



Designing global futures: A mixed methods study to develop and validate the teaching for global readiness scale



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HIGHLIGHTS

- Instructional practices that promote global readiness were examined.
- Four dimensions identified: situated practice, integrated global learning, critical literacy, and transactional experiences.
- End product was the Teaching for Global Readiness scale with 19 items.
- Provides empirical foundation for evidence-based theories, policies, and practices for global readiness education.

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ABSTRACT

In response to globalization, leaders have called for more global education in K-12 schools. This study utilized a sequential exploratory mixed methods design to validate the construct teaching for global readiness. After exploratory qualitative analysis of 24 expert teacher interviews, an instrument was developed and administered to K-12 U.S. classroom teachers. Based on EFA and CFA, four factors were interpreted as: situated practice, integrated global learning, critical literacy instruction, and transactional experiences. The end product was a measurement model and scale of teacher practices related to global readiness instruction.

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1. Introduction

Globalization has become a major issue in the field of education (e.g., Darling-Hammond, 2010; Delores et al., 1996; Stewart, 2012). Globalization has been associated with a flattened world economy (Friedman, 2006), higher global migration (Suarez-Orozco, 2001), and changing demands on the workforce (Levy & Murnane, 2007). In response to globalization, education leaders have called for more global education in U.S. K-12 schools (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Reimers, 2009). In 2012, the United States Department of Education (USDOE) issued a report entitled *Succeeding Globally through International Education and Engagement* that included the following goal: “Increase the global competencies of all U.S. students, including those from traditionally disadvantaged groups” (p. 5). This means that in addition to graduating college, career, and civic ready, all students should graduate “global ready.” The report defined *global competencies* as “21st century skills applied to the

world” (USDOE, 2012, p. 5). Twenty-first century skills include collaboration, communication, and problem solving (*Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2014*), so applied to the world this would mean cross-cultural collaboration, cross-cultural communication, and solving global problems. Proponents believe that comprehensive global education may help students access the global job market and solve global social issues. Reaching this goal requires instruction focused on global readiness for all K-12 students.

The public seems to agree. According to a report by the Association of International Educators, over 90% of Americans believe that global education is a key to preparing children for success in the 21st century (NAFSA, 2003). However, some business leaders believe U.S. schools are not producing enough global ready graduates (Committee for Economic Development, 2006; Stewart, 2012). Since the turn of the century, concern for the global readiness of U.S. graduates has increased (e.g., National Governors Association & Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010).

To address the need for global education, internationalizing preservice teacher education has become a growing focal point in teaching and research (e.g., Cushner, 2012; Merryfield, 2000; Zhao,

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2010). Much of the literature focuses on increasing global competence of preservice teachers. However, little is known about teaching practices that lead to global readiness at the K-12 level (Cushner, 2012). Based on a synthesis of the literature, *global readiness* refers to *global citizenship with the multiliteracies necessary in the 21st century to participate, collaborate, and work in a global society*.

In October of 2014, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) announced the Framework for Global Education. The framework, written by VIF International (formerly, Visiting International Faculty), sets standards for global ready teaching and learning in every subject for every grade K-12. While the P21 framework is conceptually sound, it is not empirically tested. This study aims to fill the gap in the research by offering an empirically-tested framework for teaching for global readiness.

The purpose of this study was two-fold. The primary purpose was to validate the construct of teaching for global readiness applied to the U.S. K-12 schooling context. The theoretical underpinnings for this study were based on sociocultural teaching and learning theories, and therefore teaching and learning are viewed as particularized to the sociocultural context, in this case the U.S. The secondary purpose was to develop a scale that collects an array of data on teaching practices that promote students' global readiness. The exploratory sequential mixed methods design allowed the researcher to examine a small sample qualitatively and then to determine whether the qualitative findings generalized to a large sample. The overarching question for this study was:

- How can we operationalize teaching for global readiness?

The sub-questions were:

- What did global education experts believe were the components of teaching for global readiness at the K-12 level? (QUAL)
- What are the factors of the construct teaching for global readiness? (quan)
- To what extent did the quantitative results confirm the qualitative findings? (MM)

2. Review of relevant literature

Much of the empirical literature on global education is from higher education or business fields on why global education is imperative in the 21st century. International researchers assert that global education is needed because globalization has flattened the world economy, the demands on the workforce are changing, global migration is higher than in the past, and the climate is changing (Hansen, 2010; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Walsh, 2016). Comprehensive global education may help students respond to the global changes in the job market and global social issues. In this section I will first synthesize the research on the changing job market and then the globalization of social issues.

In the past, education focused on reading, writing, and arithmetic—specifically reading print texts, writing that was formal and academic, and calculating arithmetic—in order to prepare students for work in an industrialized society. However, international research indicates that work life has changed (Gardner, 2009; Levy & Murnane, 2007; Schleicher, 2015; Walsh, 2016). Work life in the 21st century for the middle class job market includes gathering and analyzing information, communicating using technology, and solving problems (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, Castek, & Henry, 2013; Gardner, 2009; New London Group, 1996). 21st century work in the knowledge industry includes being able to think creatively and critically as well as communicate and collaborate interculturally

(Deardorff, 2006; New London Group, 1996; Schleicher, 2015). In addition, research has demonstrated that global economic issues have resulted in increased migration across borders in search of employment (Walsh, 2016). Increased global migration raises students' chances of working with diverse others, calling for the relevant skills to do so effectively.

Global education may increase students' social networks. Students' network of global connections established in school may be useful for conducting international business in the future (Bremer, 2006). Through these increased networks, collaborations hold the potential to teach students about culture. Students may gain international perspectives, deeper appreciation of other countries and cultures, and knowledge of diverse societies' contributions (Bremer, 2006; Hadis, 2005; Sussmuth, 2007; Van Hoof & Verbeeten, 2005). Empirical studies on cross-cultural collaborations in school have found ethnocentrism is reduced (Union & Green, 2013), stereotypes are reduced, and respect for other cultures is increased (Besnoy, Maddin, Eisenhardt, & Steele, 2015). Not only do students have the potential to learn about other cultures, they can learn about their own culture as well (Myers & Eberfors, 2010; Smiles, 2001). When students observe other cultures, they may see other ways of knowing and doing. Comparison and contrast can help students identify their own cultural beliefs, values, and customs. Global education holds promise to promote important interpersonal skills, such as cross-cultural communication and collaboration (Akande & Slawson, 2000; Lindsay & Davis, 2013; Sussmuth, 2007) as well as intrapersonal skills, such as identity clarification (Banks, 2008; Hull, Stornaiuolo, & Sahni, 2010).

Challenges faced locally or nationally often go beyond borders and impact diverse groups of people. Likewise, international issues can have serious effects on local communities (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; New London Group, 1996; Noddings, 2005). According to the National Academy of Engineering (2015), today's global challenges include ending extreme poverty, providing sustainable green energy, increasing fair global trade, reducing epidemics, and promoting peace and social cohesion. Research suggests that these global challenges require citizens to "make informed judgments by accessing accurate information, discerning the nuances of multiple points of view, and communicating their own perspectives to affect change" (Orozco-Domoe, 2015, p. 61). Moreover, the way that the global citizenry of the 21st century advocates for desired civic actions may require the use of communication technology and other tools that did not exist even a few years ago or that have yet to be imagined (Leu et al., 2013; New London Group, 1996; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2014). To solve the global issues of today, students may need to develop the same skills described above for today's workforce (Gardner, 2009). Future graduates may need to be both globally competent and multiliterate in order to be successful as they use technology to work and interact with culturally and geographically diverse people (New London Group, 1996; West, 2010). Following this line of reasoning, global citizenship and multiliteracies combine to form the construct global readiness.

Two empirical studies have developed and validated a construct related to global readiness. Deardorff (2006) utilized a qualitative Delta method to define and validate the construct of international competence. Morais and Ogden (2011) utilized quantitative methods to develop and test the factors of global citizenship. Both of these studies were intended to measure the construct with undergraduate students. While Deardorff's model is frequently cited in higher education, Morais and Ogden's scale is beginning to be utilized in K-12 research because of its apparent relevance to people of all ages. However, neither of these studies addressed teaching. The next section will describe the teaching theories that framed the study.

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