

GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

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ABSTRACT

Understanding and implementing a global perspective of business and education is a requisite skill for 21st Century educational leaders. Among principal preparation programs within the United States, there has been limited evidence of embedding the thread of global literacy or aligning curriculum with global-local skills. The purpose of this paper is to address this challenge by sharing an innovative approach that was designed and delivered in the MBA in Education Leadership program at the University of Indianapolis. This interdisciplinary initiative highlighted a thread of global perspective and aligned the thread with course content. In addition to a discussion of how instructors used various teaching methods (including lecture, discussion, hands-on activities) to promote understanding of global literacy and the assessment of student learning, this paper describes candidates' feedback regarding their positive learning experiences.

Keywords: school leadership, education leadership, global perspective, global-local perspective, principal preparation programs, MBA

INTRODUCTION

The American educational system is changing rapidly and being influenced through a variety of global connections. The results of international comparative educational exams such as Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) play a bigger role in educational policies in many countries; therefore, it becomes essential for American educational leaders to better understand educational reforms in the global context and think critically of those international benchmarks. Closing the international achievement gap has been recognized as a new and significant responsibility for educational leaders (Stringfield, 2011).

Many have argued that the role and skills of leaders in the current American school system need to be transformed. We continue to serve students in school systems that operate on a 19th Century timetable and deliver a 20th Cen-

tury curriculum (Hayes-Jacobs, 2014). In the 21st century, how is the American educational system preparing children for a future that is connected both locally and globally? To improve the quality of schools and increase student academic achievement, it is critical to develop competent educational leaders who have a solid understanding of global education and who can lead across different cultures.

One critical attribute of effective educational leaders is the capacity to understand and implement a global view of the world, including intercultural competencies. Schools and districts can no longer function independently. School leaders should understand that modern learners need to interact not only in their local community, but also with state, national, and international communities. Global literacy should become an integral part of the school curriculum. Global literacy, as described by Rosenthal Tolisano (2014), is an individual's ability to understand global education and competencies, while being able to switch flu-

ently between local and global perspectives. Students need to recognize the challenges and opportunities of an interconnected world and be able to work in it and improve it (Boix-Mansilla, & Jackson 2011). Therefore, educational leaders must have the knowledge and capabilities to model and create the culture that embraces these literacy skills for students and staff.

Only when education leaders have a clear global perspective can American school systems better prepare youth to be competitive in the ever-changing world. Our leaders should have access and ability to analyze other countries' educational systems to partner and learn from them. The 2012 International Summit on Teaching and Learning in New York City provided an avenue to promote global competencies. Ministers of education and teacher leaders from 23 high performing or rapidly improving countries agreed that "leadership with a purpose" is central to raising student achievement. Several participating countries underlined the central role of high quality training, careful mentoring of new leaders, and ongoing development and feedback (Asia Society, 2012). Acknowledging and utilizing the information from international systems can provide support and leverage to impact the American educational system.

The challenge for school leaders is not simply figuring out which specific activities contribute to fostering aspects of global competency, but also finding out how to integrate those activities into the regular work of schools (Reimers, 2009). In a survey administered by Reimers (2009), fewer than one-half of respondents reported that their schools offer opportunities to develop global competencies or to infuse global competencies throughout the curriculum. These results reflect the importance of educating future leaders in global education and provide strategies to integrate into the curriculum. If our American education system is to support and grow our youth for the future, the leaders must be well prepared. According to Zhao (2009), a paradigm shift in thinking about education, both in what we teach and how we deliver it, is needed.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Global literacy is an essential component for training and licensing educational leaders; however, there are few programs around the country that adequately integrate the global/local strands into administrator preparation studies. Brooks and Normore (2010) have advocated rethinking educational leadership for 21st Century schools. They have coined the term, "glocalization" to refer to "a meaningful integration of local and global forces to help educational leaders inform and enhance their pedagogy and practice (p. 52)."

Although the National Education Association (NEA) and educational policy organizations have advocated for global competency as a 21st Century imperative (www.nea.org), there is limited evidence that educational leadership masters programs include curriculum aligned with global-local skills. The Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) reports 36 graduate programs at the Masters and Ph.D. level in the United States. Their curricula are research-based and do not necessarily include courses to meet building-level administrator licensing requirements (www.cies.us). Principal preparation programs seeking National Council for the Accreditation of Educator Preparation (CAEP) accreditation must demonstrate curricular alignment with Educational Leadership Constituent Council Standards (ELCC, www.ncate.org) pertaining to visioning, strategic planning, supervision of instruction, management and operational systems, school-community relations, social justice, and school law. At the present time, the ELCC standard elements for content knowledge and professional leadership skills reference cross-cultural leadership, but not specific global educational competencies.

A look at international leadership programs reveals a very different scenario. The University of Southampton Education School in the United Kingdom offers a master's in educational management and leadership with coursework in globalization and internationalization in education (www.southampton.ac.uk). Southampton students create presentations and project planning strategies to internationalize educational curricula. Cambridge College students, who are also eligible for licensure in Massachusetts, study Advanced Leadership in Policy and Practice, using simulations and scenarios to examine national and local educational policies (www.cambridgecollege.edu). Future school leaders in Singapore are trained at the National Institute of Education where the focus is on innovation and school transformation. Principals in training complete a school improvement project for their site, visiting an international school utilizing their research (www.ascd.org).

Linda Darling-Hammond (2010) has offered insights regarding how the United States can learn from the success of other countries to solve teacher shortages and improve instruction in our schools. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) is facilitating multiple strategies to increase communication and interaction among instructional leaders worldwide. Creating an effective environment will necessitate removing barriers to promote global-local learning (www.oecd-educationtoday.blogspot.com). Infusing rigorous global-local threads in principal preparation programs would seem a significant step in preparing 21st Century school leaders.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

To respond to the pressing need to promote candidates' understanding of global education and intercultural competency, the MBA in Education Leadership program at the University of Indianapolis designed and integrated a global/local thread in their program. In this paper, we will report an innovative approach to embedding global/local strands into administrator preparation studies and review the preliminary results collected from fellows (i.e. graduate students) in the program.

The MBA Fellowship in Education Leadership program that is described in this paper is an example of an effort to develop leadership competency and prepare educational leaders for schools that are experiencing many changes currently. The MBA in Education Leadership program is designed to combine the best practices in business and education with a variety of opportunities for Fellows to apply their learning in a school setting. Coursework in this program utilizes an applied, problem-based approach that is directly related to fieldwork experiences. Fellows receive a full tuition scholarship in this 13-month cohort-based program. The program adopts a "grow-your-own" model. All Fellows in the program have to go through a highly selective nomination process by school districts or charter school authorizers. Throughout the program, Fellows are provided school leadership and business immersion experiences, which are supported by their current district or charter school and include opportunities for Fellows to immediately apply leadership competencies in the field. One of the guiding principles of the program is the combination of the best practices in business and education. The goal is to increase educators' understanding of the highly competitive nature of global business and the need to develop and foster relationships with leaders within the American educational system. The intent is to give the Fellows tools to continually create, develop, and implement educational practices to enable their students to compete in the global arena.

GLOBAL/LOCAL STRAND WITHIN THE PROGRAM

One focus of the program is to cultivate global literacy and the integration of a global and local thread throughout the program. In this strand, topics that are addressed include, but are not limited to:

- How can I bring my understanding of key course concepts to a global level? For key course concepts (e.g., curriculum and assessment, financial resources, etc.), what are other countries' policies and practices?

- How are other countries' educational policies and practices similar to or different from those in the United States?
- How can I bring my understanding of key course concepts from the global level back to the local level? What are the implications of other countries' policies and practices for my school and my school district? Given my global understanding of those concepts, how can I think critically about what is being done in my school and school district?
- This thread was co-taught by a business faculty member and an education faculty member. In this paper, we will share the efforts that the MBA in Education Leadership at the University of Indianapolis made to integrate the development of their understanding of global education and intercultural competency specifically in the areas of instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

GLOBAL/LOCAL UNDERSTANDING OF ASSESSMENT

This paper focuses on promoting prospective educational leaders' understanding of assessment in a global context. Within the program, there are two courses that focus on the assessment of education: (1) Data Analysis and Statistics and (2) Instruction, Curriculum and Assessment. These two courses were dedicated to effectively finding, analyzing, and interpreting assessment data. The global/local session was offered to Fellows on the last day of the two courses. This 4-hour session focused on three modules: (1) Individual Fellow presentations on global data, (2) Introduction to global educational data, and (3) Comparing and contrasting several countries' assessment data. The session utilized various teaching methods, including lecture, discussion, and hands-on activities within small groups.

Individual Fellows "Fact-Sheet" Presentations in A Small Group

The class meeting started with Fellows presentations on their "fact sheets" of global education. Prior to the class meeting time, Fellows were asked to identify a problem or a situation that they identified from their current work and intended to solve. Then Fellows read required course readings to learn more about what other countries have been doing to address that problem or similar problems. The assigned readings (see Appendix) covered two topics: a) global education, and b) entrepreneurship and innovation in education and business.

Fellows' choice was found helpful for this learning activity. They were encouraged to connect their work to the unique needs of their school or school district. Many of the Fellows seized this as an opportunity to conduct in-depth research for their school or school district and seek inspirations and solutions from other countries. The topics for their "fact sheet" and presentation covered a wide range of topics, including retention rate, technology integration, poverty issues in schools, the development of community schools, 21st Century skills, and collaboration between school and corporation. Each Fellow presented in a small group of five. In the presentation, the presenter stressed the significance of the problem and shared what inspiring ideas were discovered from other countries. Discussion time was provided after each presentation, during which group members gave feedback to the presenter. They also asked questions and shared how that issue was approached in their schools or districts. By doing this, the conversation was taken from a global level and applied at the local level.

Introduction to Global Educational Data

A mini-lecture, co-led by School of Business and School of Education faculty, provided multiple resources and databases on global education (e.g., World Bank Education Database, UNESCO database). Instructors showed Fellows how to navigate within each database and how to read those databases. Fellows had access to those databases on their own devices during the session

Comparing and Contrasting Global Assessment Data

Fellows received additional hands-on experiences with finding, analyzing, interpreting, and presenting large-

scale data from this small group activity. Numerous sources of international educational data were provided. They were asked to download data from the UNESCO database and to compare their local district with other countries via specific educational variables, such as teacher-student ratio.

Additionally, Fellows learned about the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), an international assessment that measures 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, science literacy, and collaborative problem solving in more than 70 countries. Fellows compared PISA scores from various countries and discussed what factors may be attributed to the different performance data among those countries.

FELLOWS' FEEDBACK

Altogether, 35 fellows participated in this pilot program and provided feedback for this innovative approach. When asked about their learning experience in this interdisciplinary session, the majority of the fellows reported that it was helpful, as indicated in Table 1. As to fellows applying the global perspective to their school district, the findings with regards to the neutral and disagree responses could be due to the fellows being in the early stages of developing their transformational educational leadership skills. When Fellows were asked about their overall experiences with the global/local session in their program, the majority of the Fellows reported that those sessions helped them with their understanding of the global/local thread of the program. As shown in Table 1, when asked about how helpful the sessions were in linking the courses together within the educational leadership program, Fellows seemed to have more mixed opinions. While the majority still indicated "Somewhat agree" or "Strongly agree" that the sessions helped them to understand how

the courses were linked together within the program, about half of them were not clear about the connections.

DISCUSSION

Overall, the feedback was positive and suggested that the global/local session was helpful in promoting the fellows' understanding at both the global and the local levels. Fellows reported the session was more helpful in developing their understanding of the global perspective of the course materials than in allowing them to apply the global perspective to their school district. One way to explain this is to look at the results from Bloom's Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. Bloom (Seddon, 1978) classified learning goals by the level of cognitive demand. The original Bloom's taxonomy included remembering (the lowest level in the cognitive domain), understanding, applying, analyzing, evaluating, and creating (the highest level). The first feedback question (i.e., Understanding the course content materials from the global perspective) would fall into Level 2 and the second feedback question (i.e., Applying the knowledge to their school district) achieved a Level 3 or higher learning goal.

According to Bloom's Taxonomy, a Level 3 learning goal is higher than Level 2 and would require more knowledge and skills to process the information. It is possible that Fellows felt that the learning activities in the global/local thread were helpful for them to explain related ideas and concepts, but they needed additional support and resources to successfully apply their newly acquired knowledge. Another possible factor for the result is the timing in which this global/local session was offered. The session was provided quite early in the 13-month intensive program, when Fellows still had limited opportunities to systematically apply that knowledge. Applying their understanding of global perspective into their school district would be even harder for Fellows whose primary job responsibility was still teaching, because they would have to switch their perspective from a teacher to a prospective leader.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

Given the potential explanations for the results, multiple directs are being considered for future work. First, we may provide the global/local session at a later time in the program, when Fellows have more leadership knowledge, skills, and experiences. Second, we could collect more longitudinal data to understand Fellows' feedback and perceptions of the global perspective. Consideration is also being given to using various formats to collect data, including open-ended questions to obtain more detailed feedback and suggestions from Fellows.

In summary, this new global/local strand provides future education leaders opportunities to examine data, policies, and practices in other countries and think critically about what is going on in their own building or school district. By developing Fellows' understanding of key concepts at both the local and the global levels, this new module has great potential in developing global literacy among future educational leaders. More research is needed to further develop this module and collect more longitudinal data.

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Statement	Agree (Strongly or Somewhat)	Neutral	Disagree (Strongly or Somewhat)
The global/local assessment session helped me to understand the global perspective of the course material.	90%	10%	0%
The global/local assessment session helped me to apply the course material to my school district.	52%	28%	20%
Overall, the global/local instructors assisted me in the understanding of the global/local thread.	87%	10%	3%
Overall, the global/local instructors helped me understand how the courses linked together within the educational leadership program.	63%	27%	10%

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APPENDIX COURSE READINGS BY THEME

Comparing Global Education

- Education at a Glance 2014: OECD Indicators (retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/edu/Education-at-a-Glance-2014.pdf>)
- Global Education Digest 2012: Opportunities lost: the impact of grade repetition and early school leaving (retrieved from <http://www.uis.unesco.org/Education/Documents/ged-2012-en.pdf>)
- Global Education Initiative—Retrospective on Partnerships for Education Development 2003-2011 Cost (retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GEI_PartnershipsEducationDevelopment_Report_2012.pdf)

Entrepreneurship and Innovation in Education and Business

- Final Report on the Entrepreneurship Education Workstream, Summer 2011, World Economic Forum (retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GEI_UnlockingEntrepreneurialCapabilities_Report_2011.pdf)
- Global Education Initiative LATAM Roundtable on Entrepreneurship Education 2011, World Economic Forum (retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GEI_LAEntrepreneurshipEducation_Report_2011.pdf)
- Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe: National Strategies, Curricula and Learning Outcomes (retrieved from <http://eacea.ec.europa>

[eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/135en.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GEI_UnlockingEntrepreneurialCapabilities_Report_2011.pdf))

- Accelerating the Adoption of mLearning: A Call for Collective and Collaborative Action, World Economic Forum (retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GAC_Accelerating-AdoptionMLearning_2012.pdf)
- Education and Skills 2.0: New Targets and Innovative Approaches (retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/GAC/2014/WEF_GAC_EducationSkills_TargetsInnovativeApproaches_Book_2014.pdf)
- The New Vision for Education (retrieved from http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEFUSA_NewVisionforEducation_Report2015.pdf)
- Adapting technology for school improvement: a global perspective (retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/iiep/PDF/pubs/F165.pdf>)
- World's Most Innovative Companies: Forbes (retrieved from <http://www.forbes.com/innovative-companies/list/>)