

# **FOSTERING TEACHERS' GLOBAL COMPETENCIES: BRIDGING UTOPIAN EXPECTATIONS FOR INTERNATIONALIZATION THROUGH EXCHANGE**

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## **Abstract**

Fostering international mindedness in teachers through their preparation and continuing education leads to innovations in teacher education related to exchange programs (Cushner, 2012) and curricular adoptions and adaptations (Tudball, 2012). This in turn supports the development of both teacher educators and teachers as change agents. Yet, without investments of resources to prioritize such work in teacher preparation and professional development programs, the impetus to support teachers' development of how teacher educators can develop a more international mindset is lacking. This paper seeks to understand how the opportunity for exchange resulted in a slew of activities by participants to enhance their own teaching and research in an effort to build a more internationalized education program.

**Keywords:** internationalization; teacher education; exchange; global mindedness

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## **Introduction**

In the preparation of teachers, a steady, if not growing push, exists to ensure teachers are culturally competent and globally minded (Cushner, McClelland & Safford, 2009). In certain contexts, such expectations are formalized, making their way into standards of practice, and benchmarks for accreditation (ACTFL, 2014). The current global climate further extenuates these needs and the marked inequity in education requires teachers to be willing to be leaders, if not agents of change in their classrooms, schools and communities. This special issue speaks to influential role teachers could and do play in

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their communities, and we argue that the *preparation of teachers* is critical to ensure teachers feel confident and able to engage in transformative practices. Furthermore, if we agree that international mindedness is a form of transformative thinking, teacher educators must actively foster such thinking in their pedagogy with teacher candidates.

Our experience as teacher educators shows us that while the rhetoric of global engagement and international mindedness is encouraged, teacher educators have limited opportunities to engage in their own transformative experiences to translate to their practice. Teacher educators might engage in such global thinking if they are predisposed to such ideas, but professional practices for teacher educators is slim to absent. The role of teachers in fostering global competence, to engage themselves as global change agents, is critical, and yet the limitations supporting teachers to develop this competence themselves are vast. The reasons for this are diverse. The culture of teacher education has tended to be local, rooted in neighborhood schools, rather than global ideals oftentimes because teacher education programs focus on local and/or state requirements for certification. Additionally, course requirements and student teaching often fill so much of a pre-service teacher's schedule typically leaving little to no room left for study abroad, language study or internationally-focused electives (Longview, 2008). Nor are teacher candidates usually rewarded in the job market for having spent their own resources on international opportunities, unlike certain other fields. The motivation then to engage in such activities could be severely curtailed.

Noting these challenges, as long-time co-collaborators, we sought out funding to support teacher educators' exchanges with the goal to encourage bilateral cooperation on curriculum, research and teaching. Successful in that endeavor, we have started to systematically study how the program, (Open GATE - Global Awareness in Teacher Education) provided opportunities for teacher educators and novice scholars to engage in an international experience in an effort to see how it might affect their personal and professional identities. Our hope was that if we could support current and future teacher educators, in an international experience, we might be able to influence their ability to create more meaningful experiences for their students as agents of change themselves. This project drew upon of a small cadre of participants and their experiences in the partner countries (Norway and the United States). Our premise is that teacher educators are critical to empower teachers to feel confident to take risks and support innovative change in their contexts, it is all the more important for teacher educators to promote international mindedness in teacher candidates. If teacher educators have a better understanding of their own international mindedness, they can subsequently foster those dispositions in their students.

Latent in our argument is that in this complex global environment, with increasing hostilities and nationalist rhetoric, being an agent of positive change, requires teachers to understand global realities, value cultural differences, and support diverse student bodies. While we would not deign to determine what actions, per se, teachers ought to take, we strongly believe that fostering the ability for teachers to think about international mindedness, speaks to a type of change that we would encourage teacher educators to nurture themselves. Unfortunately, if teacher educators are not supported in these efforts, the work with teachers ends before it begins.

Our goals for the grant included sending teacher educators and advanced doctoral students to the other country for 2-4 weeks to engage with peers at the host institution. While our overarching goals focused on allowing for a global experience to be transformative for participants, we also were curious to see what other ways the exchange

would unfold. The analysis offers insights into the development of research partnerships between young scholars; systematic processes of collaboration between peer groups of students and faculty; role of stakeholders on critical forms of research to facilitate educational transformation; outlets for faculty exchange of curricula, pedagogy and best practices in teacher education; and finally, the capacity of early career scholars in teacher education to develop and disseminate research of consequence. The paper will help to answer questions on how systems can support teachers to be globally engaged and transformative in their teaching, as well as to better understand how those involved in teacher education, funders, schools of education and faculty, can work together effectively to showcase practical support to what is otherwise seen as utopian expectations of promoting global engagement and international mindedness in teacher education.

### **Background and Context**

The failure of our schools to respond to the growing international influences is a cyclical process. Students who do not develop global competence throughout their education grow up to be teachers who are not equipped to foster global competence in a new generation of students. In the US, a 2009 survey by the Harvard Graduate School of Education found that 10% of school principals reported no opportunity at their school for students to develop global competency, and 46% reported little opportunity for them to develop these skills (Reimers, 2009). Teachers in the same survey overwhelmingly reported that global competency development was not a priority in their schools. Additionally, only one in four principals “reported adequate opportunities for teacher professional development in global competency, and only one in five reported partnerships with universities or other organizations to support the development of global skills in their schools” (Reimers, 2009, n.p.). Unfortunately, we speak to the rhetoric of global competence, but oftentimes partnerships between teacher education institutions, schools, and students are unable to think creatively about building the capacity for people to live, work and engage actively in an increasingly global world.

These concerns around building teacher candidates' experiences around internationalization have percolated literature from around the world (Tudball, 2012, Shaklee & Baily, 2012, Merryfield, 2000, and Cushner, 2012). Within teacher preparation programs, teacher educators have sought to develop curricula that promote international mindedness in their coursework and assignments (Fox, 2012), as well as to promote international student teaching as a vehicle to promote internationalization among students (Chacko & Lin, 2015). Programs that support overseas teaching, cultural immersion and other forms of exchange have limited public funding in the United States especially, but there are a few sources of private funding to support such efforts (Quezada & Cordeiro, 2016). Competition for those funds is relatively fierce with far more demand than supply. In the Norwegian context the level of research expertise in teacher education varies from program to program (Gunnes & Rørstad, 2015), with considerable disparity in terms of framework conditions, research expertise, publishing, international cooperation and relevance to professional practice. Funding programs are also relatively competitive with the ability to be successful in acquiring funds unpredictable. These programs require not only national cooperation in research, but international research cooperation as well. This is in part due to the relatively short research traditions in teacher education institutions in Norway. In order for teacher education institutions to carry out high-quality research, they must increase their research expertise and international networks.

As the Longview Foundation (2008) described, “the critical role of teachers in internationalizing...education has never been clearer, yet today’s educators rarely begin their careers with the deep knowledge and robust skills necessary to bring the world into their classrooms” (p. 3). Globally competent teachers are usually able to demonstrate certain specific characteristics, which are then evident in their teaching. These characteristics include: the ability to investigate the world beyond their immediate environment, framing significant problems and conducting well-crafted and age-appropriate research, recognize perspectives both of others’ and their own, articulating and explaining such perspectives respectfully, communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences, bridging geographic, linguistic, ideological, and cultural barriers and take action to improve conditions, viewing themselves as players in the world and participating reflectively (Global Teacher Education, 2016).

Unfortunately, a lack of resources is often one of the most critical challenges to build global competencies in spite of the fact that many best practices encourage global engagement and interactions as positive ways to support internationalism (Schneider, 2003, Green, Olson & Hill, 2005; Olsen, 2008). Internationalization requires new pedagogies, which could include experiential, service and collaborative learning and requires calls for a model of systemic change (Reigeluth, 1993; Duffy, 2009), emphasizing the necessity to envision reform as a system wide priority. Recently, Wassell, Kerrigan and Hawrylak (2018) call for more studies that seek to understand how institutions are disrupting the deficit views that exist in education, especially as it pertains to increasingly diverse student populations. They ask, “how can we (work...) intentionally to prepare a corps of agentic future teachers, that frame their work in cultural responsiveness and social justice, rather than simply being reactive to the changes of in the student population?” (p. 231). This question, and this overarching sense of what it means to be an agent of change, an agentic teacher, or a transformative teacher, requires a better understanding of all the forces that prepare teachers, including teacher educators. The next section focuses on key literature that speaks to the need to include teacher educators in global competency development, the overall influence of teacher educators as change agents, and the ways in which the US and Norway are addressing these issues.

### **Perspectives on Internationalization of Education**

The key ideas that are grounded both in the project and this paper center around how we can infuse a more international mindset into education by influencing teacher education and furthermore how such changes might be grounded in the context of current practices to support teacher candidates to become more internationalized. These two areas have robust literature that provides both empirical knowledge as well as a theoretical foundation to undergird the importance of internationalizing education from the earliest years, to the highest degree programs available. So, how does one build an international teacher education program? Schneider (2003) proposed a number of recommendations that cut across many aspects of pre-service teachers’ academic experience. These include:

1. Reviewing and assessing the full range of campus resources for international exposure, and their accessibility, particularly for students in teacher education programs;
2. Providing training on international needs and students’ options for both faculty and professional advisers;

3. Fostering development of internationally oriented curriculum, through individual faculty grants, through workshops for Education faculty (together); and
4. Reviewing policy and practice for the integration of study abroad in the curriculum, with respect to both general education and major field requirements.

Similarly, the American Council on Education (ACE) has argued for a comprehensive approach to internationalization, which involves infusing an international or intercultural dimension into the teaching, learning, research, and service functions of higher education (Green, Olson & Hill, 2005, p. v). Olsen (2008) summarized recommendations from the range of studies and programs ACE has conducted, including:

1. Combinations of well-crafted and supported faculty development options
2. Faculty ownership, choice and support
3. Faculty activities integrated with other internationalization strategies
4. Strong sustained leadership combined with a constantly widening circle of engaged faculty
5. Workshops on methods for infusing international content into the curriculum.

In Norway the importance of internationalization in teacher education has become a key issue in the government's recent *National Strategy for Quality and Cooperation in Teacher Education* (Norwegian Ministry of Education and Research, 2018). This National Strategy along with several other policy documents and reforms aim to support the government's ambition to permanently strengthen the Norwegian teaching profession. The impact of teacher education on the teaching profession has been highlighted in several policy documents, in particular in the strategy *Promotion of the Status and Quality of Teachers*.<sup>2</sup> The government has aimed to address the major challenges in this area through improvement of the institutional structure, elevation of primary and lower secondary teacher education to a master degree level, large investments in a robust national system for continuing education, introduction of more rigorous entry requirements for teacher education programs for both the primary and the secondary level. The aim of this national strategy is to lay the basis for attractive teacher education programs of high quality in which research and internationalization are key components. This requires that study programs for teachers must be perceived to be academically challenging and rewarding by both staff and student-teachers.

Internationalizing teacher education has ripple effects across the lifespan of an individual. From childhood to retirement and beyond, people who are exposed to global ideas and who are interculturally competent will be able to navigate the changing landscape of the world in more positive and beneficial ways. One of the best places to start is with those who currently and in the near future prepare teachers. To internationalize teacher education, we need to ensure that faculty have had the opportunity and exhibit the willingness to be international citizens themselves. Shaklee (2012) asks

What have (teacher educators) done in their educational programs or extracurricular experiences that indicate they are people of the world? Are they multilingual? Have they studied or worked abroad? Have they done

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<sup>22</sup> For more information see <https://www.regjeringen.no/en/topics/education/innsikt/larerloftet/id2008159/>

research in international settings? Have they done research or had sustained experiences in settings with students of significantly different cultural backgrounds? Do they exhibit knowledge of the world research related to their areas of expertise (e.g. literacy, mathematics, foundations, history, science...)? Do they have ideas, resources or experiences that would engage teacher education candidates in international venues whether online or face-to-face? Do they demonstrate well-developed intercultural communication skills? (p. 245)

These questions from Shaklee are clearly important in understanding the internationalization of teacher education. Williams (2018) recently found that even teacher educators who lead international experiences for their students, are exposed to transformative ideas as it relates to both their “professional and personal and professional learnings and identities” (p. 10). Furthermore, Williams (2018) argues that teacher educators valued their opportunities to learn through study abroad experiences, which provided a stronger foundation for their own teaching, and challenged their own thinking of how to teach in contexts that were very different from their own. Siczek and Engel (2019) cite the work of Merry Merryfield (2000), pointing out that teacher educators who have experienced life outside of the mainstream societal categories of race, ethnicity, social class, language, or national belonging are more often than not more successful at building global perspectives into education. Furthermore, Duckworth and Maxwell (2014) argue that any form of social justice focused curriculum requires more effective preparation of mentors if they are truly going to focus on larger transformative actions of change. In both the United States and Norway, increasingly significant rhetoric on the influence of globalization and the importance of intercultural communication is growing. Unfortunately, it has been clear for some time, too little attention has been given to the question of how to make the curriculum more reflective of international dimensions, while simultaneously ensuring that we have more internationally competent teachers.

Chacko and Lin (2015) find that the focus on international student teaching still faces many challenges. They document that teachers spend less time teaching while they are abroad, the level of cross-cultural awareness is still limited, and any greater engagement with the local community and in the local culture is not something that many teacher candidates make a lot of effort on while they are overseas. Chacko and Lin (2015) argue that teacher education programs need to do a more effective job in overseeing these efforts – but for the most part, while these can be excellent opportunities for the individual, they do not result in the sort of transformation teacher educators are hoping their students will discover.

Linking this back to teacher educators, Kopish (2017) finds that teacher educators who try to undertake this work must be “gritty, reflective practitioners” (p. 43), themselves. This is because students exhibit ambivalence or resistance to conversations that address critical global issues, and as such, teacher educators, must be willing to scaffold student learning to engage in greater willingness to examine issues of “status and position, challenge relational hierarchies and confront privilege” (p. 43). For teachers to be change agents, teacher educators turn to social action projects (Lash & Kroeger, 2018), to support teachers to see themselves as agents of change, in an effort to “recognize the power in schools...as addressable...(and understand) the necessity of moral action in their teaching” (Lash & Kroeger, 2018, p. 692). Others seek to provide educators company at the ‘edge’ of this complicated work (Berger, 2004). In other efforts, some teacher educators use equity

audits (View et al, 2016), engage their students in teacher research (Stribling, 2012), or provide transformative experiential activities across a longer period of time (Baily, Stribling & McGowan, 2014) to seek more lasting and transformative ways to work with teachers.

Working in two countries with relatively strong teacher education programs, we found a need to be continuously innovative to ensure teacher educators are committed to equitable learning opportunities in constantly evolving and oftentimes, challenging classroom environments. If schools are to become more global, teachers within those schools must have the knowledge and skills to engage in globally-oriented education. Despite some uneven starts to internationalizing teacher preparation programs, research shows that they are still among the least international programs in both US and Norwegian college and university campuses (Longview, 2008; Senter for Internasjonalisering Av Utdanning, 2016).

In both contexts, recommendations are a start but they are often implemented to a limited degree and relatively piecemeal – i.e., as an additional course or as an added international experience, true internationalization is systematic and requires holistic curriculum transformation and opportunities for exchanges such as those proposed in this project (Green & Schoenberg, 2006; Olson, Green, & Hill, 2006; Johnston & Spalding, 1997; Mansilla & Jackson, 2013; Longview, 2008). True internationalization is not as easy as creating a course or inserting readings or assignments into existing courses (Olsen, 2008). True internationalization requires new pedagogies, which could include experiential, service and collaborative learning, all of which were part of the objectives of the project proposal (Olsen, 2008). This article seeks to provide a systematic look at the ways in which two advocates of internationalization of teacher education worked with colleagues and students as well as their institutions to influence more structural efforts to enhance internationalization of teacher education.

### **Modes of Inquiry**

This paper utilizes a critical constructivist perspective, in an effort to understand the meanings generated by this effort for individuals involved. Both researchers would consider themselves critical feminist researchers, but for this study, we understand that the very nature of knowledge creation stems from our understanding of how the goals of our program were met by those participants who were involved in the implementation of the program. The design for this study is an illustrative case study, where this single case, (Open GATE) provides an opportunity for us to study this project from multiple perspectives, including “analytically, holistically, hermeneutically, (and) culturally” (Stake 1995, p. 443). The focus on how this particular case allows us to recognize the case itself as important and allows us to note what it reveals, as the “specificity of focus makes it a...good design for practical problems, for questions, situations, or puzzling occurrences arising from every day practice” (Merriam, 1998, p. 29).

Open GATE is housed in two institutions where both institutions sought to recognize that internationalization/global education is vital to both realizing that vision and opening up opportunities for students. Further, the mandate for all programs to increase their emphasis in reaching internationalization goals was seen as a foundation for this project. The two principal investigators (PIs) for this program sought to align these principles with the call for proposals from the Norwegian Center for International Cooperation in Education (SIU).

Thus, the Open GATE project aims towards contributing to meaningful internationalization, which requires new pedagogies that include experiential, service and

collaborative learning. This is to be achieved through the various exchanges between all partners, including the academic institutions as well as network partners, which includes local schools. Internationalizing teacher education is most effectively done when global awareness and developing international understanding and perspectives are built into the full fabric of educator preparation. The goals of the project are to internationalize and enhance teacher education at multiple levels, centered on building strong collaborations across novice, advanced and experienced researchers and practitioners.

Under the auspices of the grant we have proposed the following activities to span four years:

1. Open GATE Residencies - Designed for graduate students at the MA and Ph.D. levels, these 4-week residencies will partner students at the two institutions with students with similar research interests to spend 4 weeks in each country to develop research questions, explore methodologies and actively engage in data collection, analysis and dissemination of findings on topics of common interest that cut across the two contexts.
2. Open GATE Fellowships - Designed for early career faculty to enhance their teaching credentials across global contexts of education, faculty will apply to this program to better understand how they can internationalize their curriculum in teacher education.
3. Open GATE Apprenticeships - Practicing teachers and administrators will also participate in these exchanges to spend time at the universities in the other country and in schools with other practitioners. Research capacity and teaching opportunities in the two countries will allow for a stronger understanding of what the strengths of the two systems are. US educators are aware of the strengths of the Scandinavian school systems with the commitment to whole child development. Simultaneously Norwegian educators are cognizant of the long-term experiences US educators have with diversity in the classroom, something which is relatively more recent in the Scandinavian countries.
4. Curriculum development - Both programs have a significant commitment to social justice and international education. This project will also comprise of the development of one collaborative course between the PIs that uses distance education tools, online learning platforms, guest lectures, and podcasts to expose students to new ways of teaching across countries, and to also promote wider dialogue on social justice issues in education.
5. Research dissemination - This project will support concurrent research dissemination opportunities where Open GATE participants will work collaboratively to each make one teaching presentation at the other university, make one conference presentation and write one collaborative article with a colleague from the other university. This will be a requirement of the program and lead faculty at both universities will host writing workshops and mentor students to ensure the success of this aspect of the project.

Participants were selected to the Open GATE program through an application process where they provided a statement of purpose, a brief research agenda and a curriculum vitae. Faculty at the host institution selected participants based on these three documents, in an effort to ensure goodness of fit and parallel faculty and students who shared similar interests. Upon selection, participants were introduced to their host, and were provided very open guidelines for their fellowship. Besides logistical instructions, the motto for the PIs was mostly for fellows to go out and learn and share and see what might come from the experience. While we had specific goals for the project, the participants were given flexibility and freedom to determine what their own goals were and how they might meet them. It was this flexibility that provides a foundation for us to conduct a more systematic study of the data, to determine how the experiences of the participants might align or not align with the goals we had envisioned for the program.

As of this midpoint, nine graduate students and three faculty members have traveled back and forth between the two institutions. Data collected for this study is primarily detailed reports provided six weeks post-exchange, as well as application materials, and follow up informal conversations about goals, outcomes and experiences. All participants have given permission for the use of their information in this paper though we have maintained their anonymity by not using their names for the purposes of discussion in this paper<sup>3</sup>.

Through the data analysis process, we sought to uncover examples themes that connected back to our central goals for the program. While the participants were never provided with explicit instructions on these goals, our hope was that through engagement, these goals would naturally become evident in the work completed by participants. We have selected three different participants, using their final reports and reflections to highlight how they experienced their participation, which then allowed us to see how these goals were realized in the actual lived experiences of our fellows. This article highlights three goals and the ways in which participants experienced what we had hoped to accomplish through this program. The three goals explored here are to support the capacity of early career scholars to develop and disseminate research of consequence, understand the role of stakeholders on critical forms of research to facilitate educational transformation, and the systematic process of collaborations.

### **Goal 1 - Capacity of early career scholars to develop and disseminate research of consequence**

*The field of international education is relatively small, especially for people working on regions of the world with limited access and information. South Sudan is one of those countries, and as such, Participants A and B, met prior to their selection for the Open GATE program. Subsequently, they were selected to work more closely together because of their prior relationship and involvement in the two institutions involved in this project. The following excerpts from A's journal of activities highlight the trajectory of their ability to develop and disseminate research of consequence in their field.*

**Day 1** - Upon arrival for the first full day at the office, Participant B and I began to work on our article by going through the 2015 South Sudan First National Curriculum...Participant B and I also decided to put together proposals for a

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<sup>3</sup> Because they would recognize their contributions, we have chosen not to give them pseudonyms, as that seemed as an assumption of names they might or might not appreciate.

UNICEF Think Piece Series. The UNICEF Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) Regional Office is commissioning think pieces to improve the quality of education in the region. We decided to submit two proposals.

**Day 4** - I attended the last panel of the Norwegian Council for Africa 50th Anniversary program. It was a two-person panel and the scholar from ABC College impressed me with his comments on South Sudan.

**Day 9** - Participant B and I attended the 20-year anniversary event for the Master in Multicultural and International Education program...Former students attended and there were presenters from around the world...I appreciated the level of international collaboration. There is always someone to meet and discuss educational and educator issues and ideas. The ease of collaboration allows for constructive and beneficial interactions and project comparisons.

**Day 19** - Participant B and I completed and submitted the two UNICEF Think Pieces. This collaboration, even if not accepted, has allowed us to create out of the box ideas and projects in international teaching and education.

**Day 23** - A professor in Oslo asked Participant B and I to co-lecture two of his classes while he was away...We will be co-lecturing two classes over two days, "Educational discourses globally: The significance of the global architecture of education" and "Is Africa different? Culture, schooling, and indigenous knowledges". We created two PowerPoint presentations with an introduction hands-on activity, assigned readings, lectures, group work, and open discussions. The students are international and from multiple countries with all instruction in English. It was exciting to be back in the classroom as a teacher.

**Post-exchange** - First, our conference proposal was accepted, and we will present our journal article findings...Second, we submitted a call for abstracts for a Special Issue on Global Citizenship Education for the British Journal of Educational Studies. Our abstract was accepted, and we are in the process of completing a full article<sup>4</sup>.

We would like to draw attention to some key aspects of Participant A's journal. Over the course of the four weeks, we see a ramping up of work. The pair begins rather modestly, attending seminars and brainstormed ways to collaborate. As they agreed to move forward, things moved more quickly. They work on multiple projects and engage in activities that support multiple career goals as novice scholars including teaching together and using their work in their scholarship to enhance their reputation as emerging researchers as well.

In this instance, the common research interests, the prior relationship and a total of eight weeks the two scholars spent as part of the Open GATE project allowed for them to be able to strategically think about what sort of research activities they could engage in, they learned to collaborate in number of ways that ought to be helpful to them in their future careers, and they were able to make strategic decisions to ensure their research found

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<sup>4</sup> At the time of writing the article was published.

its way into venues that would be receptive to their work. The experiences that Participant A had in Norway allowed her to also experience teaching in a non-US context and the ability to meet and build relationships with other faculty and students. The ability to build a network of global partners is something that is restricted for students, based on the fact that much of this can be very expensive and cannot often be developed at international conferences where time is restricted, and multiple people and programs are competing for your attention.

**Goal 2 – Understand the role of stakeholders on critical forms of research to facilitate educational transformation**

*Participant C had no connection to either of the PI's on the project but applied and was selected on the merit of her application and interest in science education. Excerpts from her report highlight the more exploratory approach she took, and the intrinsic motivation she needed to exert to be able to meet new people, develop new contacts, as well as experience new moments in an international academic setting. The experiences for this participant highlighted a deeper understanding of context, culture and the ways in which research could be facilitated to promote her own transformation.*

**Reflection 1** – This was my first time spending a great deal of time comparing and contrasting the US system with the systems present in other countries. Politicians seem to spend a great deal of time attempting to do this, as well, but these conversations seem to focus exclusively on international test scores and performance. I'll admit I also prepared for my trip to Norway by doing some of the same... – student science performance in the US is surprisingly better on the TIMSS assessment, which is an assessment that focuses largely on student knowledge of scientific content at the fourth and eighth-grade levels. Science performance on the PISA is roughly the same in both countries, and this test is more interesting to me, as it examines the critical thinking and problem-solving abilities of 15-year-olds. Because the two tests are based on different frameworks, there's no real way to make a blanket statement about student performance like, "Norwegian students catch-up to their US peers in science performance by the age of 15." Instead, these results raised so many questions for me, such as "Why do US students outperform their Norwegian counterparts in science knowledge at the elementary and middle school levels?" and "Given that US students probably possess greater science content knowledge in science, why are Norwegian 15-year-olds just as capable of problem-solving in scientific contexts as US students?"

**Reflection 2** – Part of the reason I wanted to go to Norway was because I had assumed that Norway, like most of Scandinavia, had everything "figured out." In many respects, I found this to be true – public transportation in Oslo was wonderful, the people I met were incredibly welcoming and kind, and accessible healthcare and living wages contributed to an incredibly happy populace. However, it made me feel better to know that Norway, while prosperous and generally happy, struggled with some of the same issues that we do in teacher education in the United States. Even with a small population and centralized education system, Norwegians were still trying to ensure students in science classes had access to hands-on, student-centered instruction like we hope teachers provide in the United States.

**Reflection 3** - I was very impressed by the ways in which the faculty seamlessly integrated pedagogy with content, and it made me wish that US teacher education programs were structured this way, rather than teaching content separate from pedagogy. However, this wish was just a wish. I want to understand more about the pros and cons of this integrated model of instruction, in comparison to the traditional US model in which content and pedagogy are separated from one another. Going forward, I would like to continue to work with the faculty at Institution 2 to better understand this integrated model of teacher education

**Reflection 4** - As an American, I am fairly used to listening during conversation, as I know that American research and American voices tend to dominate in many research circles. I believe, like many do, that it is important to hear everyone at the table, and as such, I have always had the tendency to listen more than speak to my international peers. In this setting, though, I felt at-ease having back-and-forth conversation about Norwegian and US problems and policies... This was a very important take-away from this experience – meaningful work between individuals from different countries requires a great deal of time to build a trusting relationship so that honest conversation can ensue...I've met a few scholars from other countries at conferences and I have always enjoyed chatting with them. However, there is always difficulty in having deep conversation about any topic because the differences between our countries stand in the way. To have nuanced conversation about any given social science topic across nations, people need space and time in order to bond and feel at-ease sharing mutual difficulties. This fellowship provided me with this opportunity.

In these excerpts from her reflections, we have tried to highlight Participant C's growth over time and her own deeper understanding of how practice, pedagogy and people can differ and yet offer a different lens through which she might look at her own research and future teaching. Participant C showcases in her report the evolution in her understanding of the two contexts she was working in. From a more superficial understanding to greater nuance as she spent more time in the country, one can see how her thinking changed as she moved through the time she was in Norway. One of her comments, which aligned to a great degree with our hopes for the project, was reflected in her understanding that conference conversations do not provide the foundation for the kind of sustained dialogue and trust that one might need for a project such as this. Moreover, her increased understanding of the cultural nuances between the systems in the two countries and her desire to understand more of the integrated subject-pedagogy approach in Norwegian teacher education contributes to developing new pedagogies as pointed out by Olson, Green, and Hill (2006).

Part of 'disrupting' stereotypes or pushing individuals to a more nuanced understanding of place and people requires the sort of reflection Participant C engaged in. Her systematic reflection over the course of 28 days allowed for her to return to ideas that she held prior to arriving as well as during her stay. The ability for people, especially teacher educators, to have sustained conversations with colleagues in the same field while overseas and outside a conference venue are slim to non-existent in our experience. The notion that the Scandinavian countries 'had figured it out' is one that is quite popular among educators in the US and so having the experience to question that allows a scholar and future education leader, a critical life experience to consider in her own work.

**Goal 3 - Systematic processes of collaboration**

*The final pair we highlight for this article are Participants D and E who are both on the faculty of teacher education at the two institutions. As faculty members they had greater clarity on how they could build a partnership that would enhance their common interests around social justice and equity in teacher education both in their practice and their research. Together, they explored the experiences of Jewish communities in both countries to design a very specific learning experience for their students. Below is a description of their program:*

**Report 1** - Over the course of a week, we created a mini-unit to foster in-service and preservice teachers' global competence and prompt their thinking around infusing a critical global perspective in K-12 school curricula. Through dialog around the literature of the field in globalizing teacher education and a shared interest in the rights of immigrants and refugees, we developed a mini-unit titled Who Belongs.

Who Belongs? links the past to the present through exploring the notion of inclusion and exclusion of groups of people in Norway, the U.S., and present-day Myanmar. The development of this theme began with a journey to *Dette er et fint sted* (This is a nice place), a small park nestled above a neighborhood in Oslo. *Dette er et fint sted* came to be through the efforts of Victor Lind, a contemporary Norwegian artist whose work has focused on revealing the truth about the way that the Norwegian police deported more than 700 Norwegian Jews to Germany in October 1942, resulting in their executions.

Who Belongs? invites teachers and teacher candidates to consider the narratives of Mexican American families who were "repatriated" to Mexico in the 1930s and Japanese American families interned during WWII in the U.S. Moving to the present, the mini-unit delves into the current realities of immigrant and refugee families in both Norway and the U.S. and encourages educators to reflect on the individual and societal beliefs and assumptions that underpin the policies and practices that include or exclude children and their families from the communities and nations in which they live. This same lens is applied to the present-day persecution of Rohingya families, who have lived in Myanmar for decades and are now fleeing daily to Bangladesh.

Provocations, in the form of artwork, photos, primary source documents, and news stories, etc. based on these historical and contemporary narratives, provide a relevant context for teachers to engage in global thinking routines. Taken from research (Global Thinking, 2016), these global thinking routines provoke thinking and discussion around why these narratives matter to individuals, to communities, to nations, and to a world in which the question of Who Belongs? affects the lives of millions of children and their families. In a globalized world in which a growing number of schools aspire to promote the notions of global mindedness and global citizenship, the question of Who Belongs? is a way to critically analyze these ideals.

**Post-Exchange** - I have integrated the Who Belongs? unit into a spring course titled Introduction to Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Learners. Across three weeks, the students engaged in several global thinking routines in response to provocations on the issue of inclusion vs. exclusion. The students' discussion board posts and blog entries indicated positive reception to using the global thinking routines to design lessons around issues of global significance that invite K-12

students to inquire about the world, to consider multiple perspectives, to engage in productive dialog, and to think about ways to take action toward social justice and equity. Additionally, the students developed and shared lesson sketches in which a global thinking routine and a critical literacy framework were applied in a lesson centered on gender equity in K-12 classrooms.

In this partnership, we saw some direct connections back to students in the US program who were able to benefit from this unit. One of the biggest challenges for students to study abroad remains resources and often depends on teacher educators to bridge the gap in creative and influential ways. This opportunity worked to showcase similar histories in two different countries, but also actively supported teachers to think about global thinking, and hopefully in turn would encourage them to think about how they might be able to translate this into their own classrooms upon their graduation and employment in PK-secondary schools. This example serves to emphasize how teacher educators themselves can develop a form of collaborative learning (Olson, Green, & Hill, 2006).

In light of the growing nationalist movements in both the US and Norway, these sorts of pedagogical practices allow teacher educators to further disrupt the ideas that teacher candidates might come into their classrooms with, and furthermore take back out to their own classrooms with students who have limited or scarce knowledge of the world. The burden to be critical educators must not lie solely with teachers once they have arrived in their classrooms. The ability to partner with a colleague around the world and share a curriculum with student teachers in two contexts allows for an exponential opportunity for teacher educators to enhance understanding of our global common humanity and help showcase the larger ways common global issues can affect both the teaching and learning process.

## **Discussion**

As far back as 1993, Fullan (1993) encouraged teachers to be change agents and for teacher educators to encourage the moral purpose of teaching. While his suggestion of a summer of teacher preparation as adequate is something we would strongly reject, his larger point of the critical need for the continued education of both teachers and teacher educators, and that institutions must have mechanisms in place to support structural change, are ideas we still see as vital twenty-five years later. What does it mean to be a change agent, especially in the context of internationalizing teacher education? We would not espouse to say we understand fully what the impact of such exchanges might be over of the course of a lifetime of teaching and learning, but we do see that there have been some significant opportunities for emerging scholars and teacher education faculty to feel discomfort, build authentic partnerships, and to bring lessons back with them to engage in their own pedagogical efforts. We find that participants in this project have been able to review and assess the full range of campus resources for international exposure, and their accessibility, particularly for students in teacher education programs; expand the opportunities for people to have international experiences and have developed internationally oriented curriculum.

First, the Open GATE project has allowed the exchange participants to review and assess the opportunity provided by the project in order to gain international exposure while also providing some of the exchange participants to move beyond mere exposure into a form of collaboration across cultures and institutions (the two teams, the emerging scholars united by their work on South Sudan, and the teacher educator team who worked on the

project on the holocaust). The length of time, the commitment to supporting the second visit for the other partner has helped to cement relationships in ways that we are excited to see unfold. In fact, the faculty team has already made plans to meet at a conference during the fall of 2019 to present a paper on their collaborative work. The impact of this work is multiplied through their own sharing of this work, but also supports the motivation to continue to work together in other ways.

Second, Open GATE has provided a platform for training on international needs and students' options for faculty and aspiring faculty (PhD candidates). This training was facilitated by the exchanges and sharing of information and experiences in how to work with increasing diversity in schools in both countries, but also globally (e.g. in the work on South Sudan). Young scholars are increasingly apprehensive about the burdens of academic life including research production, international credibility, and external funding. The ability to build trusting and deep relationships with other people at similar career stages allows for the establishment of a long-term collaborative career, but also defuses any potential power issues that might be inherent in professor/student or late/early career partnerships. This allows for a more equitable relationship and supports their own growth as mentors and advisors in the field of education in the long run.

Finally, the Open GATE exchanges have fostered the ability for some of the participants to develop internationally oriented curriculum and has furthermore provided a platform for the faculty team to continue working together to further develop internationally oriented curriculum, that will expose student-teachers to the challenges and possibilities in working with an increasingly diverse student population.

## **Conclusion**

Both the US and Norwegian initiatives have a strong impact on assessment and accountability. Teacher education programs are not immune to these influences, and as a result of the concerns arise, raising the quality of teacher education programs has become a focus of reform such as the recent reform in Norway where teacher education has been elevated to a master degree level. Yet, research suggests that the diminishing quality of teacher education programs may be the result of an increased focus on testing and accountability in schools (as seen through the above school reforms). Mehta (2008) argues that this new paradigm in education de-emphasizes a more humanistic approach to instruction and instead places an emphasis on goals of efficiency, which still prevails today and has a detrimental impact on educational reform. Moreover, the increased focus in education on rigid systems of accountability, creating a focus on testing, can result in dehumanizing education and inhibit teachers from engaging students in authentic learning experiences that foster optimal learning (Dorn, 2007).

We argue that teachers require support as they face the challenge of effectively teaching diverse students in their classrooms. Teacher-educators have used various methods to foster change in teachers' thinking, attitudes, and behaviors regarding cultural diversity, but these efforts have produced mixed results because they often focused on content rather than the process of cross-cultural learning. For our teacher educators and aspiring academics (PhD candidates) and practitioners the Open GATE project has attempted to help them move beyond mere content and instead allowed for a deeper understanding of the process of cross-cultural learning.

The urgency in education to support the rhetoric of internationalization requires the parallel implementation to foster internationalism in practice. What we know is that

teachers and teacher educators cannot be asked to simply exhibit internationalism without scaffolded experiences to nurture such dispositions. What we have seen through the context of this project is that with enough investment, a commitment on two sides of the Atlantic to institutionally support these experiences, and openness and creativity for people to follow their own path to discover their own natural inclinations for partnership, such programs can show promise.

In a recent OECD working paper focusing on the lives of teachers working in increasing diverse classrooms the importance of opportunities for professional development, like those offered through Open GATE, within teacher education programs is highlighted.

There is general consensus that teachers need to be equipped with relevant competences throughout the teacher education continuum if they are expected to fulfil the growing expectations they face. Policy-makers have increasingly sought to define the competences required from teachers by developing frameworks (European Commission, 2013). Such frameworks can offer education systems with a sound basis for planning and providing comprehensive professional development opportunities. However, policy approaches to developing competent teachers are not always coherent with the intended objectives, are often limited in scope or even counterproductive and misguided: “just when the very most is expected of them, teachers appear to be being given less support, less respect, and less opportunity to be creative, flexible and innovative than before” (Hargreaves and Lo, 2000, p.2). The growing diversity in classrooms and societies makes these issues even more compelling (Forghani-Arani, Cerna, & Bannon, 2019, p. 13).

Thus, the lack of agency for teachers to be real change agents requires that teachers are supported on a professional level. Our hope is that through project like OpenGate those of us involved in teacher education can support professional learning communities and peer-networks; breaking down isolation both in the classroom and in professional development; being open to learning from across national boundaries; learning from and within the communities within which their schools are based, but also across countries.

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