

To Leave No Teacher Behind:

Building International Competence into the Undergraduate Training of K-12 Teachers

REPORT SUMMARY

The Project

The data for this exploratory study on the undergraduate training of teachers, funded by the U.S. Department of Education, were collected in interviews with some 400 administrators, faculty, and students on 41 campuses over a five-year period. The first phase focused on secondary school teachers and the more recent phase on the elementary level. About 120 current teachers also contributed data through interviews and questionnaires. The methodologies, findings, and recommendations have been reviewed by a small advisory group.

Findings and Recommendations

A first step in the interviews was establishing the wide range of activities – some 25, on campus and abroad – that can expose students to foreign languages and cultures. The findings point to a number of recommendations that emphasize cost-effective activities and approaches, clustering around four general topics. Here are the recommendations, with some of the key findings.

Advising

Institutions of higher education should add formal international components to student advisory services, beginning in the pre-application phase, to assure the feasibility of maximum international exposure within normal time-to-degree constraints and

should provide training on international options, and website support, for students, for faculty, and for professional advisors.

They should also expose all students with international interests to the challenges and satisfactions of teaching careers.

Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education (SCDEs) should strengthen the international components of their academic and career advising services, in cooperation with other university and community college advising services.

Outside funders should offer funding for academic and career advising among the allowable activities that can encourage international exposure for all undergraduates.

The research found that inclusion of international options in undergraduate advising, and particularly for underclassmen, is a major need. More than 85% of the phase two interviewees felt that advising about international options should be improved, and nearly 75% of the interviewees in Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education (SCDEs) felt that advisors (faculty and staff) are *not* sufficiently trained about the full range of possibilities for international exposure for students. A substantial number of respondents recommended improved training for advisors. Few of the responding current teachers had had advising about international options as undergraduates and over 90% think that teacher training programs should include such advising.

In Arts and Sciences, few faculty and professional staff advisors seemed prepared to help students with international interests to consider teaching careers. Offices of International Programs could play a key role in strengthening their institutions' advising about international options, and careers – and some undertake a variety of activities to do so.

Curriculum: General Education Requirements, Majors, and Minors

Institutions of higher education should foster development of internationally oriented curriculum, through, for example, individual faculty grants, particularly for general education courses, and

SCDEs should review all courses in the teacher education curriculum for possible addition of international content, and

should offer an effective introductory course, and even observational internships and a minor in education, open to all undergraduates, to reinforce advising about teaching career options.

SCDEs should also increase options for observation and practice teaching in bilingual and international magnet schools and

should include international orientation in the criteria for selecting cooperating teachers for students' observation and practice teaching placements.

Many teachers, faculty, administrators, and students (94% of the SCDE respondents) would like to have courses added *or revised* to include international dimensions, and a large majority would like to have K-12 teachers-in-training encouraged to minor in a field with international content. Many also felt that an Education minor for Arts and Sciences students could serve a useful function. Only about half of the SCDE respondents reported any mentoring by current teachers with an international outlook. While over 80% reported a possibility of practice teaching in a bilingual or international magnet school, many noted that few students are so placed.

Curriculum: Foreign Language

Institutions of higher education generally should strengthen requirements for foreign language training for all undergraduates, with a goal of attaining at least conversational proficiency in a second language.

SCDEs should require that prospective foreign language teachers have at least one semester of overseas experience in an area where the target language is spoken.

State and local governments should remove all exemptions for significant foreign language competence in teacher training in all humanities and social science fields at all education levels and

should add an endorsement for K-6 foreign language instruction.

Accrediting agencies should recommend distinctly different programs for training foreign language teachers at the elementary and secondary levels.

Professional associations should increase attention to solutions for the demand and supply problems of foreign language teachers, at all levels of instruction (K-12 and postsecondary).

Few university respondents reported foreign language requirements for prospective teachers, but many, in all categories, felt that teachers should acquire some foreign language competence. Among the participating current teachers 90% favor a foreign language requirement in teacher training. For foreign language teachers in the elementary grades, the only certification reported was K-12, and, although participants at a few institutions mentioned a possible combination with the general K-5 or K-6 certification, none reported a separate certification or endorsement for K-5 foreign language instruction.

Curriculum: Experience Abroad

Institutions of higher education generally should review policy and practice for the integration of study and internships abroad in the curriculum, with respect to both general education and major field requirements.

SCDEs should integrate study and internships abroad into the professional training of teachers.

State and local governments should revise regulations about practice teaching, if necessary, to allow credit for pre-service observation and internships in other countries for at least part of the student teaching experience.

Although many in all categories (overall, 65%) – teachers, faculty, administrators, students – would like more study abroad participation, the current participation rates for teachers-in-training are very low, probably under 1%. Participation rates are very low for internships abroad as well, often because of state practice teaching requirements, and more than half would like more. Respondents made a number of suggestions for improved integration of overseas study and internships into the home campus curriculum.

Curriculum: Certification and Accreditation Issues

Accrediting agencies should include requirements for international exposure, through coursework, foreign language study, and study and internships abroad, in accreditation criteria for all teacher education programs.

State and local governments should include international and global perspectives in requirements for endorsements and certification, to recognize interrelationships of disciplines and cultures.

They should also facilitate integration of international content in continuing professional development for current teachers, through workshops and special courses.

Professional associations should give increased attention to needs and strategies for improving international components in testing standards and in the preparation of teachers.

Less than 10% of the SCDE participants reported a foreign language requirement for certification. While many told of recent changes in certification requirements, more than 80% of the recently interviewed teachers (and two-thirds of the SCDE respondents) reported that changes in certification requirements do *not* reflect increasing globalization, nor do subject standards, or most SCDEs' graduation requirements. Little more than half of the elementary school teachers could say that adequate resources are available for teaching international topics, and less than half look for internationally oriented web-based materials.

Faculty

Institutions of higher education should foster development of internationally oriented curriculum, through, for example,

- individual faculty grants (particularly for general education courses),
- joint workshops for Arts and Sciences and Education faculty, and
- hiring faculty with international training and experience.

Accrediting agencies should include requirements for international exposure in faculty qualifications among accreditation criteria for all teacher education programs.

To facilitate development of curriculum with more international dimensions, most respondents,

including 96% of the senior administrators, like the concept of faculty travel abroad explicitly for curriculum development, but few are doing it currently, although many reported that faculty experience overseas likely results in some course readjustments. Nearly as many respondents, in both Arts and Sciences and Education, would like joint (A&S/SCDE) faculty workshops focused on curriculum development and well over 85% in the second phase of the project like the concept of team (A&S/SCDE) teaching. Many respondents reported that “international” plays no formal role in hiring, promotion, or tenure decisions.

Policy and Governance

Institutions of higher education should strengthen the role of campus-wide offices for international services and programs, and effectively provide information about their services institution-wide.

They should also track the characteristics described in the report for evaluation, research, and planning purposes, for all undergraduate programs, including those in professional schools and advising services.

Outside funders should improve their dissemination of information about funding resources available to initiate and strengthen international and area studies and foreign language programs their potential impact on the training of prospective teachers, and

they should provide funding support for a wide variety of activities to do so, particularly for those who might consider teaching careers.

They should also develop more effective networks for disseminating information about options and resources for prospective and current teachers.

Professional associations should give increased attention to needs and strategies for improving international components in publications and at meetings.

Although standards and certification requirements usually do not so specify, internationalizing initiatives are being undertaken in SCDEs by faculty and deans, with encouragement from senior administrators *and* colleagues in Arts and Sciences. Facilitation of these and other efforts may be available through institutions’ offices of international services and programs, but relatively few of those visited are exercising a full range of possible functions; even what services they do provide tend not to be widely known on their campuses. Nor is a full range of public and private funding resources known to the people interviewed for this project; nearly 40% of the recent Education participants said they knew of none.

Conclusions

On nearly every issue the second phase findings mirrored and strengthened the findings from the project’s initial phase, indicating similar problems and challenges for internationalizing training for both elementary and secondary teachers. The full report contains much more information about these findings and about strategies that have been and could be used to increase international content in the preparation of K-12 teachers. It is available on the researcher’s website (www.internationaledadvice.org) or may be purchased at cost from the researcher:

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