Becoming critical

A challenge for the Global Learning Programme?

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Abstract

The Global Learning Programme in England employs a new form of networked governance to deliver education for sustainable development in schools. This article focuses on Biccum's claim that such programmes serve to sustain the prevailing neo-liberal hegemony by further marginalizing critical voices such as those drawing on Marxist and post-structuralist theories. After introducing the GLP, Biccum's argument, and indicators of the neo-liberalization of education for sustainable development, it examines the potential of these two theories to inform critical pedagogy. It then evaluates the GLP's core guidance, assessing the extent to which it reflects the indicators and whether it is likely to promote such pedagogy. It concludes by outlining some research questions.

Keywords: global learning, critical theory, critical education, critical pedagogy, global education reform, education policy, hegemony, ideology, Marxism, politics, post-structuralism, public–private partnerships.

The result of the EU referendum in the UK and the arrival of President elect Trump in the USA point to the end of the form of globalization that the rich world has invented, refined, and patrolled since the end of the Second World War. Popular movements against neo-liberal globalization on the right and the left focus on the impacts of economic growth, free trade, immigration, and the austerity that followed the financial crisis of 2008 on jobs, inequality, living standards, and democracy. They urge either a retreat into nationalism, protectionism, racism, and xenophobia, which would undermine the existing inadequate liberal international order, or the remaking of globalization in ways that strengthen and reform that order so that it relieves poverty and delivers sustainability in equitable and democratic ways. Completing this 'unfinished global revolution' in global governance (Malloch-Brown, 2011) is the focus of social movements and political parties that seek a different form of global capitalism or its replacement by radical alternatives. This article argues that

global learning should feature such alternatives, for only by so doing can it rightly describe itself as critical.

Critical global learning is urgently needed to give school pupils in England hope in troubled times. Prospects of economic and political disorder flow from Brexit and the new US presidency and shape future scenarios that already appear to deny them the jobs, housing, pensions, and rising living standards that their grandparents took for granted (Hertz, 2016). Anxieties prompted by probable futures, and the pressures of schooling and consumer culture, have resulted in high levels of mental ill health (Young Minds, 2016) and unhappiness with school (Weale, 2015). UK teenagers identify themselves as global citizens (Birdwell and Mani, 2014) and deserve an education that develops their critical understanding of global society, how it works, and how it might work differently to improve their prospects. Until there is radical education in common schools delivering a comprehensive social education for all pupils (Fielding and Moss, 2011), developing such understanding relies largely on piecemeal initiatives linked to the adjectival educations (environmental, development, human rights, citizenship, etc.) and the limited time and space they are able to claim within the curriculum. The Global Learning Programme (GLP) is such an initiative.

The Global Learning Programme

'Global learning' is the latest term to describe learning that addresses the aim of realizing sustainable development at all scales from the local to the global. As such it incorporates aspects of such adjectival educations as citizenship, environmental, development, human rights, and global education, and can be seen to displace what was becoming established as education for sustainable development (UKNCUNESCO, 2013). Scheunpflug (2012) advocates global learning (GL) as a guiding principle in education and defines it in terms of thematic issues, competences (knowledge, skills, and values), and critical reflection. The Department of International Development (DFID) is currently funding the GLP (GLP, 2016g) to promote such learning in English schools.

The programme is being delivered by the Development Education Consortium, consisting of seven partners: Pearson; the Geographical Association; the UCL Institute of Education; Oxfam; the Royal Geographical Society (RGS) with the Institute of British Geographers; the Schools, Students, and Teachers network; and Think Global. Schools with outstanding practice in development education (DE) are being accredited as GLP Expert Centres and have established local networks of partner schools via peer-led professional development and half-termly meetings, supported by the guidance and resources available from the GLP website and

elsewhere. Among these are two publications that outline the theory and practice of global learning and development education (Bourn, 2015, 2014).

The GLP website and its guidance for teachers

The aims and objectives of the programme, which is aimed at pupils in Key Stages 2 (7 to 9 year olds) and 3 (10 to 14 year olds), are stated as follows:

The programme will help pupils gain additional knowledge about the developing world, the causes of poverty and what can be done to reduce it. They will also develop the skills to interpret that knowledge in order to make judgements about global poverty. In this way young people will be able to:

- *better understand their role in a globally-interdependent world and to explore strategies by which they can make it more just and sustainable*

- *become more familiar with the concepts of interdependence, development, globalisation and sustainability*

- *move from a charity mentality to a social justice mentality*

- *gain greater awareness of poverty and sustainability*

- *think critically about global issues*

- *explore alternative models of development and sustainability*

- *consider the relative merits of different approaches to reducing global poverty and draw conclusions about the causes of global poverty and how it can be addressed.*

(GLP, 2016a)

Figure 1 shows the way in which the GLP is designed to explore knowledge themes and develop key competences, while offering four lenses through which issues might be viewed. Readers are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the GLP website, the resources it offers, and the insights it provides into the network of schools, GLP partners, and CPD providers on which the GLP depends. Particularly relevant to the theme of this article are the following pages and resources:

- **The curriculum framework** connects up-to-date information about global learning with specific knowledge, understanding, skills, and pedagogical approaches. It also outlines a global learning knowledge sequence (GLP, 2016a).

- **Global learning pupil outcomes** outlines what knowledge, skills, and values pupils could learn about each of the GLP's themes and specifies a global learning knowledge sequence (GLP, 2016b).

- **Pupil assessment frameworks** for KS2 and KS3, together with an **online assessment tool**, provide teachers with a means of assessing pupils' understanding of such topics as global poverty and development (GLP, 2016c).

- **Critical thinking** guidance notes can be downloaded from a link on the Curriculum Framework page (GLP, 2016a).

- **Theories of development** are outlined in notes prepared by the RGS that outline six key perspectives on development, from the 1960s to the present day. This is also downloadable from a link on Curriculum Framework page (GLP/RGS, 2016).

- The **development context** page summarizes the progress on development in recent decades and the continuing development challenge of extreme poverty, and lists the 2015–30 Sustainable Development Goals (GLP, 2016d).

- **How the GLP supports current school priorities such as British values**. This guidance is no longer live on the GLP website but the page on values (GLP, 2016e) offers a link to Ofsted guidance (Ofsted, 2016) and a range of teaching resources.

Figure 1: The GLP's knowledge themes, skills, values, and lenses (GLP, 2016b)
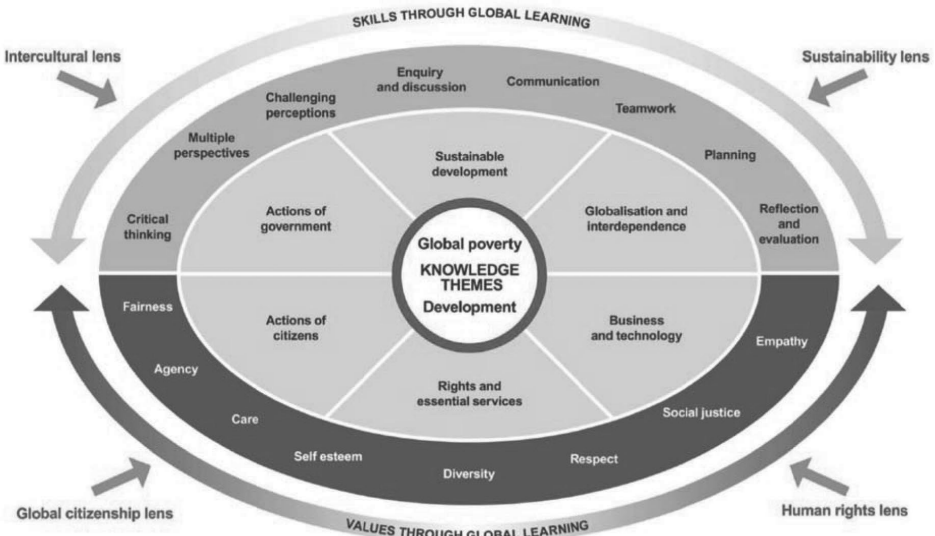
There is much else on the GLP website, including guidance on developing GL across the curriculum and in specific subjects, and advice on progression. The focus of this

article is on the core guidance and the extent to which it encourages truly critical thinking. The appointment of Pearson as the lead partner in the Development Education Consortium raises concerns that it may not.

The Development Education Consortium and the role of Pearson

Pearson describes itself as the 'world's leading learning company', with 40,000 employees in 80 countries and sales of £5.2 billion in 2014. It profits from low-fee private schools in Africa and Asia and is a member of the Funders Platform of the US-based Center for Education Innovations, a body established and funded by DFID (Singer, 2013). This platform allows donors, foundations, companies, and investors to share information on their non-state education policies and programmes in developing countries. Pearson's AGM in 2015 attracted protests both from the Global Justice Network (Curtis, 2015) and from teacher unions (NUT and ATL) concerned by Pearson's role in privatizing education and promoting high-stakes testing (NUT, 2015).

That both DFID and Pearson are players in the global educational reform movement that seeks to turn schooling into a product that can be bought and sold for profit (NUT, 2016; Sahlberg, 2016) should concern teachers committed to democratic schooling. Neo-liberalism brings pressure to downsize the state and open public services to the private sector, but this risks greater inequality of provision, the erosion of citizens' voice in determining provision, and the undermining of support for education as both a public good and a human right. The Development Education Consortium may not be the kind of public–private partnership (PPP) in education (Robertson *et al.*, 2012) that DFID favours elsewhere (Anderson, 2015), in that Pearson appears to have no financial stake in the GLP, but nevertheless its role as 'lead partner and contractor with UK Government' (GLP, 2016f) should prompt concern over the possible further neo-liberalization of DE and EE.

The neo-liberalization of DE and EE

The incorporation of actors who have a critical perspective on issues relating to the environment, development, and education into consortia that offer funding and access to key constituencies is a way of moderating or silencing their voice and dissent. This may lead to the environmental and development education sectors endorsing, tacitly or otherwise, the very ideologies and political–economic arrangements that are responsible for producing or exacerbating conditions of poverty, injustice, and unsustainable development, while simultaneously claiming to stand for social justice and sustainability. In examining such 'de-clawing' of DE, Bryan (2011) reminds us that the de-radicalization, de-politicization, or co-optation of radical projects and discourses by powerful actors and the subsequent muting of their transformative potential is one of the key strategies of neo-liberalism. Researchers have therefore

addressed the neo-liberalization of DE and EE, with Biccum (2005) arguing that official DE efforts constitute part of a broader effort to normalize neo-liberal-shaped globalization and produce a citizenry that is complicit in and unquestioning of its agenda. Hursh *et al.* (2015) explore how neo-liberal ideals, promoting economic growth and using markets to solve environmental and economic problems, constrain how environmental education is conceptualized and implemented, while Huckle and Wals (2015) suggest that publications from the UN Decade of ESD fail to challenge neo-liberal globalization.

Global learning and hegemony

Such researchers acknowledge that neo-liberalism has become the dominant social imaginary in many societies around the world, making particular ways of thinking and acting possible while simultaneously discouraging the possibility and pursuit of others. The Italian Marxist Gramsci used the term 'hegemony' to refer to such permeation throughout society of an entire system of values, attitudes, beliefs, and morality that has the effect of supporting the status quo in power relations. To the extent that this prevailing consciousness is internalized by the population it becomes part of what is generally called 'common sense', so that the philosophy, culture, and morality of the ruling elite comes to appear as the natural order of things (Boggs, 1976). Schooling is an important site in which hegemony is reproduced or challenged via the production of citizens who are either supportive or critical of the existing social order (infed, 2016).

Biccum (2015) picks up her earlier argument (Biccum, 2005) suggesting that global education (GE)/development education (DE) is part of a process whereby international development and poverty reduction have had their profiles raised in the public spheres of the advanced economies whose governments fund them. This has happened at the same time that civil unrest and protest against neo-liberal globalization, mounting academic critiques of dominant theories of development, and crises in Europe and elsewhere over such issues as austerity, migration, social exclusion, and multiculturalism have undermined public support for overseas aid and development assistance. Hence GE/DE can be seen as part of an attempt by the state to deal with a legitimation crisis (Habermas, 1973) and maintain the prevailing hegemony. In Biccum's words,

> *GE/DE is hegemonic in the Gramscian sense that it is intended to produce leadership among students, teachers, schools and whole national education sectors that co-opts the critical sentiments of oppositional forces into supporting the apparatus of the state in its bid to reproduce the productive forces for the global economy.*
>
> (Biccum, 2015: 335)

In Biccum's view, the repositioning and mainstreaming of development education as global learning only serves to strengthen its hegemonic role. It has led to the centralization of curriculum development and the erosion of practitioner autonomy (stronger central guidance, and a declining influence for NGOs and Development Education Centres) and a resulting depoliticization of content and pedagogy, which is now more strongly orientated towards problem solving within the prevailing status quo. Its new networked form of governance (the Development Education Consortium) represents a hybridization of the public and private sectors and of foreign (international development) and domestic (education) policy, and results in a more fluid, decentralized, and leaderless environment in which there is a strong risk that radical knowledge and voices will be co-opted, marginalized, or silenced. To be counterhegemonic in the Gramscian sense, GL should connect learners' lives and concerns about the future with neo-liberal globalization, pay greater attention to global political economy and international relations (Booth, 2014; Baylis *et al.*, 2011; Burchill *et al.*, 2005), and offer alternatives to current realities that are grounded in critical theory.

Indicators of neoliberalized and hegemonic GL

GL that serves to reinforce or sustain the prevailing neo-liberal hegemony is likely to emphasize the following limited forms of knowledge, skills, and values:

Knowledge that:

- Renders neo-liberal capitalism and its economic, social, and cultural power relations largely or wholly invisible. Accepts the current form of global society, globalization, and the status quo in power relations or offers only reform rather than radical change.

- Ignores critical accounts of global society, its contradictions, and political and social movements seeking radical change.

- Advocates economic growth and globalization to address poverty alleviation and environmental protection. Suggests growth will allow wealth to 'trickle down' and that 'green growth' will take care of environmental issues.

- Promotes market-based instruments and entrepreneurship to deliver sustainable development. Advocates entry to the global market via trade and investment as the key to jobs and development while asserting that the pricing of the environment is the key to its sustainable use.

- Emphasizes individual rather than collective action as the means of realizing sustainability and social justice. Holds that individuals should be educated as self-reliant global citizens who are charitable towards the poor and act in environmentally responsible ways.

- Endorses a model of environmental and global citizenship centred on privatized and individualized activities. Asserts that in an enterprising society there is a limited role for government in ensuring sustainable development.

- Promotes public–private partnerships in the delivery of education and sustainable development. Contends that development and schooling work best when the public and private sectors are in partnership.

- Emphasizes quantitative measurement as the basis for transparency and accountability in poverty alleviation, environmental management, and school effectiveness. This may include the use of rewards systems to incentivize participation and learning (e.g. eco-schools, international schools).

Skills that develop:

- Critical thinking as a form of logical thinking rather than an outcome of a critical pedagogy designed to be logical, to reveal neo-liberal hegemony, and to offer radical alternatives.

- Enquiry as a form of technocratic problem solving within existing forms of society.

- Limited forms of pupil participation in classroom and community projects. Participation reflects the lower rungs of Arnstein's ladder of participation (Hart, 1992) and relates to pupils' future roles as consumers rather than workers and citizens.

Values that include:

- Competitive individualism. Competition between pupils and schools based on the acquisition of formal academic knowledge.

- Freedom, democracy, and enterprise, interpreted in ways that are supportive of the status quo.

- Social justice and sustainability, so long as the inability of neo-liberal capitalism to deliver such values is not explored.

Modernity, development, and critical theory and pedagogy

Before examining the GLP's core guidance to judge the extent to which it reflects the neo-liberalization of DE and EE or advocates a more critical approach, it is relevant to remind ourselves of the origins and scope of critical theory and pedagogy.

Peet and Hardwick (2009) remind us that development is a founding belief of the Enlightenment and modernity, stemming from that time in Western history when people began to believe that rationality, coupled to ethics and values, science and

technology, and democracy, could change the world for the better. Modern thought suggested that development leads to human emancipation in two senses: liberation from the vicissitudes of nature via science and technology, and human freedom via conscious control over the conditions under which human nature is formed and society is governed and reproduced.

According to critical social theorists the promises of the Enlightenment and modernity have not been realized. While development should lead to a better life for everyone, the reality is that the practice and language surrounding development have become so distorted that they are most often used to legitimate what amounts to more money and power for a few. Modernity's promise of human emancipation has not been realized and critical theorists have produced a range of theories to explain why. Along with mainstream theories that explain and justify the existing organization of global society, these theories cover international relations (global politics) (Baylis *et al.*, 2011), globalization (Held and McGrew, 2002), development (Peet and Hardwick, 2009), and environmental politics (Death, 2014; Dryzek, 1997). A common theme of critical theories is the need to democratize society in all domains (economy, politics, culture) and at all levels (local, national, regional, global) so that the world's people are able to realize their common interests in sustainable development (Mohan, 2008).

Critical theory is of two main kinds: Marxism, which includes the critical theory originating with the Frankfurt School; and post-structuralism, which includes postcolonial and subaltern studies. Such theory informs the critical pedagogy that is key to moving pupils from a 'charity mentality to a social justice mentality' (GLP 2016a), and has three characteristics:

- **Pupil-centrism**. Such pedagogy puts pupils, rather than authoritative knowledge (e.g. the national curriculum), at the centre of the learning process. Objectives, content, and learning activities are negotiated and much learning is experiential.

- **Knowledge construction**. Critical pedagogy understands that knowledge is not an authoritative body of information to be delivered to pupils but emerges through communication and dialogue whereby pupils come to see the world through their own life experiences. This process is social and cultural and requires teachers to see schooling as a set of institutional practices that reproduce and/or challenge dominant structures of power.

- **Critical theory**. This pedagogy draws on critical theory that questions mainstream theory; reveals the structures and discourses that shape life experiences; and invites pupils to consider alternative ideas and forms of development.

Resources on the Freire Project website (Freire Project, 2016) provide an overview of critical pedagogy, while Table 1 outlines the partly complementary and partly conflicting approaches of critical thinking and critical pedagogy.

Table 1: Critical thinking and critical pedagogy compared (also see Johnson and Morris, 2010; Hovey, 2004; Burbules and Berk, 1999; Grundy, 1987)

Critical thinking	Critical pedagogy
• to be 'critical' means to be more discerning in recognizing faulty arguments, hasty generalizations, assertions lacking evidence, truth claims based on unreliable authority, ambiguous or obscure concepts, and so forth;	• to be 'critical' means to regard knowledge claims not primarily as propositions to be assessed for their truth content but as parts of systems of belief and action (ideologies, discourses) that have aggregate effects within the power structures of society. It asks first about these systems of belief and action *who benefits*?
• people do not sufficiently analyze the reasons by which they live, do not examine the assumptions, commitments, and logic of daily life;	• the primary preoccupation is with social injustice and how to transform inequitable, undemocratic, or oppressive institutions and social relations;
• the prime tools are the skills of formal and informal logic, conceptual analysis, and epistemology. The primary preoccupation is to supplant sloppy or distorted thinking with thinking based upon reliable procedures of inquiry;	• critical pedagogy is of three kinds: Marxist, based on praxis and ideology critique; Habermasian, based on the testing of knowledge claims through open dialogue; and post-structuralist, which seeks to give voice to marginalized and subjugated people.
• can go deeper to focus on values, power, and politics, but rarely does;	
• aims at self-sufficiency – the self-sufficient individual free from the unwarranted and undesirable control of unjustified beliefs;	
• rational thought is a guide to action.	

Critical thinking and critical pedagogy cannot be kept separate, because the standards of logic, and the ways in which they are invoked and interpreted, are a key concern of critical pedagogy.

Self-criticism

Becoming critical requires self-criticism. The argument presented here is that of an elderly, privileged, white British male, a retired teacher educator who no longer has regular contact with schools and classrooms. My perspective is limited. I am more familiar with Marxist theory than post-structuralist theory and have omitted reference to debates between them (but see Peet and Hartwick, 2009, chapters 6 and 8). Some major branches of critical theory, notably feminist and green theory, are overlooked, and there is no consideration of mainstream theories, including neo-liberalism, that should feature alongside critical theory in the classroom. Also missing is reference to critical theory's impact on DE and EE in the past, the challenge of incorporating it into a curriculum designed for younger pupils (but see Huckle, 2002 and 1988), and the opposition such incorporation is likely to face given continuing school reform.

Marxism

Marxism is a structuralist theory that links events in the world to underlying structures of economic and political power and the flows of capital they enable.[1] Global capitalism brings combined and uneven development across space and time, and Marxist theorists (Harvey, 2010; Wallerstein, 2009) trace the evolution of this system in terms of waves of capital accumulation, changing global divisions of labour and economic ideas, recurrent crises, and contradictions that open the possibility of alternatives that may provide the focus for anti-capitalist movements (Saad-Filho, 2003). Theories of dependency (Amin, 1976), world systems (Fordham University, 2016), and network society (Castells, 2013) are influential in explaining development and underdevelopment.

Wall (2015), Rogers (2014), and Swift (2014) provide introductions to capitalism and its alternatives, with Wall's analysis incorporating anarchist, eco-socialist, and feminist ideas. Foster *et al.* (2010) and Kovel (2007) provide Marxist perspectives on sustainable development while Harvey (2014) identifies 17 contradictions of contemporary neo-liberal capitalism, suggesting that its need for compound growth and its tendency to destroy the ecological resources and services on which it depends together threaten its survival. He offers a manifesto for change that shares elements with Mason's Project Zero (Mason, 2016) and with the post-capitalist futures outlined by Albert (2014) and Wright (2010).

Cox (1981) draws on Gramsci to argue that hegemony is as important in the international realm as it is in the domestic. The USA remains the hegemonic power in the world and its interests and coercive powers explain why neoliberal policies closely associated with the Washington Consensus (Jones, 2006) have been so widely accepted elsewhere. These policies have been forced on poor countries, often in return for debt relief, and have resulted in the privatization and reduction of public services, currency devaluations, greater reliance on primary industries, and increased imports of manufactured goods from rich countries. Aspects of such structural adjustment were visited on the UK as austerity in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis.

Critical theory (Crossman, 2016) is a development of Marxism that shifts the focus from economics (economic structures and social relations) to culture (ideology and the superstructure). Originating with the Frankfurt School in Germany in the inter-war period, it concentrates on issues of technology, bureaucracy, and the limitations of instrumental rationality, suggesting that the spread of such rationality, linked to consumerism and the mass media, means that the working class have been absorbed by the capitalist system and no longer present a threat to it. Habermas (Finlayson, 2005) contrasts instrumental rationality (utilitarian calculation of expediency) with communicative rationality that requires subjects to account for their beliefs and actions in terms that are intelligible to others and which they can contest or accept.

Such rationality is at the heart of discourse ethics (Devetak, 2005) and deliberative democracy in the form of consensus-orientated approaches to agreeing values (see for example ECI, 2016) and resolving political issues within a moral framework. Linklater (2007) uses such ideas to argue in favour of the expansion of the moral boundaries of the political community and for new forms of global democracy and citizenship.

In terms of pedagogy, Marxist notions of praxis shape those forms of critical pedagogy advocated by Freire (1972), Grundy (1987), and Gadotti (1996), while critical theory's advocacy of communicative rationality underpins forms advocated by Englund (2015, 2010, 2000) and discussed by Terry (1997) and Walsh (2008). Allman (2010) and Hill (2014) provide insights into contemporary Marxist approaches to education, while Evans (2012) outlines a comprehensive critical theory and pedagogy of higher education for sustainability.

Post-structuralism

From the 1970s onwards some social theorists began to doubt the value of seeking to explain all social events and phenomena as components or outcomes of some more general overarching system, such as global capitalism. They drew on social constructivism (contending that human development is socially situated and knowledge is constructed through interaction with others) to advance a theory of knowledge with three characteristics (Pilkington, 1997):

- **Anti-foundationalism**. The theory holds that there are no indisputable foundations for knowledge, no general criteria to distinguish truth and falsity. Language, thought, and reality are interdependent and all knowledge is mediated through language rather than being an accurate reflection of nature. Truth is relative and there are no guarantees of truth or reality outside language or discourse.

- **Anti-totalization**. The theory contends that it is arrogant to advance general theories that pretend to reveal universal truths or meanings. We should abandon such attempts and accept a diversity of limited theories and truths. We should be particularly sceptical of totalizing thinking that seeks to explain the world from centred and privileged positions of male power.

- **Anti-utopianism**. Modern knowledge, these theorists hold, has not delivered utopia or enlightenment, but has resulted in oppression and domination. There is no justification for accepting grand stories or narratives of human progress that suggest that history has a purpose and that things will get continually better (for example developmentalism).

A key figure in the development of post-structuralism was Foucault (Gutting, 2005), who argued that power works in dispersed ways through the everyday practices of

institutions and in the ways in which we inspect, name, and blame one another. Power lurks and works in discourse (sets of concepts, categories, and ideas that provide ways to understand and act in the world). It is tied to knowledge and language, and our identities – along with the meanings of development, sustainability, social justice, and democracy – are the contested and shifting outcomes of different discourses (Dryzek, 2006, 1997; Held and McGrew, 2002).

Whereas structuralism generally employs economic language to criticize capitalism as a class system, post-structuralism (Belsey, 2002) uses cultural language to criticize modernity understood as discourse. While the former sees potential for human emancipation in modern development, the latter is sceptical about such claims, seeing modern developmentalism (drawing on modernization theory) as a hegemonic discourse and strategy of power and control, and suggesting that critical pedagogy risks totalization and utopianism. It reminds us that the world is seen largely through a Western development gaze and is mainly understood and recreated through Western ideas. Developmentalism operates through the identification of 'problems' (poverty, sustainability, etc.) that only it can solve; through the professionalization of development experts who depoliticize such problems while creating new regimes of truth; and through the institutionalization of development via a network of new sites of power/knowledge (such as the GLP) that bind people to certain behaviours and rationalities (Escobar, 1992).

Post-structuralism led to the advocacy of local approaches to development guided by a number of frameworks: participatory action research (Kindon *et al.*, 2007); race and postcolonial theory and subaltern studies, which draw attention to the impacts of modern institutions on colonized, marginal, and subjugated peoples (Prakash, 1994); and post-development theory, which rejects modern development and advocates diverse local initiatives, simpler ways of living, and the reappraisal of non-capitalist societies (Rahnema and Bawtree, 1997). It also led to new approaches to environmental politics, such as post-humanism (Hobden, 2014), which seeks to overcome the nature/society dualism in modern thought.

Postcolonialism addresses the cultural legacy of colonialism and imperialism and the human consequences of external control and economic exploitation of native peoples and their lands. It examines the imperial regime's depictions of the colonizer and colonized, questions and reinvents the manner in which native cultures are viewed, and – as critical theory – explains the ideology and practice of neocolonialism. In these ways it seeks to critique and subvert dominant Western styles of thought, imagination, and theorizing to allow the voices of colonial subjects to be heard. Spivak (1988) reminds us that to truly listen to subaltern peoples' experience of colonization and underdevelopment we should suspend our own

interpretative concepts, and pay attention to both their accounts of their experience and their own interpretations of this experience.

From a post-structuralist perspective it is important that GL examines global issues through the lens of discourse, showing how linguistic structures give concepts like globalization and sustainability meaning and how deliberative democracy enables communication amongst them in ways that foster global citizenship (Huckle, 2015). Through media studies and the development of critical literacy (Andreotti, 2014), pupils should consider how their identities or subject positions are constituted in discourse and how individuals and institutions (including schools) navigate between different positions. When studying an issue, they should ask 'who is the subject and how can the subject speak?' and 'what are the silences and forms of marginalization produced by the dominant discourses?' (Hovey, 2004).

Andreotti is the key figure promoting such approaches to development education. With international teams of collaborators, she has developed two projects – Open Spaces for Dialogue and Enquiry (Andreotti and Warwick, 2007), and Through Other Eyes (Andreotti and De Souza, 2008) – that encourage critical engagement with global issues and give voice to different indigenous and cultural groups. Engaging with Through Other Eyes, pupils learn to unlearn, listen, relearn, and reach out with their new knowledge, through a process that reflects the three characteristics of post-structuralist knowledge listed above while remaining an example of critical pedagogy.

Evaluating the GLP's core guidance

So does the GLP's core guidance on its website encourage teachers to devise a curriculum that is hegemonic or anti-hegemonic? Does it reflect the indicators of a neo-liberalized EE and DE, or does it promote consideration of a range both of mainstream and critical ideas? Throughout this section, titles of guidance materials on the website are given in bold.

Knowledge

The GLP's **curriculum framework** (GLP, 2016a) is wide-ranging, but states that 'it is not an exhaustive list' and that 'there is no expectation that you should teach everything on it'. For teachers familiar with critical theory and pedagogy it is enabling, but for others there are traps that need to be avoided. In the 'aims' section and elsewhere, for example, there is mention of a 'globally-interdependent world' and of 'interdependence'. This may suggest mutual advantage, whereas in fact combined and uneven development results in winners and losers and in the continuing dependency of the poor upon the rich (for trade, investment, technology, etc.). Pupils are to 'become more familiar' with concepts such as interdependence,

globalization, and sustainability, but there is no explicit acknowledgement that such concepts are discursively constructed and take on different meanings within different political ideologies. Since there is no acknowledgement that the 'global economy' is a capitalist economy, no naming of 'alternative models of development and sustainability', and no identification of 'the different actors' who can tackle poverty and help deliver social justice and sustainability, the guidance risks depoliticizing global issues. Poverty, rather than wealth and the exercise of undemocratic power, is portrayed as the key problem, and there is no acknowledgement that the keys to a more just and sustainable world may lie in radical forms of global democracy that take us beyond 'developmentalism'.

Selecting, for example, knowledge area four (concepts of interdependence and sustainability) for further scrutiny, we might consider how 'the relationship between social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects of quality of life' is to be taught. Are pupils to learn about political economy, modes of economic production and cultural reproduction, the unsustainability of consumer capitalism, the reforming of schooling to better meet the needs of neo-liberal globalization, and the impact of 'examination factories' on their quality of life? Are the present actions of people and governments to address poverty and sustainability sufficient? Is 'the balancing of development and the sustainable use of resources' possible within a capitalist economy driven by greed and the need for sustainable profits? Should technology be guided by deliberative democracy if it is to deliver sustainable development? What can subaltern peoples teach us about sustainability?

As regards **pupil outcomes** the guidance specifies what pupils could learn about the two central elements and six themes (Fig. 1). Again there is much that is enabling but much that requires further clarification. Does exploring 'different ideas of poverty', for example, include considering the role of ideology and the myths surrounding poverty (Dorling, 2011) that need to be challenged? Does understanding 'what development is' include the views of subaltern social groups objecting to mainstream development? The **pupil assessment framework** specifies early, developing, and secure levels of understanding for 12 assessment areas at each Key Stage. Secure understanding of 'why there is global poverty' at Key Stage 3 would, for example, enable a pupil to state:

> *I can compare and contrast reasons why people may be poor in both poor and richer countries, including having less resources or opportunity, facing discrimination and uneven power relations between people, using evidence to form my own opinion.*

(GLP, 2016c)

Such descriptors are welcome and invite teaching about social class and the power relations within global capitalism not only between people but between nation

states and the organizations that represent capital, workers, and anti-globalization movements.

Theories of development

The GLP's section on **development theory** outlines six approaches to development (modernization, dependency, neo-liberalism, sustainable development, human development, and post-development), each associated with a key thinker and an era. This is a useful resource, prepared for the GLP by the RGS, but it omits contemporary Marxist approaches (for example Wallerstein's world system theory and Castells's theory of network society) and could lead to the misunderstanding that modernization theory died in the 1960s and neo-liberalism in the 1980s. Ideally the approaches should be related to the changing fortunes of global capitalism, the decline of Keynesian social democracy (Wall, 2015; Rogers, 2014), and the approaches of states that have continued to experiment with socialism (Burbach *et al.*, 2013).

The section on the **development context** reveals the influence of DFID, reminding teachers that 'over recent decades there has been the fastest reduction in poverty in human history'. It attributes this reduction to economic growth, the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals, and the rise of India and China. It acknowledges that neo-liberal globalization has resulted in increased inequality within and between countries and that other 'significant challenges', such as 'environmental sustainability and the global economic situation', remain. It summarizes a UN report on progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and outlines the 2015–30 Sustainable Development Goals. It then looks forward to a future 'beyond aid' and mentions UK talk of a 'golden thread' of PPPs that work to create open societies and economies; end conflict and corruption; enshrine the rule of law, free speech, and property rights; and build infrastructure with the aid of Western banks. These objectives are largely consistent with neo-liberalism and the Washington Consensus.

Skills

There is much to be welcomed in the GLP's specification of skills as set out in the **pupil outcomes** section. Pupils are to engage in critical thinking (that involves 'exploring a range of evidence related to global development, analysing and comparing it to facts and opinions to form their own more considered views'); consider multiple perspectives ('recognising that knowledge is subjective and based on viewpoints and power, being able to explore where and how viewpoints arise for different development issues, and using these ideas in forming their own views'); and engage in reflection and evaluation ('after taking appropriate actions following learning about global development, or after thinking more critically about it, being able to look back in a structured and logical way using evidence to decide if something worked well and how to improve'). There is much here to encourage

critical pedagogy (the way in which the skills of enquiry and discussion, challenging perceptions, and teamwork are specified, and the knowledge sequence is set out), but the emphasis remains on critical thinking rather than critical pedagogy (Table 1).

The **guidance notes on critical thinking** define this as 'better thinking': more rigorous, rational, and open, and more prepared to challenge assumptions and reflect on the process of problem solving or learning. There are no direct references to critiquing ideology or arriving at consensus having considered competing knowledge claims, but points 5 to 7 suggest pupils should understand different points of view, be prepared to change their views based on evidence, look for hidden meanings or perspectives, and consider different voices and points of view on global issues. Together with the key questions 'who should have a say and why?', 'what do I and other people think?', 'do I need to change my thinking?', and 'are anyone's views missing from the discussion?' there is perhaps ample prompting of critical pedagogy, but teachers may need more guidance on the critical ideas that pupils might consider and on working towards consensus. Such guidance would also render the **global learning knowledge sequence** a more powerful tool as answers to such questions as 'what does it mean?' and 'what can be done about it?' are clearly dependent on the range of political perspectives and voices offered.

Values

The **pupil outcomes** suggest that learning about global issues will support pupils in 'considering' eight values: fairness, agency, care, self-esteem, diversity, respect, social justice, and empathy. The majority of these might be considered procedural rather than substantive values and in the case of the key value of social justice pupils are to 'think about what a socially just world would look like, and how important it is to achieve this'. There is no commitment on the GLP's part to cosmopolitan values or such ethical principles as those outlined in the Earth Charter (ECI, 2016), nor is there a suggestion that such principles should be taught or instilled via appropriate values education techniques. Sustainability is not included as a value and care is not defined in ways that extend care to other species and to future generations.

The guidance on how the **GLP supports current school priorities such as 'British values'** (GLP, 2016h) suggests the GLP should help the government's Prevent strategy (Department for Education, 2015) by actively promoting fundamental British values such as democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. The strategy has attracted criticism from the Institute of Race Relations (IRR, 2009) and others, who see it as discriminatory (constructing Muslim youth as a 'problem'), ineffective, counter-productive, and positively harmful. The guidance suggests how the GLP can support not only the Prevent strategy but also the Equality Act and the delivery of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development in schools. Such commitments are to be

expected from a programme supported by the state, but they raise important issues about alternative interpretations of what are claimed to be British values, whether the state lives up to those values, and whether the strategy is an appropriate response to the terrorism prompted by wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and elsewhere. Such questions might be considered as part of global learning.

The GLP and research

For the teacher familiar with critical theory and pedagogy, there is much in the GLP's core guidance that is welcome and enabling. For others there is a lack of sufficient prompts to render global learning politically realistic, encourage the introduction of critical ideas alongside mainstream ideas, and counter the current dominant 'delivery of outcomes' culture with critical pedagogy. With regard to Biccum's claim, my evaluation of the GLP's core guidance is inconclusive but suggests the programme is more open to counter-hegemonic content than she imagines.

The GLP is generating research relevant to the theme of this article (for example see Simpson, 2016; Brown, 2015). There is a need for more research to examine its content and pedagogy as delivered in classrooms and CPD sessions and theorized in related texts (Bourn 2015, 2014). The subject guidance also warrants attention, as does the overall impact of the GLP on pupils' understanding of their role as global citizens. The politics of the Development Education Consortium is worthy of study with a focus on the extent, if any, to which it marginalizes critical ideas. Only when such research is completed will we know in what sense and to what extent the GLP can claim to be critical.

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Notes
[1] http://firstedition.routledgesoc.com/profile offers background notes on Karl Marx, the Frankfurt School, Michael Foucault, critical race and postcolonial theory, and globalization.

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