# Preparing globally competent teachers

## Indo-German perspectives on teacher training

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### Abstract

Globalization has an immense effect on education. Education relies on the teacher and the process by which teachers are developed. In this context, the expectations of teacher role and options for teacher preparation today have key roles to play in educating children to become responsible citizens of increasingly multicultural societies and active participants concerning the global challenges in various facets of society. Globalization is one of the most powerful forces shaping the present and future world in which today's children and youth will have to survive, intellectually, to create a sustainable and just world society. Starting from a focused understanding of globalization, this article discusses the competences of global learning, associated competences of global teachers, and perspectives within the teacher training systems of India and Germany.

**Keywords:** global teacher, global competences, teacher education

### Introduction[*]

This article is a result of interactions within a German federal government-sponsored student exchange programme, titled 'A New Passage to India', which aims to expand

the intercultural and global orientation competences of students in Germany and India.[1] This paper's German co-author, Gregor Lang-Wojtasik, has made numerous visits to India over the past 27 years and has published articles on various research questions concerning the subcontinent (e.g. Lang-Wojtasik, 2001; 2013a; 2013b). The Indian co-author, Brijesh Darji, took part in the exchange programme in the summer term of 2013, spending five months exploring German society and the German education system at the University of Education, Weingarten. The article has no specific empirical methodology but developed out of the experiences and ideas of the authors, and from concepts debated in a class on 'Global learning as lifelong challenge' especially designed for exchange students from the University of Weingarten's various partner institutions. The article does not present its own empirical findings but offers a summary of the concepts debated within the class, and discusses the options for creating global teachers who will be ambassadors of education for upcoming generations beyond the borders of existing nation-states. The authors take globalization as a rising spatial fact within world society, creating challenges from factual, temporal, and social perspectives (Lang-Wojtasik, 2014a); the paper includes critical debates on the nature of globalization as well. We are convinced that globalization creates new possibilities to solve world challenges for everyone, on the basis of human rights and in the context of sustainability and global justice.

In this paper we reflect on the role of globalization within teacher education, and on how this relates to our own understanding of education. Education is the most important tool in national and international development. Its aim is to achieve overall development and enlightenment of the mind, broaden the vision, and build character, which can be beneficial to the individual him/herself and to the society and the nation. To achieve this aim, the roles of teachers and teacher educators are very important. Teacher education is the 'brain' of all educational disciplines, as it delivers education to train prospective teachers. As with all other professions, teacher education is affected by globalization. No country can live in isolation; each experiences the impact of global trends and changes in all fields of life.

We present here the main lines of debate that emerged in the aforementioned class, to inform the article's subsequent focus on the challenges of preparing globally competent teachers within the existing system of teacher education. To deal with this, we discuss the following questions:

1. What is our understanding of globalization (as distinct from internationalization)?

2. Which competences are feasible concerning global learning?

3. What specific competences would global teachers need to gain?

4.  How can these competences be acquired within the existing systems of teacher training in India and Germany?

After describing briefly our understanding of globalization, we take a focused look at the associated competences as relevant to global learning. Keeping these in mind, we then try to understand the specific competences of global teachers that are important in assisting students to gain such competences. Finally we offer some further perspectives for debate on how this can be made to happen within the existing understandings of teacher role and teacher training in the two countries.

## Globalization

Even when looking systematically and historically at the term 'globalization', it is not easy to specify its meaning. Some would say that the arrival of Columbus in America in 1492, an event considered to be exploration from a certain (ethnocentric) point of view, was the initial spur to a debate on globalizing processes such as colonialism and imperialism. These processes and the events that followed would then be taken as the development of globalization, first in economic and then in other aspects of society (Osterhammel and Petersson, 2003). Maybe it helps here to differentiate. We can discuss *internationalization*, on the one hand, as a rising spatial awareness and as the term for exchange among nations and nation-states, represented for example in the United Nations. There would then be the term *globalization*, on the other, to describe transformative processes *beyond* nations and nation-states, and for the consequences of transnationalism for the sovereignty, power options, and identities of nation-states (Beck, 1997: 28f). Besides economy, the field of globalization includes consequences for most aspects of society: politics, science, law, etc. (Niederberger and Schink, 2011). Most probably globalization has a strong effect on culture, and an understanding of a 'world culture' would involve a reference to the world as a single place that serves as a common frame of reference for everyone (Tomlinson, 1999). Taking this into account we believe that the world of today can be described as a 'world-society', i.e. as a communication horizon and problem horizon on the global level and beyond national boundaries (Luhmann, 1997). It is characterized by risk and insecurity, and can be perceived in phenomena of acceleration, ambiguity, and lack of clarity (Lang-Wojtasik, 2014a). Opting for such an understanding, we are aware that we talk about options and that these might be already embedded in an ethnocentric view of societal description, needing clear reflection on possible post-colonial semantics. This is often visible in Indo-German debates about globalization, where there is a fear that a focus on the economy alone will be accompanied by insufficient attention to other aspects of the phenomenon. Knowing that both countries are 'global players', especially in terms of multinational companies, we aim to keep within our account also the shady sides of 'development'. As both countries are self-professed democracies, it is essential to keep in mind the

consequences of globalization for the majority of people in both specific countries. According to Sen (2002), there is an urgent need for both international and national reforms to improve the distribution of the benefits of globalization. At the national level, public policy is critical in areas like education, epidemiology, land reform, microcredit, legal protection, etc. Internationally, we need educational exchanges, technological dissemination, and environmental protections.

The aforementioned understanding of globalization, concerning the idea of the 'world-society', creates challenges for national societies and their associated learning options. Some of the challenges for globalized societies are as follows:

1.  Technology is changing rapidly and continuously; learning to deal with it requires not just one-off mastery of processes but also adaptability.

2.  Societies are becoming more diverse and compartmentalized, with interpersonal relationships therefore requiring more contact with those who are different from oneself.

3.  Globalization is creating new forms of interdependence, and actions involve both influences and consequences (such as pollution) that stretch well beyond an individual's local or national community (Scheunpflug, 1996; Lang-Wojtasik, 2011).

To discuss these issues, it should be made clear that global learning and global teachers require an education system that functions according to the aims set out in UNESCO's Education for All charter (UNESCO, 2014). Though the challenges are different in the two countries, and are not discussed in detail here, we want to point out that reflecting on the competences required for global learning and global teachers necessitates a clear commitment to dealing with the neglected parts of the society in both these self-described democracies (Datta and Lang-Wojtasik, 2013: 7).

## Competences of global learning

To deal with the aforementioned challenges of globalization requires a clear understanding of educational opportunities. UNESCO's famous vision of lifelong and continuous learning within a learning society (UNESCO, 1972) is becoming essential for a successful life in the modern age and for empowering global society. People need to learn to know, to do, to live together, and to be (UNESCO, 1996). To live well in a global society and to face the challenges of the present era, people need essential skills, up-to-date knowledge, and the latest information on changing social needs, technologies, and attitudes (Scheunpflug, 1996; Lang-Wojtasik, 2011). Global education motivates and empowers people to become active as responsible global citizens. Thereby it aims to change citizens' attitudes, and encourages them to reflect on their own role in the world. In consequence we refer in this article to

the understanding of global education suggested at the November 2002 Maastricht conference:

> *Global Education is education that opens people's eyes and minds to the realities of the world, and awakens them to bring about a world of greater justice, equity and human rights for all. Global Education is understood to encompass Development Education, Human Rights Education, Education for Sustainability, Education for Peace and Conflict Prevention and Intercultural Education; being the Global Dimensions of Education for Citizenship.*
>
> (O'Loughlin and Wegimont, 2002: 66)

In this understanding, education is an option for preparing the younger generation for a complex society. The pattern of education and its transaction processes need to be updated in the light of the emerging challenges of global society.

Today's understanding of education and learning is very much dominated by the discourse on 'competence'. At the very outset it may be noted that competences comprise the identified behaviours, knowledge, skills, and abilities that directly and positively affect the success of professionals and institutions. One of the most prominent definitions suggests that competences are a positive combination of knowledge, ability, and willingness on the part of the individual to cope successfully and responsibly with changing situations (Weinert, 2001). This understanding is very much embedded in the interlinking of competence and performance. The above definition is used in many international comparative studies, where competence is treated as a cognitive-based and measurable quantity. In this article we want to underline the distinct meaning of competence as it is promulgated in education theory (Roth, 1971). This understanding focuses on the rationality of human beings beyond measurable cognitive achievements, and links it to self, factual, and social competences (Roth, 1971: 180). Against this background it could be helpful to find out how societal participation could be created and how interlinked creative abilities could be facilitated. Necessary competences could be categorized into three broad areas, as defined in the ambit of the DeSeCo process (Rychen, 2003): the competences to (1) use tools interactively – to make interactive use of language/symbols/texts, knowledge/information, and technology; (2) interact in heterogeneous groups – to relate well to others, to cooperate and work in teams, and to manage and resolve conflicts; and (3) act autonomously – to act within the big picture, to form and execute life plans and personal projects, and to assert and defend rights, interests, limits, and needs.

Within global learning there are four related, circular fields of content: peace and non-violence, as a frame of aimed activity options (*spatial*); migration and interculturality, as focused challenges concerning knowledge (*factual*); development

and environment, concerning questions of the inter- and intragenerational survival of human kind (*temporal*); and human rights and plurality, as premises for living together (*social*). Looking at today's risky world, there are four corresponding paradox challenges to be dealt with in learning: openness and limitation (*spatial*); knowledge and lack of knowledge (*factual*); certitude and incertitude (*temporal*); and familiarity and strangeness (*social*) (Scheunpflug, 1996; Lang-Wojtasik, 2014a; 2014b). Being aware of these challenges concerning learning, one should ask how to deal with them and how to develop concepts to educate the next generation. In the present paper, this focus is limited to questions concerning the place of teachers within society.

## Expected competences of global teachers

It is common knowledge that academic and professional standards for teachers constitute a critical component of the essential learning conditions for achieving educational goals. The teacher education system, through its initial and continuing professional programmes, is expected to ensure an adequate supply of professionally competent teachers to run a nation's schools. The International Commission on Education for the twenty-first century highlighted as early as the mid-1990s the need for a rethinking of teacher education 'in order to bring out in future teachers precisely those human and intellectual qualities that will facilitate a fresh approach to teaching' (UNESCO, 1996).

To make this happen requires clarity about the assumed role of teachers in society. Preparing pupils for a global society requires a teacher with global perspectives and attitude. The teacher should be put in a position where he/she is able to prepare the young generation for this new reality. He or she must ensure that students gain knowledge on global issues, different languages, cross-cultural skills, and the values of citizenship and collaboration that are essential to work and live in this interdependent world. Further, efforts should be made to develop reasoning, resilience, and responsibility among the younger generation. Reasoning will enable them to think critically and solve problems. Resilience will help them to develop such life skills as flexibility and adaptability. Responsibility will help them to act wisely and become good decision-makers. Besides this, a teacher must have the pedagogical skills to teach students to analyse primary sources from around the world, appreciate multiple points of view, and recognize stereotyping, and a commitment to assisting students to become globally and nationally responsible citizens. Since the teacher has a prime role to play in developing these skills and values and enabling students to be wise, the role of the teacher is becoming highly challenging. Nonetheless, even students who are unable to leave their own countries can be introduced to international students, visiting faculty, or immigrants in ways that help them learn about the world and build cross-cultural values.

Against the backdrop described above, the teacher education paradigm is shifting from one of simple 'training for teachers' and towards one of education for globally competent teachers. Thus, the aim of teacher education should be to prepare globally competent teachers. But what is required to meet the demands of the teaching profession? The preconditions for a teacher to cope with teaching tasks can be termed the competences of teachers. Each competence has a distinct pattern, made up of knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes. From an Indian point of view one can refer to four different domains: (1) *cognitive* competences, referring to competences in planning, instructing, communicating, managing, and evaluating, and to subject mastery; (2) *affective* competences, referring to efficacy, expectancy, locus of control, enthusiasm, and warmth and acceptance; (3) *psychomotor* competences, referring to capabilities at demonstration, improvising with teaching/learning aids, and technology use; and (4) *perceptual* competences, associated with organized demeanour, dynamism, flexibility, and creativity (Bhardwaj, 2010).

From a German perspective, teacher education standards set out by the Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK; the conference of the 16 education ministers) and based on educational science seek to improve the quality of school education regularly. These are framed in terms of an understanding of the job profile of a teacher. Teachers are expected to be: (1) experts in (scientifically based) *teaching and learning;* (2) aware that their educational duty is very much linked to *instruction* and *school life,* including the parents' work and including constructive problem-solving; (3) competent *evaluators* and *counsellors* who make use of psychological and diagnostic competences; (4) continuously *developing* their competences through further training, including fruitful contacts with institutions beyond the school and in the world of work; and (5) active in *school development,* through a school culture beneficial to learning and a motivating school climate that incorporates both internal and external evaluation. Accordingly, there are 11 competences to be followed in teacher education, and a set of connected and related standards (KMK, 2004) defined in order to make teacher education programmes comparable and accountable. The standards are aligned to developments in educational research, pedagogy, and other sciences that contribute to the progress of teaching and learning, the school, and the education system.

Do these selected aspects help us to isolate the competences of the global teacher? Maybe the suggestions of the United States National Education Association (NEA; 2010) can orient the search for further options, though these suggestions are shaped by economic perspectives in the US context. This agency suggested understanding the term 'global competence' as referring 'to the acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and ability to learn and work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency

in a foreign language, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community' (NEA, 2010: 1). Consequently, it emphasized four focal areas: 'international awareness [...], appreciation of cultural diversity [...], proficiency in foreign languages [...] and competitive skills' (ibid). This model seems to be overly cognition-driven. Against our underlying concept of global learning, we feel it should be extended to incorporate a rationality-based vision of a critical approach, and a wider content scope, beyond economic matters, to take in such global challenges as peace/non-violence, migration/interculturality, development/environment and human rights/plurality, all in the context of sustainability and global justice. So if competence is taken, from a conception of rationality, as the use of one's own brain to deal critically with the various challenges, it includes also questions of power and of the distribution of chances.

Starting from the works of Pike and Selby (1988), and contextualized in the debates of Education for All (UNESCO, 2014), Lang-Wojtasik (2014b) tries to systematize the debates on the global teacher within a world-society. He underlines that the competences of global learning encompass a highly complex field of human activity in relation to the world on a normative basis. Sustainability and global justice are easily acceptable as visions to change society, but how should they be taught? The main challenge, then, lies in cultivating changes in the attitudes of the persons on whom the learning process is focused (teachers and learners), beyond the dissemination of information (a duty that is assumed to follow from teachers' possession of adequate and proper knowledge). This challenge concerns the advancement of a reflexive–enlightened attitude, to prove oneself in reference to societal cross-sectional subjects, and to be gained within autonomous learning arrangements. Lang-Wojtasik suggests four circular, connected fields in which globally competent teachers operate and in which competences could be created:

1. *Attitude and capability,* in dealing socially with processes of individualization and pluralization in education, instruction, assessment, and counselling:

   - authenticity as a teacher and as part of a human community;

   - conscious and reflective handling of cultures, perspectives, and power-structures;

   - facilitating learning processes, based on assumed needs and life-worlds/environments, and reflecting variety and sensitivity to limitations;

   - development and advancement of learner-specific diagnostic and (self-)assessment capabilities.

2. *Content and topics,* for dealing factually with knowledge and lack of knowledge*:*

   - trans-disciplinary linkage of contents;

- interdependent curricula;

- willingness to embrace controversy, perspective-change, and contradictions;

- focus on subjects such as non-violent conflict resolution, social justice, values and perceptions, sustainable development, interdependence, human rights, diversity, and global citizenship.

3. A focus on *development and discovery,* to deal temporally with certainty and uncertainty*:*

- a future orientation to education and lifelong learning processes based on biographies;

- innovation in curricula and methodology;

- openness to border-crossing creativity, flexibility, and curiosity for sustainable lifestyles;

- embodying visions for alternative life-design and pioneering new options for acting.

4. A *grounded world view and humanity,* to deal with spatial openness (of the nation-state) and sometimes inadequate orientation:

- a global-centric, cross-linked, and holistic frame;

- belief in human potential;

- respect for human rights as universal values and as a genuine component of debates;

- willingness to look beyond one's own activities in life and school (adapted from Lang-Wojtasik, 2014b: 8).

It is clear that globally competent teachers need many capabilities beyond cognitive aspects. They require a good combination of affective, psychomotor, and perceptual approaches for dealing with information and to offer opportunities for learners to develop an enlightened approach to dealing with the challenges of the present world.

Education prepares the future generation to take their due place in society; a teacher plays a pivotal role in this process. A teacher is the key person to initiate and support change for educational improvements. With the increasing complexity of problems, expectations of teachers are also increasing. To create a thirst for knowledge among his/her pupils, a teacher must continue to learn and grow professionally. Thus, education of teachers at all levels is highly significant.

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## Indian and German teacher education perspectives on global teachers

The systems of teacher education in India and Germany are quite different. This is due to the different structures of the education systems and to the different preconditions for teacher training. In order to discuss how the aforementioned options for global teacher education might be put into practice, some basic information is necessary. Both countries are federally structured. In Germany, 16 different school systems exist, ranging from community-oriented to multi-tier systems (Cortina *et al.*, 2008). In India, the National Policy on Education of 1986 (Government of India, 1986; 1992) called for the creation of a universalized education system to ensure comparable structure and quality across all 28 states of the nation, to overcome existing differences in length of schooling and school structure (Lang-Wojtasik, 2013a). This aforementioned federalism has consequences for teacher training.

When comparing the two countries, the main apparent structural difference concerns the duration of teacher education. In general, teacher training in India lasts two semesters, while in Germany it comprises a minimum of seven or eight semesters and is an integrated endeavour. In India, Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) candidates must already hold a Bachelor or Master's degree. In both countries there are theoretical and practical aspects to the studies. In Germany, studies are complete only after a second stage consisting of a school placement and associated studies organized by a school administration institution (this stage is termed a 'Referendariat', or internship), lasting 1.5 to 2 years. Most Indian universities have their own B.Ed. teacher training curriculum, covering major subjects like sociology, psychology, philosophy, classroom management, technology, and subject-specific teaching methods. German teacher training courses, on the other hand, are generally integrated courses consisting of a combination of educational science, psychology, basic sciences (philosophy, sociology, theology), and two to three teaching subjects including their didactics. Taking these structural differences as a given, we now present two possible visions, one associated with each system, for creating globally competent teachers.

The *vision of developments* can be seen in the following aims of Indian teacher education: to make teacher education integrative as well as liberal, humanistic, and responsive to the demands of inclusive education; to appreciate the diversity of learning styles that children exhibit and the learning contexts in which teachers have to function, including overpopulated classrooms, diversities of language, ethnicity, and social background, and children suffering from disadvantages of various kinds; to meet the needs of diverse contexts through critical reflection by the teacher on his/her practices; to empower the teacher with the self in the light of changing contexts; and to address contemporary needs with respect to multicultural

education and teaching for diversity (National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education, 2009: 19).

The *German visions* of teacher education take into account the changed profile of requirements to become a teacher within a changed education system and changing societal conditions. Teachers are expected to be innovators of schools, within schools, and concerning pupils, according to specific changes. It is emphasized that the teachers of today should be able to deal attentively, constructively, and professionally with plurality, and should develop the capability and preparedness to cooperate with other professions and institutions (KMK, 2004: 2).

To summarize, both countries emphasize the role of teachers as active agents for creating future generations in a reflective way. In dealing with societal challenges teachers should focus on the plurality and diversity of the democratic societies represented in the schools. That is a clear vision for innovations in the professionalization of future teachers, and offers opportunities to think about options for creating global teachers in the two countries; though they are different in structure. Globally competent teachers should be able to create learning circumstances that promote questioning of the world, to make the initially quoted concept of global learning a reality (Lang-Wojtasik, 2014b).

We would like to offer some conclusions from our discussions in class and beyond, as perspectives for ongoing debate:

- Global learning and global teachers need a functioning and flexible education system to make lifelong Education for All happen.

- The competences of global learning should be considered both as cross-sectional aspects of the education system and in systems of teacher training. Consequently, aspects of global learning can be included in all sections of teacher education, in the B.Ed. and/or integrated model; that is, in educational science, psychology, sociology, philosophy, classroom management, teaching subjects and their didactics, etc.

- Global teachers need a strong personality and a clear vision of the meaning of democracy today when dealing with diversity and plurality against the global dimension of education.

- They need consciousness, empowerment, and respect for their attitudes and capabilities to deal with a diverse society; should possess a wide range of knowledge and capabilities to deal with a growing lack of knowledge, including critical questions of power; must offer abilities to foster human development and a readiness to innovate for a sustainable and just world-society; and should ground their global views in local structures to create

orientation possibilities beyond the nation-state but anchored in human identity and potential.

In consequence, training global teachers necessitates changes in colleges and universities to make the global dimension a realistic focus of common curriculum development, methodology, and structure. Possible steps to be undertaken would be:

- aligning teacher preparation programmes with global perspectives;
- designing and supporting professional development programmes with a global dimension;
- finding new ways to foster international and global exchange;
- enriching university environments for educational and research activities according to the global dimension;
- expanding skills training, e.g. teaching foreign languages through an international exchange of teachers.

In this era of globalization many changes are taking place. Many new demands are emerging, so education should be such that it can deal with these global demands. In India, many schools have started international student exchange programmes. In the same way, to meet the demand of producing globally competent teachers we need to find new ways to encourage international exchanges in general universities (as well as teachers' universities) where internationally exchanged pre-service teachers should take part in short-term internship programmes to teach particular subjects in their host countries. We need strong community and family support systems to fulfil the above-mentioned demands, for which the broadening of outlooks among community members is inevitable. To cope with the situation we need to design and support professional development programmes with a global focus. This opens the horizon for dealing with the aforementioned challenges concerning globalization, at least for all who have access to these educational institutions.

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## Notes

1 'A New Passage to India' is an initiative of the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) enabled through funds of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), and is intended to enhance contacts between students and doctoral researchers at particular German universities and their respective Indian partner institutions. Scholarships support exchange students to attend the partner institution for one semester. The programme began in 2009 with an exchange between the University of Education, Weingarten, and Banasthali Vidyapith in Rajasthan, India, and was expanded in 2012 to include the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (MSUB), Gujarat, India.

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