

Internationalizing Teacher Education: Challenges and Recommendations

At AIEA conferences in recent years I have shared various aspects of my research on the challenges of internationalization in teacher education. Since my last AIEA presentation, I have completed the second phase of the research and many of you have probably seen a summary and possibly the full report on my website. I've tried to share the research in a variety of venues, in efforts to reach the many players in the teacher education game. The constant in most of these reports has been the possibly critical role of an office of international programs in making progress on this difficult topic. So now I want to take this opportunity pull together the many ways in which you might be both supportive and proactive, in your efforts to infuse more international options and competence in the undergraduate training of K-12 teachers. I hope that this will be a little more than preaching to the convinced!

But first, let me provide a little background. My general research topic is the *Prospects for Internationalizing Teacher Education*, and the project was funded by the U.S. Department of Education under Title VI of the Higher Education Act, in two phases. The first phase focused on the undergraduate training of secondary school teachers, and the second extended the study to the preparation of elementary school teachers.¹

Backing up a little more, about my own background: I worked for many years as a Title VI program officer in the U. S. Department of Education; we were constantly urging grantees to strengthen their linkages with Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education (SCDEs), but year after year the grantees' reports indicated little change. After leaving the Department, I was involved in an evaluation of the long term impact of the Title VI program for strengthening international and foreign language studies at the undergraduate level.² At the time those results were published, the press was describing the shortcomings of teacher preparation, so I wanted to learn more about why – despite various Title VI efforts – teachers might still be ill-prepared to introduce their students to factors contributing to both conflict and cooperation in today's world. The project just completed at that time had provided no answers.

Which gets me back to the research project we're discussing today. With the help of a small advisory board, starting in 2001 I collected information through a series of open-ended but structured interviews – nearly 400 in all – with deans, faculty, student advisors, students, and a variety of senior administrators at 41 institutions (research and comprehensive universities and liberal arts colleges) ranging in size from 1,300 to 52,000 students, in nineteen states in the east, west, south, north, and in-between. Nearly as many interviews were with people in Arts and Sciences as in Schools, Colleges, and Departments of Education because, in fact, roughly 75% of the instruction for teacher preparation is

¹ Ann Imlah Schneider, *To Leave No Teacher Behind: Building International Competence into the Undergraduate Training of K-12 Teachers*, May 2007, available at www.internationaledadvice.org.

² Ann Imlah Schneider and Barbara B. Burn, *Federal Funding for International Studies: Does it Help? Does it Matter?* University of Massachusetts at Amherst, International Programs Office, 1999.

usually in the liberal arts curriculum. In addition, nearly 120 current teachers have been interviewed or have completed an interview protocol as a questionnaire for the project. The result is a daunting amount of data now available for analysis.

However, because the numbers of people in several of the subgroups, such as advisors, are relatively small, the research must be considered exploratory. Nonetheless, the overall results point to several recommendations that could make a difference in preparing students to be more effective teachers in our increasingly interconnected world – in other words, for building a more internationally oriented undergraduate curriculum for training teachers.

The topics in the study cover curriculum issues, foreign language study, programs for study and internships abroad, faculty development, and the roles of offices of international programs. Details about the findings and the formal recommendations are available on my website (www.internationaledadvice.org). Briefly summarizing the findings:

1. **Advising** systems (both academic and career) could use much more attention to international exposure, starting with the admissions process and pre-freshman orientation. Close to 90% of the responding current teachers said that undergraduate advising should include more attention to international options. From all categories of campus interviewees I heard that advising should be improved. More training for the advisors themselves could be a relatively low-cost place to start.

2. The **curriculum issues** include study abroad (which, realistically, is a possibility for very few teachers-in-training), course content (and how it might be changed), and foreign language requirements (or lack thereof for the prospective teacher).

3. Consistent with the conclusions of the previous Title VI study on internationalizing the undergraduate curriculum, **faculty development** was considered a successful strategy for program strengthening and many respondents would like more of it.

4. **Policies** on “international” as part of the teacher certification process are scarce, but some SCDEs are initiating internationalization efforts, and are encouraged by senior administrators as well as by colleagues in Arts and Sciences – not to mention recent recommendations by national organizations such as the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO), the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE), and the Committee for Economic Development (CED).

5. The research also explored related **governance** issues, and these are what I want to talk about today – topics that should be close to the hearts of participants in this conference.

What Do OIPs Do?

Although nearly all the campuses that I visited have **offices of international programs**, knowledge about the mandates of such offices was very uneven. Indeed, as I discussed in some detail for a 2006 AIEA meeting, I was a little surprised to find, on the same campus, quite a variety of answers to straightforward questions about ways in which all students may receive international exposure.

On all campuses I asked questions about Offices of International Programs, which I’ll refer to as OIPs. Most, but not all, of the visited campuses have them. What are their roles and services? Here again there was variety in the responses. Yes, the question was an open-ended one, and yes, I occasionally did a bit of prompting in this part of the interview, but among the 38 institutions reporting

some kind of OIP, the variations in the reporting of their functions also seem striking. Faculty members were more numerous out of step than their proportions in the entire survey – and Education faculty may tend to be somewhat less informed than Arts & Sciences faculty. Arts and Sciences deans also seemed a little less likely to be fully informed about the services that the university OIP could provide. So my first recommendation to OIPs is to work on additional ways to make the full range of services widely known.

What were the functions that I was told about? Table 1 provides the data.

- Just about all OIPs administer **study abroad** programs.
- Advising (and often recruiting) **international students** was a second important function, although on some campuses it is done in a different office.

Table 1

Functions of University Offices of International Programs
as reported by interviewees, compared with AIEA data

<u>Function</u>	<u>OIPs</u> N=56	<u>All Others</u> N=237	<u>AIEA Survey</u> <u>primary/secondary</u> N=76
Study abroad	38	190	
Exchange programs, linkages	23	44	
Program development (for study abroad, exchanges)	16	35	
Internships abroad	4	5	
Study abroad, exchanges			88% / 9%
International students	33	158	
International visitors, lecturers	24	79	
International students & scholars			80% / 13%
Facilitating faculty travel	19	78	
Facilitating curriculum development	11	32	
Facilitating grant applications	3	13	
Faculty seminars	2	6	
Faculty/curriculum development			24% / 53%
ESL program	6	7	
International training/ESL			40% / 33%
Area, international, foreign language studies major/minor	7	13	20% / 43%
Film, speaker series, festivals	15	33	
International house	2	3	
Passport application acceptance	3	4	
Fundraising	2	0	
Other			44% / 44%
International representation	2	0	80% / 20%
Community outreach	4	4	59% / 24%
International contracting	0	0	38% / 33%

These functions are consistent with the AIEA survey data reported at the 2005 meetings and available on the AIEA website.³ However, you probably notice that many of the categories of activity in Table 1

³ www.aieaworld.org

recorded by me and by the AIEA do not exactly match. The reason is partly methodological, since my question was open-ended while the AIEA survey offered a menu of possibilities, using several categories that were either more general or more specific than what I heard in the interviews. However, for some I can offer no explanation. For example, community outreach was mentioned by only 7% of my OIP interviewees (and by only 2% of all my interviewees), compared with more than 80% of the AIEA respondents – the difference seems greater than the methodological difference between an open-ended interview and a simple menu on a questionnaire might explain.

Indeed, more than 75% of the OIPs reported four or more functions to me, but on those campuses at least 80 people attributed fewer functions to them than their (OIP) Directors reported – and most of those who underreported were in Education. This could be quite relevant and could indicate one of the simpler challenges to be resolved for internationalizing teacher education programs. (On the other hand, for a few, the OIP was attributed more capabilities by others than they themselves reported!)

Perhaps a more important set of differences in Table 1 is the contrast between the OIP and “all other” columns, particularly as the eye moves down the list of activities – and keeping in mind that there were, on average, at least seven interviews in addition to OIP personnel on each campus. So, for example, if eleven OIPs are facilitating faculty development, why was that not reported by a lot more than 32 other interviewees? You too may have noticed that a few people on your campuses may not seem to be fully informed, so perhaps the numbers in Table 1 may alert you to issues that could receive more attention. The AIEA data do not show anything about the campus perception of OIPs, but my data seem rather sobering in this respect, demonstrating that OIPs need to do more to make the full range of their services much better known throughout their campuses.

Advising?

As noted above, advising emerged from my research as potentially a key element in the internationalization process. Yet it is mentioned on neither the AIEA menu nor in my interviews (with but one exception). Indeed, at other points in the interview many OIP staff did report participation, for varying periods of time, in freshman orientation and in other activities that could fall under the advising rubric. Rather than training other advisors, OIP staff seem to be doing some advising themselves. I would suggest that OIPs need to give increased attention to both their advising function and to the training of all others doing advising on their campuses.

In the course of the project I have made several presentations to NACADA (National Academic Advising Association) urging attention to international competence. The organization has long had an interest group for the education major, but “international” has been far from its list of issues. Advising is a complicated field, with responsibilities spread among professional advisors (in each college and in many departments), faculty, and career counselors. Students in teacher education programs are likely to have different advisors for their academic program and for certification preparation. Another layer of complications appears for the increasing number of students who do their first two undergraduate years at community colleges. NACADA has recently added an interest group for study abroad, but it seems unlikely that the organization can do much to “internationalize” the advising profession – the burden for this is more realistically on you and your colleagues in AIEA and NAFSA, working in your own institutions.

So I want to share with you some of the things I have been telling advisors at NACADA meetings about how you – OIPs – might help them! My research data are clear that the training of

advisors is very haphazard. In response to a direct (open-ended) question, I learned that advisors' information sources can include meetings, e-mail, newsletters, memos, workshops, the institution's catalog or website, word of mouth, and faculty orientation. But a dean told me that advisors are really on their own, confirmed by a department chair (at another institution) who told me that advisor preparation is "catch as catch can!" So I would suggest that training advisors about the international options for students, and about the students' need for as much exposure internationally as possible, should be firmly on the list of OIP functions. OIPs should be involved in the training and constant updating of all who do advising – the faculty, professional advising staff, and even admissions officers. Prospective undergraduates who are considering teaching careers normally have very crowded schedules, with many requirements and few electives. So particularly if students who want to be teachers are interested in foreign language study and/or overseas experience (study abroad, classroom observation, and/or internships), they must be helped by knowledgeable advisors to start the planning process even before Day One of their undergraduate experience.

Among other suggestions for OIP influence on student advising are:

- overseas experience (such as participation in evaluation of overseas programs) for the advisors themselves, including those doing freshman advising;
- improvements in guidelines [and checklists] for advisors, to be sure that international options (and, whenever possible, requirements) are included;
- preparation of materials about international options for both advisors and students, and
 - distribution of such materials in all advising offices;
- inclusion of information about international options in admission materials;
- strengthening of contacts and influence in residence halls, especially for freshmen;
- backstopping of student clubs that foster international interest;
- exposure of advisors to graduates who have been shaped by international training;
- organization of "advisors' nights" at the OIP; and
- attendance by OIP staff at department meetings and networking with department advisors.

In my interviews with Arts and Sciences personnel, I asked several questions about another dimension of advising – who helps students with their career choices, how do they learn to do so, and how do students learn about teaching as a career. Not only were interviewees surprised to be asked such questions, but most of their responses indicated little systematic preparation or even interest. Were the students of international affairs, foreign languages, and area studies ever encouraged to consider teaching careers? A few OIPs are taking this on, by organizing career workshops with graduates from international programs, but do they include teaching careers? This might be another realm for further OIP exploration and initiative, working with faculty and staff in Education.

Curriculum and Faculty Development?

Curriculum was a major topic in my research, and I've talked about it in some detail at other meetings – for the American Historical Association, the International Studies Association, Title VI Directors, the Inter-Agency Language Roundtable, and of course AIEA. Table 1 does indicate that some OIPs consider curriculum development to be part of their mandate, although according to the

AIEA survey it is rarely a primary responsibility. An even smaller percentage of the faculty members I talked with cited OIP help in this domain, so again I've urged faculty members to enlist your help.

The interviews covered many aspects of the curriculum for prospective teachers, including –

- whether they actually complete an A&S major in addition to their required courses in education (some do, particularly those preparing for secondary school teaching),
- whether they are able to do an A&S minor that might include international components (again, some do),
- whether their general education requirements include an international or comparative course (usually only one will meet the requirement),
- whether they must meet any kind of foreign language requirement (rare for teachers-in-training),
- whether an introductory education course is open to undergraduates whose interests are “international” (surprisingly, many such courses are closed to all but students in a teacher education program),
- whether practice teaching can be done in a bilingual or international magnet school (most said yes, but actual numbers are low), and
- whether practice teaching might be done in an overseas environment (many state requirements discourage it).

Even when the answers to these questions were positive, it was clear that the participant numbers were very low, or even non-existent, for all but one. The exception was the general education requirement of an internationally oriented course. Review of education program checklists, particularly for the prospective elementary school teacher, also indicated that exposure to international content, if at all, is through general education requirements. Many agreed that further revision of general education requirements would be a good idea, but it was frequently dismissed as too much of a “hot button” issue. Revising the courses already approved for general education, to add international content, would be a much more effective path, many said.

In other words, nearly all wanted more international content available for students. Toward the end of the interviews, I asked about a variety of strategies to achieve that.

- Of those asked, 97% of the A&S faculty would like more international modules in general education courses, and 82% of the Education faculty agreed.
- 100% of both the Education and A&S faculty (who were asked) would like to encourage course revisions. Yet in my interviews I heard repeatedly from Education faculty that they are interested, but that Arts and Science faculty probably would not be – and I heard the mirror opposite from Arts and Sciences faculty, as this set of data indicates.
- Of those asked, all of the A&S faculty would like more joint A&S/Education workshops, and 98% of the Education faculty agreed. A few A&S faculty members even acknowledged that they were not sure how many of their students were

prospective teachers but noted that if many were, perhaps they (the faculty members) should review their approaches, to be more helpful to those students.

- 94% of the A&S faculty would like more A&S/Education team teaching, and 100% of the Education faculty responded similarly.

These data surely indicate more opportunities for OIPs to facilitate improved communication – for the ultimate benefit of teacher trainees.

Does your campus have a Center for Teaching and Learning? I heard about them increasingly in the course of my interviews, and they were cited as important sources of help for faculty updating, retooling, and cross-disciplinary instruction. Do OIPs work with them to foster curriculum “internationalization?” And does this extend to participation by Education and Arts and Sciences faculty in the same workshop?

Of course OIPs are providing other services to faculty which also contribute to their development internationally, such as help with international travel, as indicated in Table 1. I also heard about efforts to strengthen the international components of initial faculty orientation and programs of debriefings (organized by OIPs) for faculty returning from overseas trips. From at least two OIPs I heard of a program of international travel grants for faculty, all with the explicit condition that some course revision would result.

And then there are the issues of foreign language requirements and instruction. Some 90% of the participating current teachers felt that they should have had more foreign language training, and 80% of the Education faculty would like to have stronger foreign language requirements for their students. Mostly, however, I learned that even in institutions with some foreign language requirements, prospective teachers are exempted, the usual reason being insufficient space in the curriculum. Some maintained that a foreign language requirement would scare off students who would otherwise become good teachers. In addition, some told me that the climate in their language departments did not encourage prospective teachers. The recent MLA report on foreign language instruction⁴ makes recommendations that could respond to some of the Education complaints. Indeed, the 2006 NASBE and CCSSO reports include strong recommendations for foreign language components in teacher training programs. The CCSSO report states that “we must...require all pre-service teachers to be fluent in a world language and have training in the teaching of world languages...”⁵ OIPs can surely play a role in the campus discussions that could permit this to happen – and again some professional development, for foreign language faculty, could facilitate and strengthen needed professionalization in the language teaching community.

OIPs might be interested to know also how few of my interviewees knew about “languages across the curriculum!” Although this might not be an appropriate kind of program for the majority of teachers-in-training, the existence of such programs on campus could contribute to support and appreciation for foreign language instruction.

Related to the foreign language questions are of course a whole range of questions about study abroad, and its role in the curriculum. Until recently, discussion in the teacher education community

⁴ Modern Language Association, *Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World*, June 2007 (<http://www.mla.org/flreport>).

⁵ Council of Chief State School Officers, *Global Education Policy Statement*, November 2006, 6-7.

about “international” has focused primarily on study (and internships) abroad, even though very few teachers-in-training are able to work such experiences into their programs. Nonetheless, more than 80% of the current teachers would have liked to have studied abroad, which presents a real challenge for the organizers of appropriate programs. Might some short-term programs be the only practical solution? Or could experience abroad be part of an appropriate general education curriculum for prospective teachers? And/or a special observation period? And/or part of the practice teaching phase? And, if the latter, in an American, international, or host national school? (And with what kind of foreign language competency requirement?) I learned of examples, on a small scale, of all of these – some organized (for better or for worse) with no OIP help.

In a paper for NAFSA, in addition to discussion of issues about participation and preparation I shared ideas I’d heard about relating study abroad to the home campus curriculum for teachers-in-training and others. For the record – and because OIPs should be particularly well-positioned to influence curriculum development related to study abroad – here are some:

- special courses for returnees and/or
- presentations by returnees, in courses, to share overseas experience with those unable to go;
- inclusion of an overseas component in a teaching portfolio;
- a post-practicum seminar, for those completing overseas internships; and
- capstone courses expected to include any overseas experience.

How do faculty members know which of their students have had experience overseas? It is probably too much to ask of OIPs to get such information out! But OIPs might influence faculty and curriculum developments to foster inclusion of such elements. And, in addition, OIPs can have returnees (including prospective teachers) working in their offices and can encourage their presentations to clubs, heritage community gatherings, brown bag lunches, and residence hall gatherings, their participation in in-service programs for current teachers, and even their articles for the campus paper – not to mention presentations to K-12 classes.

Whose Initiative?

All the campus interviews included a question about who takes initiative for campus internationalization efforts. The most frequent response was “faculty” – rarely deans or provosts, or even OIPs, although many OIPs have surely been very active behind the scenes. Their – your – support, helping with grant applications, for example, and facilitating plans for curriculum development, could be crucial.

And does the funder play an initiating role? A surprisingly small number of respondents had ideas about funding sources that might be available for internationalizing efforts – and this was particularly the situation among the Education interviewees, 40% of whom would not even venture a guess about sources of incentive (internationalizing) funding. This is a point I have made in presentations to ACE and AACTE (American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education) groups; professional associations need to do more to promulgate timely information about available resources. But more initiative is also needed from funders themselves – government and private agencies need to make special efforts to make their programs known to constituencies that include teacher education programs. Some U. S. Government agencies were mentioned by my interviewees – most likely “FIPSE,” Department of State, USAID, and the Department of Education (Titles II, III, and/or VI), and

also NIH, and NSF. Surprisingly few (a scant 24% of the research university interviewees in the second phase) mentioned the Department of Education's Title VI. (If readers who are interested in knowing more about that resource should visit <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/iegps/index.html>.) On the non-governmental side, many mentioned "foundations," possibly in fact referring to their own institutions' funding arms. Development of outside funding options would seem to be another realm for OIP attention, working with university grant offices as well as contacts in the grant-making community.

Key elements in the teacher training context, I heard repeatedly, are state standards and certification requirements. I have learned of state-wide initiatives in a few states (North Carolina and Wisconsin come to mind) to make needed changes. And I have also heard of OIP activity to encourage such initiatives – a lot of slow, hard work, but surely offering ultimate results, improving the international exposure of prospective K-12 teachers.

Returning to the campus context, I have mentioned many indications that students, and perhaps faculty, in Education are underrepresented in internationalizing activities. In addition to a few study abroad participants, Education respondents told me that yes, they do have international visitors and faculty, but they also conveyed a sense that such visitors might be comparatively few. Those few, however, were cited as additional sources of incentive and initiative for internationalizing activities. Maybe more could help too!

Interestingly, in their listings of OIP functions, very few interviewees (less than 1%) mentioned improving campus communication about international options, nor did I hear of this in response to my final question about how the interviewee would target money for "international" if some became available. Given the focus of my research on teacher education, I was of course wondering whether faculty and deans in Education were less informed about OIP services, and while this may be the case, the data seem to indicate more clearly a need for improved connections between OIPs and both Education and A&S – and possibly other university units as well. Indeed, the reader may wonder to what extent the findings are unique to the challenges of internationalizing teacher education. Many of the issues discussed are probably campus-wide to some extent. Perhaps pervasive campus-wide internationalization – the permeation of all courses with international elements, as some described it to me – is the only way to include appreciation of foreign languages and cultures in the formation of our future K-12 teachers. And so I would submit that the OIP can and should play a role in developing the widest possible range of international activity.

I hope that this brief research report has added a little to what you already know – and look forward to your questions and suggestions.