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Education For Sustainable Futures in The Language Classroom

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Abstract

This study investigates how Global Citizenship Education (GCE) can be more effectively embedded within Initial Teacher Education (ITE) for Foreign Language teaching in Ireland. Language classrooms are uniquely positioned to foster intercultural awareness, ethical reflection, empathy, and critical engagement with global issues. However, many pre-service language teachers report uncertainty about how to translate the principles of GCE into meaningful and practical classroom approaches. Using a mixed-methods design, this research combined a pre-intervention survey with a collaborative world café discussion to explore participants' confidence, dispositions, and perceptions of both the opportunities and challenges associated with teaching GCE through foreign languages and in the foreign language classroom in post-primary level, in Ireland. The study examined how student teachers understand the main concept of Global Citizenship Education and then it explored concepts such as intercultural competence, global responsibility, and critical pedagogy. This study also examined their levels of confidence in teaching such concepts in the foreign language classroom and how these ideas might inform their lesson planning and classroom practice. Findings provide valuable insight into the ways future language teachers interpret, negotiate, and operationalise GCE within contemporary educational contexts, while also highlighting the supports and pedagogical strategies needed to strengthen GCE integration within ITE programmes in Ireland.

Keywords: Classroom Practice, GCE, Global Citizenship Education, ITE, Languages; Pre-Service Teachers