

**Abstract: The State of Teacher Training for K-12 International Education**

*for presentation on January 24, 2003*

*at conference on*

Global Challenges and U.S. Higher Education: National Needs and Policy Implications  
at Duke University

For the last two years or so I have been working, with a Title VI research grant, on *A Study of the Prospects for Internationalizing Teacher Education*. My paper shares highlights of research findings and recommendations—some of which are indented and in bold in this summary.

First, by way of background, what got me into this? In my time at the Department of Education as a program officer for the Centers and Fellowships programs, we were constantly urging grantees to strengthen linkages with Colleges of Education, but year after year the NRC reports indicated little change. Then I was involved in a three-year evaluation of the long term impact of the Title VI undergraduate international studies program<sup>0</sup> and, as its results (which said little about teacher education) were published, the press was having a field day describing the shortcomings of teacher preparation, so I wanted to learn more about why teachers might be ill-prepared to introduce their students to the factors contributing to both conflict and cooperation in today's world. In recent years several organizations have published policy papers on improving teacher education and on the need for more international perspectives in teacher education (AACTE,<sup>1</sup> ACE, AASCU, AAU, CCSSO, and others<sup>2</sup>). But what nuts and bolts need to be installed to get the desired results did not seem to have been addressed.

At the urging of my small advisory board, the project focused on the training of secondary school teachers. However many of the findings will likely be relevant for the training of teachers for all levels.

Open-ended but structured interviews with 174 people or groups—deans, faculty, student advisors, students, and a variety of senior administrators—provided data from twenty-four campuses in ten different states. Of the 24 institutions, five are private, two are liberal arts colleges, ten are comprehensive universities (with strong histories of teacher education), twelve are research universities, one is an HBCU, and at least two are Hispanic-serving. My advisors helped with formulation of the interview protocols and have been reviewing the findings and recommendations.

In addition, 65 current teachers were interviewed or completed the interview protocol as a questionnaire. Ten of them are elementary school teachers, and most of their responses are similar to the reactions of the 53 secondary and middle school teachers. Although the research was essentially exploratory, the results do point to recommendations that could improve the preparation of more effective teachers in our increasingly interconnected world; they touch on curriculum and certification issues, foreign language study, programs for study and internships abroad, faculty resources, the roles of offices of international programs, funding sources, and—most important—advising.

In the interviews, the first set of questions dealt with definitions of “internationalization”—what kinds of internationally-oriented activities, academic and extracurricular, were taking

place on that campus. Many in the teacher education field think of internationalization in terms of overseas experiences for faculty and students,<sup>3</sup> but most of the activities we discussed are actually home campus-based—and those are really the focus of this research. Details about the activities are available in the full report; two examples are inclusion of non-U.S. content in courses required for a major (80%) and use of international competence and experience as criteria in faculty hiring, tenure, and promotion (4%).

Issues related to the teacher education *curriculum* have seemed rather confusing, and fast-changing. Contrary to our expectations, for example, the interviews revealed that most prospective secondary school teachers do a liberal arts major (or an equivalent), although that is less often the case for students preparing for elementary school teaching.<sup>4</sup> A cursory review of distribution requirements for relevant majors indicated inclusion of a few international courses, such as World Geography and/or East Asian History. A significant number of interviewees in all categories felt that

**more such courses, and more comparative components in current courses, should be in the curriculum and the faculty teaching such courses, particularly at institutions with strong teacher education programs, need to give attention to the needs of prospective teachers in their courses, and should work with Education faculty to revise courses accordingly.**

Most of the Education student's coursework is in fact in the Arts and Sciences because, in addition to the content major, students planning to be teachers, like most undergraduates, take a large number of general education, or core, courses, some of which do have international or comparative modules. A few respondents told of their institution's policy to make the entire curriculum internationally "permeated." About 60% of the respondents said that at least one non-U.S. or comparative general education course is required. So

**increasing the international content of the large number of general education courses, combined with strengthened course requirements for the major, would go a long way toward exposing prospective teachers to more international content.**

Another subject in the interviews was *foreign language instruction* and requirements. Very few of the Education programs that were visited have a foreign language requirement for students planning to be secondary school teachers, in contrast to requirements for Arts and Sciences undergraduates in most of their institutions. A large proportion of the Education students I interviewed were disappointed, even angry, that they had not been able to gain more foreign language proficiency as undergraduates. Furthermore, 84% of the current teachers felt that their preparation should have included foreign language study.

**The issue of foreign language requirements in teacher training should be revisited.**

About half of the Education deans with whom the question was discussed told me that they too would like to have a foreign language requirement for their students. Why has it not happened? Mostly, it was said, because students in teacher training programs have very crowded curricula. Also, interviewees commented, foreign language departments do not have the resources (faculty or, sometimes, interest).

**Postsecondary institutions and outside funders need to give much more attention to finding solutions to the problems dogging the foreign language instruction field and should take steps to require foreign language training for prospective teachers.**

In addition to their liberal arts courses, prospective teachers must prepare for *certification*, usually taking eight or more courses in Education, along with practice teaching. From the interviews it seemed that relatively few of the required Education courses include comparative information. The faculty teaching them may have had some overseas experience, but with little incentive to revise courses as a result.

**Adding international and comparative components to these courses, and to the practice teaching experience, would be important improvements.**

How hard and fast are certification requirements, and what determines them? State legislatures may play strong roles, as do some state Boards of Education, but I also heard that Education deans have considerable latitude, that the key is accreditation, through NCATE (the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education), rather than the state bureaucracies.

**In their program reviews accrediting agencies should include requirements for international experience through coursework, foreign language study, study and internships abroad, faculty qualifications, and even internationally oriented extracurricular activities.**

Many noted the importance of the standards that are coming into play, for both subject content, with state-wide testing, and for teacher competence. Over 70% of the current teachers in my study reported that recent changes in their own certification (and re-certification) requirements do not reflect globalization, but about 65% did find that changes in subject standards do reflect increasing globalization, requiring them to revise courses, and acquire the information to do so.

A related topic under the curriculum heading is *study abroad*, which could be an important cross-cultural experience for the prospective teacher. Current study abroad participation rates for Education students seem to be close to zero on most campuses, and many interviewees wanted more. Several factors contribute to low participation by Education students, among them a crowded curriculum, an apparent lack of overseas programs that are appropriate and creditable, sufficient advance planning, financial aid, and advisors with undeveloped appreciation for the benefits of experiencing other cultures. *Internships or practice teaching overseas* seem almost as rare.

**Better integration of study and internships abroad in teacher training programs needs to be explored.**

However because so many students are unable to spend time abroad (for a host of other reasons) the focus of this study was on the domestic curriculum for prospective teachers.

To strengthen international components of the curriculum (Arts and Sciences, and Education), nearly all of the people asked urged more *faculty development* – which is consistent with findings of the study evaluating the Title VI Undergraduate International Studies program.<sup>5</sup> More than 90% of those asked, in both Education and Arts and Sciences, liked the idea of travel abroad to work on new courses or revisions. Interestingly, no Education faculty interviewees cited previous foreign travel for course revision.

**Encouragement of foreign travel – for research, conferences, seminars, visiting lectureships, program development and supervision, consulting, or course revision – would likely engender course revisions and less insular attitudes among any faculty, and particularly those in Education.**

Nearly all who responded to questions on faculty workshops liked the idea of curriculum development workshops for Arts and Science and Education faculty working together on topics of mutual interest. Several people noted a current gap in communication between Arts and Sciences and Education faculty, but anticipated that

**well-prepared “internationalizing” faculty workshops could offer useful bridges.**

Actually, the idea of asking this question came from a grantee under Title II of the Higher Education Act, on Teacher Quality Enhancement,<sup>6</sup> one of whose principal objectives is to foster better communication between faculty in Arts and Sciences and in Education. Similarly, faculty development is an activity encouraged under Title III (and Title VI!); many Title III institutions have important teacher training programs.

**Although both Title II and Title III currently have many eligibility conditions, “internationalizing” them in the reauthorization process should be considered.**

Another research finding was that the work and potential of universities’ *offices for international programs* (OIPs) are not always fully understood throughout the university. While OIP staffs cited many responsibilities, relatively few services were mentioned by Education interviewees. The roles of these offices are constantly evolving on many campuses;

**my report will recommend that the OIP directors make their services and activities better known throughout their institutions, and particularly in Education.**

An aspect of the undergraduate experience that has long interested me is the potential *role of student advising* in the internationalization process. For this study, more than 80% of those who were asked said that student advising needs improvement with respect to the international opportunities and needs for prospective teachers. Most of the advising systems discussed do fit the National Academic Advising Association (NACADA) model of a professional advising center for “undeclared” undergraduates followed by faculty advising for students in the major.<sup>7</sup> However, the advising needed for prospective teachers is more complicated than for most liberal arts majors. Students usually apply to the university for general admission and only subsequently to Education, with the result that their pre-major academic advising, if any, is done by the advising staff in Arts and Sciences. At some universities the advising by Education staff is limited to certification preparation, while at others, Education students, once accepted for a teacher education program, receive all of their advising in Education.

How do advisors – faculty or professional, Arts and Sciences or Education – get the information they need to share with their advisees? One person simply responded “haphazardly.” Meetings were the most frequently cited source, followed closely by e-mail, then newsletters, and memos. Workshops were cited by only 28% of the respondents to this question, but several said they wished there were some – or more.

**Both faculty and staff should be evaluated for their advising work.**

It was clear on all campuses in my survey that a number of internationally-oriented courses are offered, and most provide serious foreign language instruction. To get these into the training of teachers, my report will recommend particularly that

**the various advisors impacting students' first two undergraduate years have additional information and training *not only* about student opportunities for international exposure, *but also* that advisors be imbued, through special training programs, with the importance of learning about the wider world as they prepare students for their eventual roles as teachers.**

While state certification requirements are relevant considerations, many said that with careful planning and advising the prospective teacher can work language training and study abroad into his or her study plan along with internationally oriented courses and extracurricular activities.

**Added training, including workshops about international options, was suggested to encourage advisors to work this out.**

When talking about the mechanics of the advising process, several people mentioned an advisor's checklist, but noted that it did not include international activities – so

**advisors' handbooks and checklists should include all international options.**

The interview question about mentoring for student teachers, described as a critical element in the preparation of “globalized” teachers,<sup>8</sup> did not get overwhelming response (to many it was a new idea), which leads to another advising recommendation,

**that Schools of Education assure that criteria for selecting teacher mentors include international interest, and experience with applying it in the classroom.**

Another category of advising that my research found to be insufficiently explored is career preparation. How many students in Arts and Sciences are aware that teaching, even teaching overseas, might be a rewarding career for them? Of the current teachers who were surveyed nearly half felt that more attention should have been given to their career advising and preparation; many who were Arts and Sciences majors reported no exposure to the possibilities of a teaching career when they were undergraduates.

**Exposing Arts and Sciences undergraduates with international interests to the possibilities of teaching careers is another issue that needs attention.**

A pragmatic set of questions asked how internationalizing efforts have and might be funded. For past *funding*, few respondents cited Title VI or any other outside sources; most internationalizing initiatives were thought to have been funded internally. And for the future? In the Education category no interviewee cited Title VI and only two mentioned other government possibilities. For Arts and Sciences less than half of the 27 respondents on this question appeared to be aware of Title VI possibilities. Here seems to be another challenge for the Department of Education, and for universities' offices of international programs that might initiate activities needing outside support.

**Outside funders need to make a greater effort to publicize their resources; before doing so, their own staffs should review their expectations, requirements (written and unwritten), and the scope of their assistance to potential applicants to assure flexibility, encouragement, and responsiveness to internationalizing initiatives.**

I have been asked whether a model internationally-competent teacher training program exists. Many of the programs that I visited have initiated effective internationalizing activities, but readily note that more is needed. The stronger ones that come to mind are at comprehensive universities and liberal arts colleges, rather than at the research universities that have received most of the Title VI funding. An ideal program is still a dream; much work on this is needed.

The full list of my recommendations is directed to state governments, accrediting agencies, professional associations, institutions of higher education generally, schools, colleges, and departments of Education, future researchers, and—outside funders.

A more detailed version of this presentation, including the full list of proposed recommendations, will be found on the conference website and eventually included in the volume for this conference. An even longer copy of the report, with attachments such as the interview protocols, will be available from the author.

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<sup>0</sup> Ann I. Schneider and Barbara B. Burn, *Federal Funding for International Studies: Does It Help? Does It Matter? A Study of the Long-Term Impacts of Federal Funding on International Studies and Foreign Language Programs* (Amherst, MA: International Programs Office, University of Massachusetts, 1999).

<sup>1</sup> American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, *Guidelines for International Teacher Education* (Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 1989).

<sup>2</sup> American Council on Education, *To Touch the Future: Transforming the Way Teachers Are Taught* (Washington, DC: American Council on Education, 1999) and Council of Chief State School Officers, "International Dimensions of Education: Position Paper and Recommendations for Action," CCSSO website ([www.ccsso.org/intlpol.html](http://www.ccsso.org/intlpol.html)) accessed October 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Sarah M. Pickert, "Changing Views about International Education in American Teacher Education Programs" (Washington, DC: ERIC Document No. ED460092, 2001).

<sup>4</sup> Council of Chief State School Officers, *Key State Education Policies on K-12 Education: 2000* (Washington, DC: Council of Chief State School Officers, 2000), 37-40.

<sup>5</sup> Schneider and Burn, *Federal Funding*, 17.

<sup>6</sup> James Middleton, College of Education, Arizona State University, telephone interview by author, November 16, 2000.

<sup>7</sup> Roberta Flaherty, Executive Director, NACADA, interview by author, Manhattan, KS, September 26, 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Merry M. Merrifield, "Institutionalizing Cross-Cultural Experiences and International Expertise in Teacher Education: The Development and Potential of a Global Education PDS Network," *Journal of Teacher Education*, no. 1 (January-February 1995), 22.

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