

Problematizing Standards for Including Students with Disabilities for Global Education Programs

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Introduction

In this paper, we explore the concepts of global education and inclusive education. In our respective professional roles, we provide two different perspectives. Ann Nevin is a special education teacher educator who focuses on inclusive education. Hilary Landorf is a social studies teacher educator specializing in global education. Both are faculty members in the College of Education at a Carnegie Research Extensive "minority" university in an urban metropolitan multicultural area of the south eastern USA. As a public research institution, this university is the top producer of Hispanic graduates in the US and the third largest producer of minority graduates (52% Hispanic, 12% African-American, and 4% Asian). Although many of our teacher education students are bilingual and hail from other cultures, many have grown up in mini-monocultural enclaves and thus have had limited exposure to those who hold different views from themselves. We pose the following questions.

1. To what extent have global education programs embraced the practice of inclusive education?
2. To what extent are inclusive education standards for global education deleterious or efficacious?

We start with the premise that there are some common goals between global education and inclusive education that might form a basis for a shared dialogue. For example, a goal for global education is to transform education so that the learner can self-reflect and take action to experience a freer self, a freer life, within the larger world context. A goal for inclusive education is the transformation of schooling itself to welcome, value, and support the learning of all children regardless of their special needs. Like Paolo Friere (1970), we believe that "Dialogue is the encounter between [people], mediated by the world, to name the world" (69). We want to transform the worlds of global education and inclusive education. This can

be accomplished, we pose, through a dialogue with each other. In this paper, to begin the dialogue, we define global education and inclusive education, describe the theoretical framework that guides our thesis, analyze the standards of various professional teacher preparation organizations, pose two problems that emerge from the standards, and discuss implications and recommendations for future study.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for this paper emerges from Taylor's (1994) work. In *The Politics of Recognition*, Taylor asserts that one of the driving forces behind political, social and cultural movements has always been the need, and sometimes the demand, for recognition. According to Taylor, the movement in the 18th century from honor to dignity brought with it a politics of universalism. Taylor further asserts that at the end of the 18th century a modern sense of identity was born, and with it, a politics of difference. Honor, as Taylor uses the word, is intrinsically linked to inequalities. In order for some to have honor, others necessarily may not have it. Taylor goes on to say that the movement from honor to dignity brought with it the idea of universalism, which emphasizes the equal dignity of all human beings, or citizen dignity. The underlying premise here is that everyone shares in this dignity. With the development of modern identity the focus of recognition was on individuality, rather than on equality. This development gave rise to the notion that we are all different. Within the politics of difference, "we give due acknowledgement only to what is universally present – everyone has an identity – through recognizing what is peculiar to each. The universal demand powers an acknowledgement of specificity" (Taylor 1994, 39). In other words, we define ourselves in relation to our uniqueness and how we are different from each other. Being true to oneself, and

being recognized for who one is, becomes being true to one's originality, which one discovers in articulation, or dialogue, especially dialogue with those who are different from oneself.

The politics of dignity is at the forefront of the international women's rights movement and the movement to ensure nondiscriminatory assessment of children with disabilities from culturally and linguistically diverse heritages. The idea behind both movements is that all humans are equally worthy of equal respect. In contrast, the push for providing special classes to English to Speakers of Other Languages as well as making accommodations for special education students in the classroom is an example of the prevalence of the politics of difference. The idea here is that we have an obligation to make accommodations based on difference. Taylor believes, as do we, that one can go beyond the tension between the politics of dignity and the politics of difference by accepting the other on his or her own terms. Taylor calls this acceptance "the presumption of equal worth" (Taylor 1994, 72) and argues that we only need a sense of our own limited part in the whole human story to accept this presumption.

Definition of global education

Global education represents a long-term strategy to cultivate a new generation of citizens who are internationally informed and engaged. It bears pointing out that as a movement, it is far from philosophically monolithic. (Even the nomenclature varies; other labels attached to similar education initiatives include development education, world studies, and intercultural education). But by and large there is a shared agenda, which combines intellectual capacity building, cross-cultural awareness, and hands-on group problem-solving (OneWorld US Special Report, from www.oneworld.net). Knighten (2004) interviewed Dr. Merry Merryfield, one of the foremost scholars in the field of global education, who gives the following definition of global education: "Global education prepares young people to understand and interact within a culturally diverse and globally interconnected world" (Knighten, 1). Merryfield (2004) posed four ways in which teachers are currently preparing their students to become responsible global citizens. These include learning to see the world through the eyes of the 'other' by considering multiple perspectives, learning to think globally, understanding the complexity and conflicts of an interconnected world, and interacting with the 'other' through cross-cultural experiences.

A lot of theory and practice on global education has emerged since its formal inception in the 1960s (Gaudelli 2003) but, to date, research has yielded little in terms of gauging the effectiveness of global education in helping students to better understand their world (Johnston and Ochoa 1993). Gaudelli (2003) describes four areas in which empirical research on global education has been conducted. These are examining the effects of global education courses on student learning, the interaction of class climate and content acquisition of global education, teacher preparation of global education, and professional development of teachers and global education. In general, in the United States, successful global education programs are just as diverse and disconnected from one another as the 14,571 school districts in the US (NCES, 2001) among which they are located.

Definition of inclusive education

Over a decade ago, UNESCO (1994) issued the Salamanca Statement which supported the practice of inclusive education for students with disabilities, with the caution that "while

inclusive schools provide a favourable setting for achieving equal opportunity and full participation, their success requires a concerted effort, not only by teachers and school staff, but also by peers, parents, families and volunteers" (11). Special education worldwide and in the United States has moved towards a position of inclusion (rather than segregation or exclusion) where inclusion refers to the accommodation of classrooms and curricula for the full participation of students with disabilities in general education classrooms located in their neighborhood schools (Bartolo 2003).

The major goal of inclusive special education is to create schools in which all children are welcomed, valued, supported, as they learn (Villa and Thousand 2005). Valuing differences involves discouraging mere tolerance of those with disabilities, and does not require rehabilitation before entering into relationships. Valuing differences means that people are respected for their differences rather than in spite of their differences. Villa and Thousand (2005) write that inclusive education relies on an "underlying assumption that inclusion is a way of life, a way of living together, based on a belief that each individual is valued and belongs" (11).

Analysis of existing standards

Currently in the USA there are several professional organizations that have generated standards for teacher education in social studies education (NCSS), special education (CEC), and beginning teachers (INTASC). A review of these standards for preparing teachers in global education reveals the extent to which standards currently exist for embedding the principles expressed in the Salamanca Statement. With respect to standards in the USA for beginning educators (both general and special educators), INTASC Standard 3 requires teachers to understand how learners differ; Standard 4 requires teachers to use a variety of instructional strategies. In comparison, CEC standards for entry into the special education profession includes competencies related to knowledge and skills in understanding characteristics of learners with different cognitive, physical, cultural, social and emotional needs; competencies related to knowledge and skills for instructional content and practice. Moreover, the NCSS standards also seem to provide a framework for addressing both global education and inclusive education. Excerpts from specific standards illustrate the common language amongst the professional groups as indicated by the phrases that have been italicized.

National Council for Social Studies (NCSS)

The National Council for Social Studies education includes the following standards that appear to be related to inclusive education and global education:

- Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to create at the appropriate school levels learning experiences that fit the *different approaches to learning of diverse learners*.
- Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to organize and provide instruction at the appropriate school level for the *study of culture and cultural diversity*.
- Social studies teachers should possess the knowledge, capabilities, and dispositions to provide instruction at the appropriate school level for the study of *global connections and interdependence*.

Interstate New Teacher Assessment and Support Consortium (INTASC)

Similarly, the INTASC standards seem to provide the framework for teachers to demonstrate competencies related to inclusive practices and global education:

- Principle #2: The teacher understands how children learn and develop, and can provide learning opportunities that support the intellectual, social and personal development of each learner. Teachers *understand students with disabilities* within the broader context of their families, *cultural backgrounds, socioeconomic classes, languages, communities and peer/social groups*.
 - Standard 3 Diverse Learners: The teacher understands how learners differ in their approaches to learning and creates instructional opportunities that are *adapted to learners from diverse cultural backgrounds and with exceptionalities*.

The International Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

Several knowledge standards address the need for understanding cultural and linguistic diversity.

- Common Core 4. Instructional Content and Practice Knowledge #7: Variations in beliefs, traditions, and values *across cultures within society and the effect of the relationship among child, family, and schooling*.
- Common Core 6. Managing Student Behavior and Social Interaction Skills Knowledge #6: Strategies for preparing individuals to live *harmoniously and productively in a multi-class, multiethnic, multicultural, and multinational world*.

In conclusion, there seems to be substantial agreement among these three diverse professional organizations with respect to standards for teachers to demonstrate knowledge and skills for differentiating instruction, supporting the education of diverse learners, and preparing students to live in an interconnected world.

Problematizing the standards in both global education and inclusive education

By problematizing the standards, we hope to engage the professional community as well as prospective teacher candidates in a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages that standards create. We pose two problems as discussed below.

Problem #1: The standards as written do not capture the aims of global education and inclusive education

In all curriculum areas, standards generally contain two elements: 1) a description of the expectations of what should be known or performed, called content standards, and an assessment of how well it should be known or performed, called performance standards (Eisner 1995). One would be hard pressed to argue against the general notion of standards. Every professional organization, teacher, parent and educational administrator who cares about education has standards for his/her administrators, teachers, and students, expresses those standards both orally and in written documents, and holds their constituents accountable to those standards in some way or another. One problem we see with standards is that, although they may be necessary, they rarely if ever address the aims of the enterprise, in this case global and inclusive

education. In addressing what to include and what to assess, standards articulate pieces of the puzzle, but not the form of the puzzle itself.

Instead, standards leave a gap, or a hole, between form and content. Hett (1993), who created a widely used instrument to measure global-mindedness, noted that the generally stated goal of global education in the United States is to foster a sense of global belonging through lessening ethnocentrism, increasing knowledge of other cultures, and promoting a concern for the global ecosystem (Hett 1993). In inclusive education, the goal, as we stated above, is to create schools in which all children are welcomed, valued, supported, as they learn (Villa and Thousand 2005). Both global and inclusive education share the common aim of empowering teachers and students to learn and accept themselves *and* the 'other', yet their standards address what and how the teachers are to teach in the classroom. Thus, in the standards that infuse global education in social studies, teachers are to teach *about* cultural diversity, global connections and interdependence, in ways that fit the different approaches to learning of diverse learners. In inclusive education, teachers are expected to embrace students' values across cultures within society, be conscious of the effect of the relationship among child, family, and schooling, and come up with "strategies for preparing individuals to live harmoniously and productively in a multi-class, multiethnic, multicultural, and multinational world." As lofty as they are, the standards address the make-up of the learner, the content to be learned, and the context in which learning is ideally to take place, but not the goals of the enterprise of learning itself—creating the experiences of being included and at the same time being acknowledged for one's uniqueness.

Problem #2 Once standards are set, there is necessarily an in-group and an out-group

As Taylor (1994) suggests, the politics of difference must be balanced by the politics of dignity. Like the politics of identity, once a standard is named, it creates an in-group and an out-group. When standards are set for teacher educators and teachers, as is the case with the standards for social studies and inclusive education, the in-group are those who think they have met the standards, and those whose evaluations show that others think they have met standards. The out-group includes those who do not think or want to meet the standards, and those whom others have deemed as not meeting the standards. We suggest that there is a danger that setting standards encourages people to objectify content, in a sense making content into the 'other.' With respect to global education, teachers can often inadvertently promulgate stereotypes about a particular culture, or present other cultures as their superficial aspects, commonly called the 4 Fs approach: Food, Fashion, Festivals, and Folklore (Sleeter & Grant, 2002). In special education, teachers can lose sight of the humanity and commonality of children's needs and development by focusing on the medical conditions or the debilitating aspects of the disability, sometimes creating an *alphabet soup* of conditions (EH, LD, MR, etc.). Kunc (1994), a family therapist and world-renowned advocate for disability rights, and a person with cerebral palsy who has experienced the impact of segregated schooling, refers to this phenomenon of identifying a person in terms of the disability as *disability spread*, the tendency to see only the disability rather than the whole person (shown below in Figure 1).

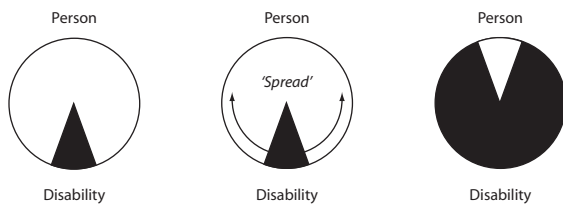


Figure 1: Disability Spread

Overall, standards for preparing teachers in both traditional social studies and special education programs are designed to be exclusive. Standards often serve a gate-keeping function that keep people and ideas out of their respective circles by carefully defining who and what can be included. The professional groups can use standards ostensibly to be accountable to the profession and to clients by assuring minimum qualifications and competencies are attained by those deemed fit to be included. On the other hand, the standards can themselves be viewed as trivializing the aims of both global education and inclusive education.

Discussion

Problematizing in this context means that teacher educators (and by implication teachers) overtly and explicitly address the tensions that exist. This means that faculty can encourage dialogue that validates, challenges, analyzes, and critiques assumptions, ideas, and conclusions without silencing the unique voice(s) of the students. This means that faculty can create a dialectic where two seemingly opposite points of view are held at the same time. This is exactly the problem that standards by definition create.

Educators who choose to problematize the standards (whether global educators or inclusive educators) may find themselves engaged in passionate dialogue to address issues such as: In whose interests are standards set? Who is it that benefits when certain (predominantly European) cultures insist that their high school graduates are multilingual and the American culture seems to be continuing its history of isolationism with the English-only movement? What are the cognitive benefits of multi-lingualism? Why are so few [American] public school teachers aware of this research? How can I ask "What is the context?" For example, if I ask my education students to "sequence the story ideas" (this is a typical State Standard for literacy), I can 'step back' to ask, "What are *your culture's* ways of 'sequencing' a story? Do you want your children to learn 'this way' to sequence?"

Further research in global education and inclusive education is recommended. We found one study which seems to incorporate both global education and inclusive education. Demovsky and Niemuth (1999) conducted an action research project of a program for increasing global skills and awareness of ethnic diversity for 6th graders and high school students with learning disabilities in social studies classes. Prior to the instructional unit, the students showed a lack of understanding of ethnic diversity, low tolerance for each other, and a lack of social skills. After the instructional unit which utilized cooperative group learning and incorporated themes of global understanding and tolerance, the students showed improvement in respecting cultural differences in their community and improved communication with each other. Pre- and post-test scores showed they increased their awareness of geography. The researchers recommended more direct instruction for tolerance. However, the researchers did not assess changes in the interactions of children with and without disabilities or children from different cultural heritages.

Brislin (1986) offers another resource that might help global educators and inclusive educators frame mutually beneficial research agendas. Brislin (1986) provided a guide to interpreting cross-cultural experiences through a unique set of training materials based on some 100 scenarios or critical incidents organized around a set of 18 concepts which provide a framework for understanding cross-cultural interactions and for developing cross-cultural training programs. For the revised edition, Brislin (1996) added new critical incidents and integrated recent research studies and analyses related to the 18 themes. New areas include interactions between members of the deaf culture and hearing individuals, and the delivery of health care across cultural boundaries.

Bartolo (2003) described two major dilemmas that EU society and schools must face regarding threats to social exclusion: (1) how to promote competitiveness while ensuring social cohesion (here focusing on solidarity as the attempt to reduce social inequalities); and (2) how to enhance integration while respecting the entitlement for inclusion of diverse individuals and groups. These are genuine and complex dilemmas in constant tension that have no final solution. This is exactly the tension that must be faced when trying to achieve teacher preparation standards and at the same time advancing the aims of inclusion.

Landorf, Rocco, and Nevin (under review) identify a gap between the teacher education practices in preparing global education and inclusive education professors. In global education teachers often ignore issues of relating to students with disabilities in the classroom. By the same token, in inclusive education teachers often ignore infusing global perspectives in the classroom. These researchers suggest that the role of an inclusive global educator is to help students create more permeable boundaries. As they negotiate the borderlands towards a more respectful and tolerant acceptance of those who are different from themselves, the result is that each person creates a larger more inclusive circle within which to live and learn. We hope that the dialogue between global educators and inclusive educators will generate new standards for professional practice that better capture the aims of both. Clearly there is a need to create a research agenda with the collaboration of conscious thinkers and activists in both global education and inclusive education.

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