

Development of Bi-Lingual Hybrid Program Between Two International Universities Sub-Theme: Curriculum in Teacher Education

Constance Rothmund, Ph.D.
National University
School of Education
La Jolla, CA, USA

Abstract: This paper introduces an idea that considers a bi-lingual teacher education program that can be developed between National University (NU) and a University in Vietnam with the goal of bringing cultural awareness through literature to teaching candidates enrolled at each university. The paper specifically addresses the course development and describes how collaboration can take place in order to meet the needs of candidates in one course offered through the NU School of Education.

Affecting the American and global higher education arena and impacting educational delivery is the fact that candidates who graduate from Teacher Education programs in America today face classrooms more diverse, with a greater number of spoken home languages and greater cultural diversity than ever before. This proposal suggests that cultural diversity challenges might be addressed through collaboration and partnerships with international educational programs that join teaching candidates in one country with teaching candidates in another.

NU is the second largest private university in California with twenty-nine regional campuses and reports 80% of total enrollment is online. The courses are intensely focused in one month formats. NU currently offers 325 courses monthly and successfully educates the largest number of teachers in California.

This paper proposes offering one hybrid teacher education course to teaching candidates in both countries. The course is one in the NU Master of Arts in Teaching Degree program. This idea could be developed as a model to bridge the diversity gap seen in American schools today

and present one solution to the growing need for American teachers to become more aware with cultural diversity. Vietnam is chosen as a country to partner with because of the large and continually growing number of Vietnamese-American who immigrated to America after the Vietnam War. Vietnamese children attend public schools throughout America and candidates who possess some knowledge of the culture, mores, and ethnic backgrounds of the children are better prepared to integrate teaching modalities with the students.

Following the NU format of one course per month in the form of an e-delivery system, candidates will complete each week one class session online and one class session face-to-face at their respective universities for a total of four weeks. The course online is offered in English; the face-to-face course is offered in English to the candidates in America and in Vietnamese to the students in Vietnam. The course is team taught with one NU English speaking professor teaching online and one Vietnamese speaking professor teaching the face-to-face classroom in Vietnam.

Most American citizens are aware that diversity in America is evident and plays an important part in our public schools. For example, in the southern regions of America 51% of the student population are students of color. This statistic represents for the first time in American history that children of color constitute a diverse majority in public schools. The shift is due to a dramatic immigration increase of Latinos, Asian, Asian Pacific Islanders and other populations (The Southern Education Foundation, 2010). Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly clear that our educational system must provide teachers with information, knowledge and skills (Larny, 2001) which will enable them to respond creatively and effectively to the complexities of multicultural education. There is a new awareness for the need of globalization of teacher education programs. This insight demands that universities and colleges must develop multicultural

studies, training and curriculum that will enable teachers and administrators to understand complex issues in order to creatively and effectively respond in the classroom and to issues that arise at the administrative level.

This proposal might serve as a model or a blueprint for other global and international educational institutions interested in increasing and expanding international education through collaboration with foreign universities to prepare teachers for today's globally diverse classrooms. International education is described through a myriad of terms such as global education, development education, comparative education and international studies, however, their meanings can differ significantly (Hayden, 2006). International education is described by (Alfaro, 2008) as "educational work that practitioners and scholars undertake in countries other than their own" (p. 20). Development education can be described as a program that produces tools and resources for teachers and young people to explore social, economic, and environmental issues of sustainable development in their classrooms, communities, and around the world (www.worldbank.org/wbi/developmenteducation). Comparative education is a fully established academic field of study that examines education in one country (or group of countries) by using data and insights drawn from the practices and situations in another country, or countries (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparative_education) and International Studies generally refers to the specific University Degrees and courses which are concerned with the study of the major political, economic, social, cultural and sacral issues that dominate the international agenda (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Studies). For the purpose of this research international education is described as that which relates to the educational work undertaken by practitioners and students in a country other than their own (Alfaro, 2008).

It is evident that within institutes of higher education that offer teacher education programs international education must be designed into the program in order to meet current cultural and linguistic needs (Burnell, 2006). The globalization of teacher education programs regarding certification such as the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) demand that future teachers be prepared for teaching in the global environment in classrooms in the United States. NCATE Standard 4 states “One of the goals of this standard is the development of educators who can help all students learn and who can teach from multicultural and global perspectives that draw on the histories, experiences, and representations of students from diverse cultural backgrounds” (NCATE, 2006).

Crossley and Watson (2006) propose several reasons to support international education:

1. gain a better understanding of one’s own educational system;
2. satisfy intellectual and theoretical curiosity about other cultures and their education systems; and better understand the relationship between education and the wider society;
3. identify similarities and differences in educational systems, processes and outcomes as a way of documenting and understanding problems in education, and contribution to the improvement of educational policy and practice; and
4. promote improved international understanding and co-operation through increased sensitivity to different world views and cultures (p.19).

Established in 1971 National University has been delivering Teacher Education courses to a wide range of teaching candidates in an extensive variety of teaching disciplines. Currently, programs at NU encompass courses leading to Associate of Arts, Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in Teaching and Learning, Master of Science in Educational Administration, Master of

Science in School Counseling and Master of Science in Psychology degrees with Specializations in several concentrated areas. This proposal concentrates on the Master of Art in Teaching (MAT) program offering with a Specialization in Teaching and Learning in a Global Society. The MAT program requires 6 courses: 27 quarter units, and the Specialization requires an additional 4 courses: 18 quarter units. The course offered in this design will be one of the four courses required for the specialization.

The intent of the design is to develop a hybrid course offered twice a week: one day meeting face-to-face onsite and one day meeting online. The customary format at NU for onsite and hybrid course offerings is to meet either Monday/Wednesday or Tuesday/Thursday. For the purpose of this research the course will meet on Monday/Wednesday. The idea is that students will meet onsite in their respective classroom at their home campus on Monday and meet online on Wednesday. Working through the NU eCollege platform embedded within the course shell is the Class Live Pro feature that allows participants to see, speak and hear each other. All online meetings, course materials, books, articles, and Power Point slides will be in English.

The course, TED 668, is titled “Multicultural Literature” and is represented and dictated by the syllabus and is the last course taken in the four-sequenced group. There are no prerequisites, however; it is recommended that course work be taken in sequential order. The course emphasizes key issues, challenges and strategies for integrating multicultural literature into classrooms in a culturally proficient manner. It fosters reading for enjoyment and understanding and encouraging critical skills in selecting and assessing literature for multicultural learners. The learning outcomes for the candidates completing the course are:

1. identify the key issues, challenges, and benefits of integrating literature from a variety of cultures into the classroom;

2. describe the different genres and formats of literature used in education:
3. describe the benefits of listening to stories, and understand the role of oral tradition in transmitting the culture, philosophy, and language of different peoples:
4. compare and contrast the values reflected in children's and young adult multicultural literature and reflect on how that cultural understanding can help candidates better understand and teach diverse learners;
5. use culturally representative and authentic evaluation criteria to select literature for classroom use;
6. identify and select appropriate books for students at various levels that reflect the diversity of our world and that can be used throughout the curriculum;
7. analyze and discuss the effective strategies and approaches to integrating literature into the classroom in a culturally responsive manner.

It is my hope and desire that by partnering with international universities in this manner greater understanding and awareness of cross-cultures can be attained, resulting in better preparation of teachers facing the great challenges in today's classrooms.

Research Questions for Teaching Candidates:

1. How has the cross-cultural experience in each of the countries affected you personally and professionally?
2. How has this experience informed your understanding and practice of global education?
3. How has this experience affected your view of cultural differences?

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