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Lotta Larson
lottalarson@ksu.edu

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Reimagining Education: Teaching and Learning in a Global Community

Lotta C. Larson

Change is hard and often not without controversy. No doubt, cultivating global competence requires change in both mindset and instructional practices.

This issue of *Educational Considerations* delves into diverse perspectives of global education. It is well known that today's students face an unprecedented future in which they will navigate a global society. In a "flat" world (Friedman, 2007), economies become increasingly interdependent, and global challenges – including migration, poverty, and natural disasters – grow in complexity. Regardless of future professions or place of residence, our students will interact and coexist with people of diverse cultures, faiths, and perspectives. To thrive and compete in an interconnected world, students must cultivate skills beyond core subjects and learn to embrace tolerance, appreciate diverse perspectives, and develop appreciation for our common humanity.

This issue's Key Conversations features Kristin Ziemke, Learning Innovation Specialist and author of [*Amplify: Digital Teaching and Learning in the K-6 Classroom*](#) and [*Connecting Comprehension and Technology*](#). Ziemke views technology and digital approaches as "essential for teaching and learning in a global community." She also points out, "...as our world becomes more and more global, every type of work that exists in the future will be interconnected in some way." She continues, "so not only do you have to work as a member of a collaborative team... you also have to be able to work with people you never meet or people who come from a completely different cultural experience than you... My dream world will be that we find much more commonalities than we find differences."

Preparing global-ready students poses the challenge of preparing global-ready teachers. Ziemke recognizes that many teacher preparation programs emphasize the use of technology and global competence, but there are still gaps and "university students know how to use devices to communicate and as tools of entertainment, but they haven't quite seen that bridge where it's really impactful for education."

Indeed, the pursuit of preparing global-ready teachers has become a main focus in many teacher preparation programs. Here, in the College of Education at Kansas State University, students are offered diverse study-abroad experiences to multiple countries. While trips abroad ideally become reality for all preservice teachers, busy schedules and lack of financial support often stand in the way. Alternatively, our preservice teachers collaborate and engage with children and teachers from other countries in online environments. While digital tools and online spaces do not replace "real" travel experiences, nor conventional classrooms, they offer opportunities for teaching and learning in global contexts.

In this issue, Amanda Lickteig, along with two preservice teachers, share perspectives on study-abroad experiences in Finland and Indonesia, respectively. Claudia McVicker further discusses lessons learned from conceptualizing and implementing study-abroad experiences in Great Britain. These articles offer valuable insights on study-abroad experiences and K-12 education in countries outside the United States. However, when travel abroad is not a possibility, Casey Holmes shares ideas for teaching for global citizenship as an integrated component in the disciplines of the social studies.

Worldwide, the number of international migrants reached an all-time high in 2015, with 244 million people living in a country other than their birth nation (International Organization for Migration [IOM], 2016). Current migration trends indicate a drastic increase in the number of refugees, asylum-seekers, and internally displaced people. In this issue, Jessica Enyioha's article explores college access for undocumented students in the United States, addressing concerns of access to education for undocumented students, difficulties encountered, and ways undocumented students may be supported.

Sarah Gordon and colleagues examine the divide between faculty perceptions of diversity and the pedagogy they employ in teaching about diversity as a way of promoting cultural competency. Addressing global competence requires a deliberate change in mindset in order to impact instructional practices. Again, change is hard and often not without controversy.

We can no longer debate *if* global awareness is essential. Moving forward, is time to reimagine education and carefully consider *how* to prepare students and educators to thrive in a malleable world that will continue to evolve. We believe this issue is a solid step in the right direction.

References

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Lotta Larson (lottalarson@ksu.edu) is an associate professor in the Department of Curriculum & Instruction, College of Education, at Kansas State University in Manhattan, KS.