

Chapter 2

Infusing Global Perspectives Into Teacher Education: A Self-Study From Texas and Georgia

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ABSTRACT

For decades, researchers and educators have called for the internationalization of teacher education and the infusion of global perspectives into preparation programs in order to better serve all children, regardless of citizenship, location, or status. This self-study of the authors' own processes and outcomes describes the transformation of two teacher preparation courses to include global competencies and content. Two key concepts, global competence and global competent teaching, were used to frame the redesigned courses. They aimed at helping candidates develop their own global competence and understand why global competence is an essential skill for their future students to acquire, as well as foster thinking routines and pedagogical practices to become global minded teachers and guide their students to build global competence. Although the university contexts and courses were different, results show commonalities and implications for educators working to internationalize courses in higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Our world is changing at a rapid rate; the world our students are living in is different from the one in which educators knew as children. In light of these changes including new technologies and increasing connectedness and globalization, scholars and educators have called for more relevant learning and global perspectives to be included in higher education (Gardner, 2007; Reimers, 2009). Moreover, in recent years, global citizenship and competence has gained attention and increased urgency as member states of the

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United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development both prioritized the teaching and evaluation of skills and knowledge of students in global competence (OECD/Asia Society, 2018). As a simple definition, Boix Mansilla and Jackson define global competence as “the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (2013, p. 2). According to the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), global competence is the “capacity to examine local, global, and intercultural issues; to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others; to engage in open, appropriate, and effective interactions with people from different cultures; and to act for collective well-being and sustainable development” (Asia Society/ OECD, 2018, p. 5).

Yet, many schools and universities lag behind this call for increased global competence as a priority. The authors are both teacher educators whose university programs, while supportive, are not engaged in comprehensive efforts to infuse global and international perspectives into the curricula. Despite this lack of focus on the institutional level, it is imperative to prepare teachers to teach global citizenship and increase global perspectives; thus we sought out opportunities to learn more and globalize our courses. We set out to learn as much as we could about internationalization in higher education and teacher education.

Through our learning process, we both became aware of a specialized mentoring program for teacher educators, the Global Teacher Education (GTE) Fellows program sponsored by the Longfellow foundation. In 2019, we were accepted into program and have been supported in our work through webinars, resources, and an assigned mentor. This self-study of our own processes and outcomes describes the transformation of two teacher preparation courses to include global competencies and content through the GTE Fellows program with the goal of providing models of possibilities for other higher education faculty. Although our university contexts and courses were different, results show commonalities and implications for educators working to internationalize courses in teacher education. This chapter provides a description of the self-study methods, an overview of the two institutional contexts along with course specifics such as objectives, assignments, and modifications, and concludes with implications and suggestions for infusing global perspectives into the curriculum.

BACKGROUND

When one encounters the words, “internationalization”, “globalization”, “intercultural”, “multicultural” and even “global citizenship” in relation to higher education, these terms may evoke emotional reactions or bring to mind certain epistemologies and perspectives. This linguistic dilemma has been puzzling academics for decades and there is little agreement. It becomes even more complex when individuals use the same words with different meanings or when the debate becomes so heated that a variety of perspectives are not considered. For example, while multicultural education is prominent in the United States, some believe multicultural and intercultural are synonymous while others maintain the differences are wide with completely different goals (i.e. intranational diversity vs. international diversity) (Green & Olsen, 2003). Multicultural education has typically referred to diverse perspectives inside a society, for example an underrepresented group in a particular country (Olmedo & Harbon, 2010) with a focus on social inequities (Green & Olsen, 2003). Yet the boundaries between international and multicultural education are blurred. The process of internationalizing education includes viewing educational institutions and pedagogies as well as educational goals and issues from the perspective of a global citizenry (Olmedo & Harbon, 2010). This approach is people-centered in that the driver of the internationaliza-

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