Internationalizing Teaching and Learning:

The Essential Role of Assessment-Based Research and Practice

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The global movement known broadly as "international education" represents a great hope and daunting challenge for wholesale transformation of local and global educational systems.[1] Existing for decades, the field of international education essentially aims to infuse curricula, programs, institutions, organizations, and societies with diverse perspectives and experiences from other nations and cultures. Consider, for example, the extraordinary research and practice that occurs from an interdisciplinary perspective under the auspices of organizations such as NAFSA: Association of International Educators (http://www.nafsa.org/), the Forum on Education Abroad (http://www.forumea.org/), and the European Association for International Education (http://www.eaie.org/home.html). Moreover, within specific disciplinary fields, international education also has become a key focus, designed to transform fields of inquiry and practice to become more internationally minded (for examples from psychology and sociology, see http://www.apa.org/international/about/; http://www.asanet. org/sections/global.cfm).

To ensure that the field of international education actually impacts the promulgation of international education for teachers and teacher educators, it is essential that assessment-based

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[1] Aspects of this paper have been adapted and/or excerpted with permission from the Center for Green Schools, 2014, *Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Self* (2014), and Shealy, 2014. A powerpoint presentation related to this paper may be accessed at
http://www.nafsa.org/Find_Resources/Internationalizing_Higher_Education/Colloquia/Teacher_Education/Internationalizing_Teacher_Education__Resources_from_NAFSA_s_2014_Colloquium/.

research and practice programs of depth and breadth are developed. Why? Because the complex and interacting nature of teaching, training, and learning – especially as envisioned by the field of international education – simply cannot be evaluated and refined over time without research and practice models and methods that are up to the task. Moreover, international education is a values-based paradigm, grounded in abundant data to be sure, but ultimately prescriptive and proscriptive of the beliefs, values, and behaviors that are integral to the competencies that educators are obliged to cultivate in teachers, students, and citizens at large (e.g., Baltensperger et al. 2013; Cordiero, 2007; Cushner, 2007; Marx & Moss, 2011; Shealy, 2014; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007).

Teacher Competencies and International Education

Within the general literature on the education of teachers, there is broad consensus that a triptych of competencies – knowledge, skills, and dispositions – is relevant to all phases of education and certification, from selection, to in-program evaluation, to the development of professional identity and life-long learning. For example, the InTASC standards describe "…what teachers should know and be able to do to ensure every K-12 student reaches the goal of being ready to enter college or the workforce in today's world" (InTASC Model Core Teaching Standards, 2011, p. 3). On the face of it, there is clear overlap at a number of levels between the values of international education and extant standards that address teacher preparation and certification, as demonstrated by the Council of Chief State Officers (CCSS), through its Interstate Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (InTASC) Model Core Teaching Standards (2011) (see also NCATE, 2006). Consider, for example, the following "Critical Dispositions" from the InTASC standards:

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Standard #4: Content Knowledge

    4(o)   The teacher realizes that content knowledge is not a fixed body of facts but is complex, culturally situated, and ever evolving. S/he keeps abreast of new ideas and understanding in the field.

    4(p)   The teacher appreciates multiple perspectives within the discipline and facilitates learners' critical analysis of these perspectives.

    4(q)   The teacher recognizes the potential of bias in his/her representation of the discipline and seeks to appropriately address problems of bias.

Standard #5: Application of Content

    5(q)   The teacher is constantly exploring how to use disciplinary knowledge as a lens to address local and global issues.

    5(r)   The teacher values knowledge outside his/her own content area and how such knowledge enhances student learning.

Standard #9: Professional Learning and Ethical Practice

    9(m)   The teacher is committed to deepening understanding of his/her own frames of reference (e.g., culture, gender, language, abilities, ways of knowing), the potential biases in these frames, and their impact on expectations for and relationships with learners and their families.

Standard #10: Leadership and Collaboration

    10(q) The teacher respects families' beliefs, norms, and expectations and seeks to work collaboratively with learners and families in setting and meeting challenging goals.

10(t)   The teacher embraces the challenge of continuous improvement and
change.

From a thematic perspective, critical dispositions such as these from the InTASC
Standards encourage teachers to grapple continuously with the complex, interdisciplinary, and
evolving nature of knowledge; to engage regularly in critical thinking; to be aware of one's own
beliefs and values; to think about the application of knowledge to larger issues in the world; and
to be mindful of the potential impact of one's own biases on others (e.g., Ellis, Lee, & Wiley,
2009; Marx & Moss, 2011; Ros-Voseles & Moss, 2007; Thornton, 2006; Usher, 2003; Welch,
Pitts, Tenini, Kuenlen, & Wood, 2010). Such emphases seem highly congruent with the
international education paradigm and its focus on "globally competent" teachers. Consider, for
example, the following definition of "global competence" from "Global Teacher Education" (see
www.globalteacher education.org/glol-competence).

What is Global Competence?

Ask anyone what young people need to be successful in an increasingly interdependent world, and the answers are likely to be all over the proverbial map. Considerable attention has been focused recently on math and science, but that is not the concern here. This report uses the term "global competence" to describe a body of knowledge about world regions, cultures, and global issues, and the skills and dispositions to engage responsibly and effectively in a global environment.

There may be differences of emphasis; however, most who are concerned about this field describe some variation on the definition below. A globally competent student has:

- Knowledge of and curiosity about the world's history, geography, cultures, environmental and economic systems, and current international issues

- Language and cross-cultural skills to communicate effectively with people from other countries, understand multiple perspectives, and use primary sources from around the globe

- A commitment to ethical citizenship. To help students become globally competent, teachers must have the knowledge, skills, and dispositions described above, as well as:

- Knowledge of the international dimensions of their subject matter and a range of global issues

- Pedagogical skills to teach their students to analyze primary sources from around the world, appreciate multiple points of view, and recognize stereotyping

- A commitment to assisting students to become responsible citizens both of the world and of their own communities.

Note the broad nature of this framework, which includes "knowledge about world regions, cultures, and global issues, and the skills and dispositions to engage responsibly and effectively in a global environment." In short, from the standpoint of teacher competencies, it appears that the InTASC Standards – and the international education paradigm – share many principles regarding who effective teachers are and should be. At the same time, international education seeks to reorient not only the content that is delivered by such teachers, but does so for specific means and ends, in order to help teachers "delve below the surface of the 'cultural iceberg' to examine 'the much larger and less tangible aspects such as beliefs, values, assumptions, and attitudes' (Brown & Kysilka, 2002, p. 69)" (see Stachowski & Sparks, 2007, p. 129).

Assessment-Based Research of Teaching, Training, and Learning

Despite the clear recognition that knowledge, skills, and dispositions are integral to quality teachers and teaching – and the synergy between various competencies with the basic values and principles of international education – such standards raise a host of research questions, including but not limited to the following:

- How best do we assemble extant and pursue future research that will address the fundamental questions that are implicit and explicit to teacher education standards (e.g., InTASC) and in a manner that is responsive to the values and goals of international education?

- How do we address best the complexity that is inherent to the investigation of such processes (e.g., How do dispositions in teachers interact with dispositions in students to impact the type and degree of learning that actually occurs? How do knowledge, dispositions, and performances interact as mediators and moderators of teaching and learning? How do individual differences among students (e.g., attributional style, emotional regulation, life history) influence learning processes and outcomes?

- How might different venues for and approaches to learning (e.g., environmental education, place-based learning, service learning, study abroad) be aligned with the fundamental goals of international education in order to facilitate learning processes and outcomes?

- How might related calls for reform (e.g., from the internationalization of the curriculum) be productively juxtaposed and/or integrated to enhance teaching and learning?

- How do we translate our research findings into applied form in order to impact policy and practice, both nationally and internationally?

- What theoretical models and applied methods are demonstrably well-suited (e.g., reliable, ecologically valid) both to help investigate and illuminate these complex and interacting processes and outcomes, while also advancing the effectiveness and depth of international education teaching and learning (e.g., How best do we understand and measure the impact of exposure to international education congruent content on both teaching and learning? Are there particular interventions, programs, or approaches that appear especially effective in facilitating learning, growth, and awareness by teachers and students)?

- Through an international education lens in particular, what are research-based best practices as well as cutting edge approaches not only for evaluating teacher effectiveness pre- and post-education, but helping teachers develop and achieve their full potential over time (e.g., How best do we address measurable differences in teacher effectiveness in order to help all teachers have the best opportunity for development and success)?

- What other research and applied questions regarding international education teaching and learning should we seek to ask and answer in the years to come?

Various aspects of these and related questions have in fact been addressed in the literature, yielding highly intriguing findings and recommendations (e.g., Almerico et al., 2011; Jung & Rhodes, 2008; Marx & Moss, 2011; Shealy, in press; Welch, Pitts, Tenini, Kuenlen, & Wood, 2010). For example, evidence from a multi-institution study of learning processes and outcomes – the *Forum BEVI Project* (http://www.forumea.org/research-bevi-project.cfm) – suggests that the receptivity to, and acquisition of knowledge by learners is dependent not only on the quality of teachers and teaching, but an interaction between the beliefs, values, and life histories of teachers and learners. Thus, in order to account for who learns what and why, and under what

circumstances, it is necessary to take into consideration a host of variables that may be mediating and moderating learning processes and outcomes (Baltensperger et al., 2013).

Toward a Global Program of Research-to-Practice

The above case for assessment-based education inquiry and practice – along with the accompanying research questions – could readily be applied to any global movement that seeks large-scale transformation of individuals, groups, systems, and societies (e.g., conflict resolution, human rights, sustainability, religious and cultural understanding) (e.g., see Center for Green Schools, 2014; Conflict Resolution Education, 2014; Cranton, 2006; Dirkx, 1998; Interfaith Education Dialogue, 2014; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009; Peace and Justice Studies Association, 2014). That is because the *content* (e.g., the information and perspectives that are being conveyed in order to influence or change others) and *process* (e.g., how and why content is purveyed as it is) aspects of such research questions are affectively loaded from a values-based perspective. So for example, if we do not appreciate how and why teachers, trainers, and learners differ in their knowledge, dispositions, and performances, we will be ignoring very real processes that mediate the effectiveness and impact of teaching, training, and learning (Baltensperger et al., 2013). Evidence suggests that our lack of attention to such underlying processes (e.g., the fact that human beings may, by dint of their histories and contexts, be relatively disposed for or against the values of respective social transformation movements) may substantially impact the degree of learning that does and does not occur, much less the concomitant changes that should follow at the level of actions, policies, and practices around the world (e.g., Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Self, 2014; Shealy, Bhuyan, & Sternberger, 2012). Thus, if we are to teach teachers and teacher educators how to convey the principles and practices that are integral to international education and other allied movements (e.g., conflict

resolution, human rights, sustainability, religious and cultural understanding), we must first step back and appreciate that these matters are heavily value-laden, and therefore must be approached with care and sophistication at all levels, from the research we conduct to determine what does and does not "work" in the real world; to our attendant capacity for assessing and addressing the complex mediators and moderators of such learning with teachers, trainers, and learners; to the sensitivity and respect with which we understand the extant beliefs and values of the educators, students, parents, and communities whom we wish to engage (e.g., Cordiero, 2007; Cushner, 2007; Marx & Moss, 2011; Shealy, 2014; Stachowski & Sparks, 2007).

In pursuit of questions such as these, an in-depth, three-year "research-to-practice" summit series will bring together representatives from teacher education / preparation, international education, and allied educational reform movements (e.g., conflict resolution, human rights, sustainability, religious and cultural understanding) in order to 1) consider models and methods that are designed to promote learning, growth, and change in a manner that is measurable and 2) transform such understanding into programs of research that are designed to pursue questions such as those listed above. Specifically, *Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Self: Summit Series on Transformative Teaching, Training, and Learning in Research and Practice* will be held at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia, beginning March 2015 (see www.jmu.edu/summitseries). Among other goals, this summit series seeks to clarify the relationship between content (e.g., what we attempt to convey through international education and related transformative movements) and process (e.g., the complex affective, attributional, and developmental interactions that influence educational processes and outcomes). As envisioned, our specific outcomes are as follows:

1. Bring together scholars, educators, students, practitioners, and leaders from a range of transformation-oriented global movements across five thematic areas – conflict resolution, human rights, sustainability, global education, and religious and cultural understanding – in order to learn from and contribute to each other's missions, methods, goals, and activities (Goal I).

2. Develop a draft agenda for a global program of research-to-practice on the basis of summit presentations and deliberations (e.g., regarding theory, data, models, methods) (Goal II).

3. Develop a plan for furthering and monitoring progress regarding the ongoing pursuit of Goals I and II.

4. Provide an opportunity for interdisciplinary stakeholders to showcase, describe, and discuss their interests, activities, and plans.

5. Identify the means and methods by which participants may participate in and propose future activities and pursue / develop further collaboration as part of the planning and preparatory process for the next two research-to-practice summits.

6. Pursue identified scholarly, professional, and organizational venues through which the outcomes, activities, and plans of *Cultivating the Globally Sustainable Self* may be disseminated and furthered over at least the three years of this series of summits.

Ultimately, through this systematic and inclusive approach, it will become possible to develop theoretically robust and empirically grounded studies that credibly inform international education teaching, training, and learning in the real world over the short- and long-term. If you are a teacher, teacher educator, administrator, or policy maker with an interest in such matters, we invite you to join us for this summit series, and help transform the process by which we

understand and actualize the internationalization of education as a field and profession, both

locally and globally.

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