

## **Preparing Elementary Teacher Candidates to Use Global Content: An Action Research Study**

Tracy C. Rock  
Drew Polly  
Laura Handler

*University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

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Globalization is a powerful force that will shape the future world in which our children will live. To prepare our students for the world, we need to prepare their teachers. To be effective in the new global environment, teachers need broader sets of knowledge and skills than have previously been required. We designed this action research study to examine our teacher candidates' use of global education content to support our ability to develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward its use. The following research questions focus the study: How do elementary education teacher candidates utilize global content within integrated unit plans? How can the elementary social studies methods course prepare teacher candidates to use global content? The findings reveal teacher candidates' integration of global content was strongest in the areas of foundational-knowledge-level dimensions with few examples of higher-level application, cross-cultural experiences, or action-oriented learning tasks. Secondly, global education content requiring a critical perspective was minimal or nonexistent in the teacher candidates' planning. We discuss these two concerns and present action steps to build teacher candidates' capacity for developing higher levels of global content into their instructional unit planning.

*Keywords:* Global Education, Teacher Education, Action Research, Social Studies Education, Elementary Teacher Candidates, Global Content

### **Introduction**

Globalization is one of the most powerful forces shaping the future world in which our children will live. How to prepare our children to live successfully in this world has become a challenging question for education (Zhao, 2010). Globalization is not new, but in the 21st century rapidly shrinking space and disappearing borders are connecting people's lives more deeply, intensely, and immediately than ever before. We need an educational system creating globally competitive graduates ready to live, work, and contribute in an interconnected world (Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills, 2009). Therefore, increasing interest and recognition in global education exists. The North Carolina State Board of Education (SBE), for example, recently charged a task force with examining and offering recommendations for enhancing global education efforts. In their report, the members of the Task Force on Global Education (2013) stated,

Maintaining and increasing our economic prosperity requires our state to be more skillful today, more globally engaged, and hence, more competent to take on the challenges of the rapidly evolving global economy, than yesterday. Education must now be global education. (p. 13)

To prepare our students for the world, we should prepare their teachers. Training quality teachers is a global concern as all nations strive for excellence at all levels (Goodwin, 2010). Making global education a priority means making teacher preparation and development a priority. In

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order to be effective in the new global environment, teachers need broader sets of knowledge and skills than previously required. Teachers should embody the global awareness, competence, and engagement educational and private-sector leaders desire from our students, as explicitly stated by the Task Force on Global Education for the North Carolina SBE:

From teacher preparation through development, teachers' need access to high quality curriculum content and training that allows them to develop their awareness of the global context in which we operate, integrate an international perspective throughout the curriculum, and bolster their understanding of how to build the global competency of their students (p. 6).

A recommendation from this task force is to require teacher preparation institutions to prepare teacher candidates to use global content. In this action research study, we seek to address this challenge.

### **Literature Review**

If the primary goal of global education is to prepare students who are effective and responsible citizens in a global society, then they need opportunities to gain knowledge of the world, engage in problem solving and critical thinking around significant global issues, and develop skills to view events and issues from diverse perspectives (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). One leading global education scholar, Merry Merryfield (2004), synthesized research literature to identify four main strategies that teachers use to integrate global: multiple perspectives, global interconnectedness, global issues, and cross-cultural experiences. She provides examples of what each of these strategies looks like in the classroom. These examples show the dynamic and powerful use of global education in the classroom and illustrate how to apply global content; however, her work primarily focuses on middle and secondary education contexts.

A more recent synthesis of the literature by Peel and Wiggs (2010) incorporates work by Hanvey (1982), Kirkwood, (2001), and Merryfield (2004) and expands it to identify eight different, but often overlapping, dimensions of global education content. According to Peel and Wiggs (2010), teachers should include the following dimensions in their teaching to integrate global content: 1) Perspective Consciousness; 2) State of the Planet Awareness; 3) Cross Cultural Awareness; 4) Knowledge of Global Dynamics; 5) Awareness of Human Choices, 6) Understanding of the Marginalized Point of View; 7) Involvement in Local or Global Affairs; and 8) Analyzing the Educational Legacy of Colonialism. Their framework provides teachers with clear and broad strategies for how to select and use content in their instructional planning that addresses the goals and intended outcomes of global education. This work provides specific illustrative examples and resources appropriate for elementary school learners.

In addition to these frameworks, curriculum support materials exist to promote the incorporation of global education into instruction. The Council of Chief State School Officers and the Asia Society Partnership for Global Learning supported the development of a text, *Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World* (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). This text clearly defines and promotes a rationale for developing global competency, presents a global competence matrix for a variety of content areas, and organizes the ideas around four themes: global competent students a) investigate the world, b) recognize perspectives, c) communicate ideas, and d) take action. The global competence matrix is useful because it provides clear and concise student performance indicators for each theme in core content areas. In addition, the Partnership for 21st Century Skills (2009) has recently created curriculum development materials that include a teacher guide for Kindergarten-12 (K-12) global

competence. This work describes what students should know and do to demonstrate global competence by presenting student performance indicators for specific grade levels.

For teacher educators, this literature is valuable since we seek to prepare teacher candidates to effectively utilize global content in instructional planning. This work provides both a way to incorporate global content into the curriculum and illustrative examples and ideas. Our review of current literature provides guidance on how teachers utilize global content in their classrooms, but we found little support for understanding how teacher candidates are able to use global content in instructional planning. We need to more fully understand their use of global education content to better support, extend, and develop their knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward its use. The following research questions were developed to focus our study:

1. How do elementary education teacher candidates utilize global content within integrated unit plans?
2. How can the elementary social studies methods course prepare teacher candidates to use global content?

### **Method**

#### **Context**

This action research study was conducted at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, a large urban research institute of higher education with over 28,000 students. The elementary education program is the largest undergraduate teacher preparation program in the College of Education at UNC Charlotte, graduating around 210 licensed elementary teachers each year. The elementary education program is a four-semester sequenced program of study. In the first two semesters, teacher candidates move through instructional design and methods courses coupled with early clinical experiences. In the final two semesters, they are offered more advanced coursework in addition to a year-long internship in an elementary classroom. This internship culminates with a full-time student teaching experience in the final semester. The data for this study were collected from the unit plans elementary-education teacher candidates created as part of a course assignment in ELED 4220: Integrating Curriculum for Elementary School Learners. This course is advanced coursework taken during the semester prior to the student-teaching semester as part of the year-long internship. Students are required to synthesize their understandings of specific disciplinary knowledge, skills, standards, and expected student learning outcomes from a variety of content areas to create an integrated unit of study that is developmentally appropriate for elementary-school learners. The teacher candidates select a theme or topic, integrate curriculum standards from at least 4 different content areas, create a unit framework with essential questions, goals, and objectives, and develop ten to fifteen lesson plans along with both formative and summative assessments for the unit plan assignment. The unit plan is also evaluated on the teacher candidates' abilities to demonstrate their proficiency with integrating technology, 21st century skills, global awareness, culturally-responsive pedagogy, and research-based instructional practices.

The authors of this study are instructors of the ELED 4220 course. When collaborating on how to best support our teacher candidates in the planning of the integrated unit task, we wanted to better understand how the teacher candidates integrated global content into their units of study. Initially, instructors presented teacher candidates with the Peel and Wiggs (2010) framework to build their understanding of how to integrate global content into their instructional planning. Each of the dimensions was discussed with examples provided by the instructor. The teacher candidates then processed the information in class in small groups. In these groups, they

defined and explained each of the dimensions in their own words and explored how to apply each of the dimensions within their unit plans. The assignment guidelines and rubric require teacher candidates to identify at least two global content connections within their integrated unit plan to achieve a rating of proficiency in this area. However, even with this support, the teacher candidates consistently reported a lack of confidence in their abilities to integrate global content. Based on our awareness of this issue and because we both teach prerequisite coursework (i.e. social studies methods course and instructional design), we wanted to examine how these teacher candidates were currently integrating global content in their instructional planning so that we could construct appropriate action steps to build confidence in our teacher candidates' use of global content earlier in the program. In this article, we will focus on developing and presenting action steps relevant to the social studies methods course that teacher candidates take in the previous semester.

The findings presented here are from a larger action research project designed to investigate how to build elementary-education teacher candidates' global competencies within a teacher education program. Teacher action research is defined by Lytle and Cochran-Smith (1990) as "systematic, intentional inquiry by teachers" (p. 83). It is research that teachers do to investigate their own professional practice in an attempt to understand and improve the nature and specifics of their work and to develop a stronger voice when communicating about it (Mills, 2011; Ogberg & McCutcheon, 1987). Action research is a planned, systematic approach to understanding the learning process that (a) develops critical reflection about one's teaching, (b) involves educators in working together to improve their own practices, and (c) requires us to test our ideas about education (Mertler, 2014). This article documents the first stage of our action research investigation where we identified a broad problem within our practice, planned methods to collect data, analyzed the data to reveal new understandings of the problem, and reflected on the analysis to create action steps to take within our practice. As the project moves forward, we will implement those actions, collect additional data, and analyze and reflect to see implications for future practice.

### **Data Sources and Analysis**

At the conclusion of the semester, we gathered the integrated unit plans of three sections of the ELED 4220 course ( $N = 64$  unit plans). We determined that document analysis would be the most appropriate method to address the first research question. Document analysis is a qualitative method in which researchers interpret documents to give voice and meaning to an assessment topic. Document analysis incorporates coding content into themes similar to how focus group or interview transcripts are often analyzed. In the document analysis method, researchers analyze written materials including information about the phenomenon or phenomena researchers want to investigate (Yildinm & Simsek, 2008; Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Two places within the unit plans provided information about teacher candidates' integration of global content into their instructional planning. The unit plans contained a rationale section where the teacher candidates were required to describe how they integrated global content into the unit. Each lesson plan within the unit included a designated section where teacher candidates could communicate any global connections established within a particular lesson. Using the Global Education Dimensions framework (Peel & Wiggs, 2010), each unit was analyzed by coding the content identified and described in the rationale section by the teacher candidate. Then, the identified global content was verified by examining the individual lesson plans to see if

the identified and described global content was addressed in the formalized planning by the teacher candidate. For example, if teacher candidates said they were introducing their students to a new or different perspective within the unit, then the use of Perspective Consciousness (PC) was coded. If the code was supported by evidence within the lesson plan that connections were made during a lesson to develop students' PC, then the code was recorded and tallies of incidence were developed across the unit plans. If teacher candidates indicated additional global content was developed in the unit and supported in their lesson planning, then it was analyzed to determine the appropriate code, recorded, and tallied on the chart. This process showed more than one global awareness dimension may be present within an individual unit plan. As data were coded and tallied within the table, teacher candidates' descriptive statements and phrases within the unit plans were captured and included in the chart to provide illustrative examples of the different dimensions the teacher candidates used in their planning documents. This procedure also permitted the action researchers to cross-check the accuracy of data coding and numbers of incidence.

### Findings

This study first sought to address the research question, How do teacher candidates incorporate global content into their instructional plans? Table 1 shows the frequencies of unit plans addressing global concepts by the various global awareness dimensions. In this section, we elaborate on how teachers integrated global content into the unit plans.

Table 1

#### *Global Awareness Dimensions Integrated into Teacher Candidates' Unit Plans*

<b>Global Awareness Dimension (Peel &amp; Wiggs, 2010)</b>	<b>Number of Unit Plans with Global Dimension Integrated</b>	<b>Percent of Teacher Candidates Who Utilized Global Dimension</b>
<b>Perspective Consciousness</b>	29	45%
<b>State of the Planet Awareness</b>	24	38%
<b>Knowledge of Global Dynamics</b>	9	14%
<b>Awareness of Human Choices</b>	8	13%
<b>Cross Cultural Awareness</b>	6	10%
<b>Understanding the Marginalized Point of View</b>	2	3%
<b>Involvement in Local or Global Affairs</b>	4	6%
<b>Analyzing the Educational Legacy of Colonialism</b>	0	0%

### Perspective Consciousness

The most common global dimension integrated within the teacher candidates' unit plans was perspective consciousness. Out of the 64 teacher candidates, 45% specifically selected content and learning experiences for the purpose of developing PC the realization that each person's worldview is unique, in their students. A teacher candidate planning a weather unit for kindergarten indicated she was developing perspective consciousness during the closure activity of a lesson in the unit:

The students will all share their drawings that they made of their favorite seasons and discuss why that particular season is their favorite. Through this discussion, the students will learn that some of them agree on which season is their favorite, and that some students will have different favorites. I will lead them to recognize that people have different opinions for a variety of reasons and that not everyone shares the same perspective.

Many of the primary-grade examples encouraged students to examine similarities and differences amongst themselves and others to become aware of different and unique views people might have. Often, children's literature would be used to provide the content, then discussion would be facilitated by the teacher. For example, one teacher candidate in a first-grade unit shared stories of children from the book, *Children Just Like Me: A Unique Celebration of Children Around the World*, by Barnabas and Anabel Kindersley (1995). Students were asked to discuss how the different environments and cultures of children in the stories influenced their ideas about family, the way to dress, the food they enjoy eating, types of music they listen to, etc. In a fifth-grade unit plan on immigration, students read real-world stories of young immigrants with the intention of developing insight about different immigrants and their worldview of America.

An important step students take toward global competence is recognizing they hold a particular perspective, one that others may not share. To fully understand world issues, they must articulate and explain the perspectives of other people, groups, or schools of thought (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). Teacher candidates integrated perspective consciousness into their instructional unit plans more frequently than the other elements of global content.

### **State of the Planet Awareness**

The second-most common global dimension integrated within teacher candidates' unit plans was State of the Planet Awareness, as 38% of teacher candidates referenced this dimension in their unit plan. The purpose of this content is to make students aware of world conditions and trends. In a first-grade unit on ecosystems, the teacher candidate wrote:

Students are learning state of the planet awareness throughout the unit but especially in this lesson where they will learn the typical characteristics of the desert, rain forest, and grasslands, to inform their understanding of different ecosystems within the world and their current conditions.

Alternatively, in a fourth-grade unit plan on natural resources in North Carolina, a teacher candidate wrote:

During the Explore portion of the lesson, students will become aware of problems our planet is facing. Task: Using the iPads, students will visit a Weebly site the teacher has created in order to choose from three different scenarios about environmental issues in NC. They will be given a graphic organizer where they will describe the problem they found in the scenario, why it is harmful to the environment, and what natural resources it will affect.

The majority of unit plans had a central focus in the disciplines of science, social studies, or health; therefore, teacher candidates were able to make many natural connections within the content to bring awareness to world conditions and trends. With the requirement of integrating global content into their units of study, State of the Planet Awareness along with Perspective Consciousness were clearly the elements of global content most utilized.

**Knowledge of Global Dynamics**

Of the 64 teacher candidates, 14% of them integrated the Knowledge of Global Dynamics dimension within their unit planning. This is important content because it requires students to be aware of the interconnectedness of world events and possibility of unanticipated consequences.

A teacher candidate planning a unit on ecosystems for fifth grade wrote:

By understanding the interdependence of plants and animals students are able to realize how events are interconnected. For example, when the students answer what would happen if there were no producers, 'the consumers would die.' This explains how animals can become extinct.

Another example comes from a third-grade unit on natural resources:

I discuss with the students the difference between natural forces and disasters caused by humans. We talk about how overusing natural resources can harm the environment including certain animal species. Then, I have the students' research and write about the unintended effects of deforestation on the homes of endangered animal species.

This global content not only builds student awareness of world conditions and trends but also requires students to see the interdependence of events and processes. Students need deeper understanding of the event, process or issue to make explicit connections to other events or to unanticipated consequences.

**Awareness of Human Choices**

The Awareness of Human Choices dimension of global content was identified in 13% of the teacher candidates' units of study. As students explore topics of global significance, they should realize implications of human choices. One third-grade unit plan allowed students to discuss how people all over the world need to work together to conserve the few usable freshwater sources. The students were then asked to turn and talk to their partners to brainstorm ways they can choose to conserve water to protect life. In a second-grade unit plan, the students learned about supply and demand and how consumer choices impact the economy. As part of this study, students learned how human choices have a serious effect on the products manufactured all over the world. While leading a first-grade unit on life cycles, the teacher discussed how choices have consequences. The teacher candidate stated that the big idea of the unit plan was for students to understand that it is important to make good choices and take care of things like the butterfly eggs they received so the caterpillars can hatch. Once the caterpillars hatched, the students needed to provide them with a nice home and plenty of food so they could live and grow. If students made poor choices and didn't take care of them properly, they might not survive and make it to the next stage of their life cycle. These are all examples of how teacher candidates who integrated this element into their planning wanted to develop student awareness to both world situations or issues and their interconnectedness and the idea that human choices and behaviors have significant ramifications.

**Cross-Cultural Awareness**

Cross-Cultural Awareness was used in 10% of the teacher candidates' unit plans. Cross-cultural awareness guides students to perceive their culture from other vantage points. It allows students the opportunity to live *in* rather than *with* other cultural groups. Teacher candidates who sought to develop cross-cultural awareness with their students planned to use collaborative technologies to connect their students with others from differing cultural backgrounds and experiences. Three teacher candidates planned to utilize ePals partnerships during the unit to gather other perspectives and to have their ePal share, react, and respond to their ideas related to

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their unit of study. ePals refers to establishing pen pal relationships with another class of students using electronic mail (email) to allow communication with those living and learning in a different global context. One teacher candidate planned similar interactions but chose to utilize Skype instead. This element entails a more difficult dilemma in both the planning and implementation for the teacher candidates. They must consider how to have their students interact with *others* in a way deepening their understanding of cultural and personal perspectives as they study the content of their unit of study. With limited time, resources, and access, teacher candidates who did integrate cross-cultural experiences sought to do so with the use of technology.

### **Understanding the Marginalized Point of View**

Only three percent of the teacher candidates indicated they integrated global content addressing the dimension of Understanding the Marginalized Point of View. The purpose of using this dimension was to develop students' empathy for the disenfranchised. A teacher candidate planning a fifth-grade unit of study on the American Revolution, for example, had students explore the idea that only white, rich men were considered capable enough to run the government efficiently. The question was raised whether all people like women, blacks, and American Indians were able to help make decisions about the country they lived in. Students considered the following statement from the U. S. Declaration of Independence, Paragraph 2 (1776), "that all men are created equal... and have the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" and were asked to put its meaning into their own words. Students individually read articles addressing the role of women and minority groups during this time and discussed whether the quote applied to all people, or even all men, during this time. Students were asked to consider *how would it make them feel to live in a country that says (with the rules in place) you aren't important or prohibited to help make decisions that will impact you?* In another example, a fifth-grade unit on immigration, students were asked to reflect and write about the point of view of both immigrant children from the early 1900s and today. There were no examples of this dimension within the K-4 grade unit plans of the teacher candidates.

### **Involvement in Local or Global Affairs**

Making instructional plans to address the Involvement in Local or Global Affairs dimension occurred in six percent of the teacher candidates' units. This element of global content emphasizes students participation in service learning with a goal of improving the human condition. A teacher candidate planning a second-grade unit on environments had students first learn about local environmental issues in their community, then create posters about a specific issue and communicate how that issue could be solved. These posters were displayed at the front of the school to educate the public. After learning about a variety of global environmental issues, students created a public service announcement video showing one global environmental issue and explained both why we should care about this issue and how to resolve it. The videos were uploaded to YouTube™ to advocate and educate the public. Another teacher candidate had students demonstrate their understanding of the humans' impact on the local environment by writing letters to the mayor of Charlotte discussing two ways that humans affect the environment and providing two solutions. Although this example required students to be aware of human choices, it was coded as Involvement in Local or Global Affairs because it required them to take action to try and improve the human condition. Only a few unit plans included activities that encouraged students actively participate in environmental change. According to Mansilla and Jackson (2011):



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Globally competent students do more than collect knowledge about the world: they seek to make a difference in the world. Furthermore, they do not postpone their contributions for “when I grow up.” Rather they see and create opportunities to act today—in their neighborhood or on the global stage (p. 21).

### **Analyzing the Educational Legacy of Colonialism**

There were no examples of teacher candidates integrating the global content dimension of *analyzing the educational legacy of colonialism*. This global content dimension requires students to analyze alternatives to the Eurocentric historical framework.

### **Discussion**

Explicit connections to global content in most unit plans (62 out of 64) were identified. Teacher candidates made concerted efforts to integrate global content into their instructional plans as required. In addition, there were examples of teacher candidates’ integration of a variety of dimensions of global content across the unit plans. As the data were analyzed, however, we recognized two areas of concern. First, teacher candidates’ integration of global content was strongest in the areas of foundational knowledge and awareness level dimensions with few examples of higher-level application, cross-cultural experiences, or action-oriented learning tasks (PC – 45% vs. Involvement in Local or Global Affairs – 6%). Second, the content related to Examining the Marginalized Point of View or Analyzing Educational Legacy of Colonialism was minimal or nonexistent in the teacher candidates’ planning. These two concerns will be explored further prior to presenting suggested action steps in the prerequisite social studies methods course to build teacher candidates’ capacity for developing higher levels of global content into their instructional unit planning.

### **Higher Level Application of Global Content**

Most of the global connections within teacher candidates’ instructional plans introduced students to global concepts and engaged them in activities requiring only lower levels of thinking skills. They most often had students represent their understanding of concepts like interdependence, varying perspectives, impact of human behavior on the environment, conditions or universal phenomena of the planet, etc. through writing, drawing, or demonstrating. This was consistent with the level of thinking required by state standards teacher candidates used to guide their curriculum planning. However, in most cases, this was the extent of the connection established. There were only a few examples in the plans where the learners were engaged in higher level application of global content with the study of global problems, issues, or concerns.

Our examination of instructional plans showed that the responsibility of integrating global context or issue of significance fell upon the curriculum planner, in this case the teacher candidate. This integration will require the learner to not only master the state content standard, but also to deepen their understanding of how the content knowledge informs our actions, decisions, or problem-solving in matters of importance to the world community. This ?? requires that teachers learn how to select globally-significant content that aligns with and supports state standards. Also it requires teachers conduct research to uncover existing local and global connections of material that they must teach. We found teacher candidates were utilizing their content-area standards as guidelines for curriculum development, as they have been instructed to do during the teacher education program. These standards alone, however, do not seem to provide sufficient guidance in pushing teacher candidates to promote deep and rich engagement with global content. The Task Force on Global Education for the North Carolina SBE (2013)

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recognizes this conundrum: “While the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, comprised of Common Core and North Carolina Essential Standards, will make our students more competitive, they will not by themselves make them more globally aware” (p. 5).

Teacher candidates would benefit from additional curriculum-development support documents and frameworks to promote movement to higher-level use of the content. The Global Education Indicators and the Asia Society Global Education Competencies Framework would be useful tools to assist teacher candidates in considering how to achieve higher levels of knowledge and skill integration of the global content. It is important to note that the Global Education Indicators do explicitly encourage action-oriented inquiry and project work but do not specifically promote understanding of the marginalized point of view or analyzing educational legacy of colonialism.

### **Omitted Global Content Dimensions**

The document analysis revealed that the teacher candidates did not integrate in the Marginalized Point of View or Analyzing the Educational Legacy of Colonialism dimensions into their unit plans. These dimensions represent a more critical pedagogy in which teachers and students are continually asking, *Whose story is being told? Whose story or perspective is not included?* and *How does understanding the history of the issue or problem at hand help explain or reveal a more complete understanding of the intended or unintended consequences of human actions?* When teacher candidates are using only the NC Standard Course of Study as their curriculum guide, they have little motivation or responsibility to promote a critical pedagogy. If these dimensions will be integrated into the curriculum, the teacher candidate must value a critical pedagogy, have deep content knowledge of global issues, and seek out developmentally-appropriate resources to challenge and engage their learners in critical thinking experiences.

### **Implications**

We address Research Question 2, *How can the elementary social studies methods course prepare teacher candidates to use global content?*, by outlining a few action steps to implement within the social studies methods course to improve teacher candidates’ ability to incorporate global content into their integrated instructional plans.

1. **Build rationale for an active, participatory social studies program that includes global connections.** At the beginning of every semester, students are engaged in an activity to develop their understanding that the primary purpose of social studies education is to create effective citizens. The question, “What knowledge, skills, and dispositions does the ‘Office of Citizen’ require?” is posed. Students generate responses in small groups and discuss. I will now ask them to consider what they would add to their responses if I change the prompt to: “How do we prepare Democratic Citizens for an Interdependent, Global World? What knowledge, skills, and dispositions are required?” A whole class discussion will follow to determine what additional ideas they would propose. From these ideas, students will be challenged to write six to eight goal statements in their small groups to guide the social studies teaching and learning in their future classrooms. They will be assigned to read several chapters from the Mansilla & Jackson (2011) text before the next class and asked to make any adjustments to their goal statements based on the reading. Throughout the course they will read, discuss, and examine various active-learning approaches for teaching social studies such as service learning pedagogy and a social action approach. The teacher candidates will reflect on

how well these pedagogies align with their goals and will be required to make connections for how such practices will support creating global citizens.

2. **Familiarize and utilize curriculum support documents that extend and deepen the use of global content beyond state standards.** Early in the semester, teacher candidates engage in an in-class project using the jigsaw cooperative learning strategy requiring them to analyze the national and state curriculum standards to discover what is taught in our elementary social studies programs. In assigned grade-level groups, they become experts on what the standards require and put together a Prezi or Powerpoint presentation for the class. An action step from this study would be to extend this activity by also introducing the Global Education Indicators and Asia Society Indicators. Teacher candidates will examine these support documents and create grade-level appropriate learning experiences that address national and state standards while also integrating global education indicators. They will present these learning experiences as part of the class project and discuss them. Following this class activity, teacher candidates will be required to incorporate these global-education indicators into all their instructional planning assignments throughout the semester.
3. **Select globally-significant content.** Teacher candidates are required to create a digital museum exhibit project to show evidence they can produce rigorous scholarship and demonstrate a deep content knowledge in the specialty area of social studies. The project requires that they identify a social studies topic or issue, research various sources, and create a digital exhibit. The digital exhibit must include text, digital images, and primary and secondary sources. Due to the findings of this study, this project will now require the topic or issue selected to focus on globally-significant content. The teacher candidates must make the case that their selected topic has obvious global significance and clear local and global connections. When framing a topic for exploration, the teacher candidates must reflect on the following questions: *In what ways are local and global dynamics addressed by this topic? How may a deep examination of this topic enable my students to understand broad global patterns and their relationship to local realities?* According to Mansilla and Jackson (2011) globally-competent students can articulate the global significance of their questions and why these questions merit study. Preparing our future students to be globally competent requires teachers be prepared in engaging in global inquiry also. It will be important to require teacher candidates to connect what they learned through this inquiry project to its impact on their future research assignments for elementary learners.
4. **Build access to developmentally-appropriate text material and resources that allow for critical examination of content and marginalized points of view.** During the course, teacher candidates are introduced to children's literature and other source materials that challenge Eurocentric thinking or provide perspective from the marginalized point of view such as Jane Yolen's (1996) *Encounter* or Joyce Carol Thomas's (1998) *I Have Heard of a Land*. However, to deepen their resources and extend their thinking around engaging children in critical thinking and exploring marginalized points of view, an action step will be to create an additional assignment to develop an annotated bibliography of curriculum materials and resources providing alternative perspectives on history, culture, and global issues and concerns. The teacher candidates must generate critical questions that would be appropriate for elementary

learners to analyze, evaluate, and problem solve for each of the selected texts or resource materials. This activity will motivate teacher candidates to focus on identifying curriculum materials allowing for critical examination of events, people, and issues. In this way, they will be more likely to engage learners in critical thinking if they have materials and resources supporting their goals.

5. **Establish cross-cultural connections.** A few of the teacher candidates recognized the value of utilizing technology to establish cross-cultural connections between their students and students living in other places to share different perspectives, experiences, and understandings of studied content. To encourage and develop this practice more broadly among the teacher candidates, an action step will be to provide teacher candidates with first-hand, personal experiences with this type of learning experience. A connection will be established with a teacher education program from an existing international partnership to identify a similar course and willing participants to engage in cross-cultural learning experiences throughout the semester. There will be opportunities to make introductions and participate in community-building activities with the international teacher candidates via Skype and email communications. There will be several opportunities following these initial interactions to engage in common readings and participate in journal response forums on Moodle on topics such as what it means to be a global citizen, service-learning pedagogy, and integrating cross-cultural experiences in curriculum planning. A required assignment for our teacher candidates is to complete a community mapping project with their clinical placement schools. They create a video that documents the geographical, cultural, economic, and historical community and school assets and reflect on how this knowledge will impact their instructional planning. Our teacher candidates will share these projects with their international partners, inviting them to provide feedback and create similar projects that provide insights on their local schools.

### Conclusions

We will implement these action steps into our social studies methods course and continue to examine how our teacher candidates integrate global content into their instructional unit plans. We will also share our findings and action steps with other content-area methods instructors within the program to promote dialogue and related actions in other coursework. Teacher candidates in elementary education programs need opportunities to explore how to effectively integrate global content across the content areas to prepare their future students to be globally competent citizens.

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#### Author Bios

**Tracy Rock** is a Professor in the Department of Reading and Elementary Education at UNC Charlotte. Her teaching and research interests include elementary social studies education, service learning pedagogy, and global education. Email: [trrock@uncc.edu](mailto:trrock@uncc.edu).

**Drew Polly** is Associate Professor in the Department of Reading and Elementary Education at UNC Charlotte. His research interests include examining ways to best support teachers' use of learner-centered pedagogies.

**Laura K. Handler** is a doctoral candidate at the University of North Carolina Charlotte in the Urban Education program. Laura's current research focuses on social studies pedagogies and building school community through service opportunities and parent engagement.