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Internationalization of Teacher Education in Higher Education

Theories, Concepts and Practical Approaches of Virtual, Blended and Physical Mobility

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Internationalization and Teacher Education for Inclusion

In 2020 the Council of the European Union highlighted that prospective and practicing teachers and trainers should be supported to effectively work with learners from a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. To develop social and intercultural competences, the council maintains cross-border mobility - either virtual, blended or physical - as a valuable opportunity and a powerful learning experience for prospective and practicing teachers and trainers (p. 5). This article focuses on the relation of internationalization and teacher education for inclusion. After a clarification of the terms internationalization and inclusion, teachers' competences for inclusive education and the supposed influence of internationalized teacher education on the development of students' competences are dealt with. Finally, research findings of studies on the relation of internationalization of teacher education and (future) teachers' competences for inclusive education are analyzed.

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Ulrike Beate Müller

Abstract

In 2020 the Council of the European Union highlighted that prospective and practicing teachers and trainers should be supported to effectively work with learners from a variety of cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. To develop social and intercultural competences, the council maintains cross-border mobility – either virtual, blended or physical – as a valuable opportunity and a powerful learning experience for prospective and practicing teachers and trainers (p. 5). This article focuses on the relation of internationalization and teacher education for inclusion. After a clarification of the terms internationalization and inclusion, teachers' competences for inclusive education and the supposed influence of internationalized teacher education on the development of students' competences are dealt with. Finally, research findings of studies on the relation of internationalization of teacher education and (future) teachers' competences for inclusive education are analyzed.

Keywords: inclusive education, teachers' competences, intercultural competences, influence of internationalization

Outline

1 Introduction

Originally, European universities in medieval times attracted students and talents from many different countries and thus were international institutions (Altbach & Knight, 2007). In times after the Protestant Reformation academe turned inward due to the rise of the nation-state and nationalism. Now, in times of an integrated world economy, information technology and rising mobility for students, academe has found an international direction again (ibid., p. 302 ff). In 2010, Quezada stated that the internationalization of teacher education programs is necessary "so that teacher educators may lead the way in developing partnerships and creating international training programs for

prospective teacher (…) candidates, so they may become more cosmopolitan educators"
(p. 1). In 2020 the Council of the European Union stated in its official journal that pro-
spective and practicing teachers and trainers should be supported to effectively respond
to challenges such as "working in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms and
learning environments, with learners from a variety of socioeconomic backgrounds,
with different needs, including special education needs and safeguarding inclusive-
ness" (p. 2). To develop social, intercultural, multilingual, and interpersonal competen-
ces, the council maintains cross-border mobility – either virtual, blended or physical –
as a valuable opportunity and a powerful learning experience for prospective and prac-
ticing teachers and trainers (p. 5).

According to De Wit and Altbach (2021), current and future processes of interna-
tionalization should integrate efforts to develop a more inclusive internationalization
and to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, United Nations, 2015). For the
education of children, Goal 4 *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote
lifelong learning opportunities for all* is central. Ainscow (2020) states that in international
context inclusive education is increasingly seen as a broad concept – encompassing
aspects of gender, social class, ethnicity, religion, and ability – rather than as a narrow
concept only addressing children with disabilities.

This article intends to have a closer look on the relation of internationalization and
teacher education for inclusion. Consciously, this article does not only focus on inter-
cultural competences, which are frequently mentioned to be addressed by the interna-
tionalization of teacher education (HRK, 2017; DAAD, 2013). In terms of a broad con-
cept of inclusion, teacher education for coping with cultural but also with other kinds of
diversity shall be addressed. At first, the terms of internationalization and inclusion are
clarified. Afterwards, teachers' competences for inclusive education will be dealt with.
Finally, the influence of internationalization on (future) teachers' competences for in-
clusive education is concentrated on.

2   Terms: Internationalization, Intercultural Competence and Inclusion

2.1   Internationalization and Intercultural Competences

The term of internationalization can be defined in different ways. Altbach and Knight
(2007) emphasize that internationalization and globalization are connected but that
they are not the same thing. While globalization sets the context of academic and eco-
nomic trends, internationalization has to deal with the global academic environment
and encompasses the practices and policies of academic institutions and systems (ibid.,
p. 290). The motivation of traditional nonprofit universities for academic internationali-
zation can be seen in advancing research, knowledge, and cultural understanding. The
motivation of the for-profit sector for academic internationalization is to earn money
(ibid., p. 293). De Wit and Altbach characterize internationalization in tertiary educa-
tion in the past 30 decades by using the following descriptions: less focus on interna-
tionalization at home than on internationalization abroad, policies of universities and

government being less strategic, comprehensive, and central than ad hoc, fragmented, and marginal, less for global and intercultural outcomes for all than benefiting a small, elite group of students and institutions, and a rising commercialization and engagement of for-profit companies (De Wit & Altbach, 2021, p. 34). For future internationalization, De Wit and Altbach (2021) present the following definition to intentionally support quality improvement and benefit for more students:

> "The intentional process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions and delivery of post-secondary education, in order to enhance the quality of education and research for all students and staff and to make a meaningful contribution to society" (De Wit and Altbach, 2021, p. 35).

Based on the Nelson Mandela Bay Global Dialogue Declaration on the Future of Internationalization of Higher Education, De Wit and Altbach constitute that internationalization processes should focus on a global learning for all members of the academic community. These should be implemented through internationalizing the curriculum, collaborative online international learning (COIL), teacher education and foreign language education, through integrating efforts to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, United Nations, 2015; for further reading referring to sustainability in context of internationalization see Buddeberg et al., 2024, in this anthology, and Morbach et al., 2024, in this anthology), through global citizenship education and addressing intercultural competences (De Wit and Altbach, 2021, p. 44). Wolff offers a definition of cultural competences, which in its core is scientifically accepted in many disciplines: "A complex of abilities needed to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (Wolff, 2017, p. 11).

Another aspect, de Wit and Altbach (2021) regard as being necessary for the process of internationalization, is developing a more inclusive and social internationalization (ibid.; for further reading towards inclusive education in context of internationalization see Seitz & Demo, 2024, and Vogt et al., 2024, both in this anthology).

2.2   Inclusion and Inclusive Education

The demand for a more inclusive internationalization leads to the term of inclusion. Ainscow (2020, p. 8 ff) highlights that – based on an understanding of inclusive education as a basic human right – inclusion and inclusive education are regarded as a broad concept which promotes diversity amongst all learners. Diversity encompasses aspects of gender, social class, ethnicity, religion, and ability. The aim of inclusive education is seen in the elimination of social exclusion by identifying and removing barriers, which hinder any kind of students from being present, from participating or achieving (ibid.).

A framework for promoting inclusive education is presented by Ainscow (2020, p. 8 ff.). It puts school development in the middle while four other interrelated factors contribute to school development: inclusion and equity as principles, use of evidence, community involvement, and administration. The principles of inclusion and equity shall be discussed by all stakeholders involved to come to a wider and shared understanding. Evidence shall be collected in such a way that it relates to the aspects of pres-

ence, participation and achievement especially for students at risk. The wider community such as the family, school-to-school collaboration and administrative departments are important components of inclusive education (ibid.).

The Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action (UNESCO et al., 2015) accented teachers as being of outstanding importance to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4 of quality education (ibid., p. 54). Indicative strategies to educate teachers properly are to improve teacher training, especially "on how to address challenges of pupils with special education needs" (ibid., p. 55). Thus, teachers' development of competences to deal with special educational needs is concentrated on in the following section.

3   Development of Teachers' Inclusive Competences

In this part, the COACTIV model of teachers' professional competences is presented and enlarged (Baumert & Kunter, 2013; Schmengler, 2022) and teachers' competences for inclusive education are presented (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2022).

3.1   The COACTIV Model of Teachers' Professional Competence

The COACTIV model of teachers' professional competences describes aspects of professional competences for the context of teaching (Baumert & Kunter, 2013, p. 25 ff). On the one hand, beliefs/values/goals, motivational orientations and self-regulation, on the other hand professional knowledge characterizes professional competences. Different domains of knowledge are specified: content knowledge, pedagogical content knowledge, pedagogical/psychological knowledge, organizational knowledge, and counseling knowledge (ibid.).

Schmengler (2021; 2022) developed a model of teachers' professional competences, which specifies the model of Baumert & Kunter (2013) for intercultural competences. Professional knowledge is particularized by knowledge about migration movements, knowledge about religious and cultural minorities, language prerequisites of students with migration background. To address beliefs and values, Schmengler itemizes values, which support learning in equal learning conditions, consider cultural backgrounds in learning processes and deal with these efficiently. The active integration of intercultural situations at school can be seen as motivational orientation. Schmengler also refers to self-regulation to deal with challenges in intercultural contexts (Schmengler, 2022, p. 203). To put emphasis on the development of competences as a process, Schmengler distinguishes between components of knowledge, beliefs and values, and agency.

3.2   Teachers' Professional Competences for Inclusive Education

Based on a 2012 version, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2022) has further developed the profile for inclusive teacher professional learning, which aims to support all educational professionals. The profile's core values are: *Valuing learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others, and personal and col-*

laborative professional development (ibid., p. 21). These core values are illustrated in Figure 1, where areas of competences are described in detail by underpinning attitudes and beliefs, essential knowledge, and crucial skills. The aspects, which have been chosen for the summary of the core values in Table 1 (ibid., p. 22 ff), concentrate on educators' dealing with cultural diversity as the context of international experiences – as one focus of this article – might especially promote intercultural competences.

UNESCO (2017, p. 35) refers to these four core values (in their 2012 version) and suggests they be embedded in teacher education programs.

After dealing with (future) teachers' competences, which different frameworks suggest, the following section intends to concentrate on teachers' competences in context of internationalization.

Table 1: Outline of the Profile for Inclusive Teacher Professional Learning: Core Values with Areas of Competences, focused on cultural diversity (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 2022, p. 22 ff.)

Profile's core value: Valuing learner diversity		
Conceptions of inclusion and equity Attitudes and beliefs: A belief in equality; real participation of all learners, a commitment to every learner's belonging, achievement, well-being and mental health Knowledge: Inclusive education as an approach to make schools welcoming, supportive and challenging for all learners Skills: Critically examining one's own beliefs; being empathetic to learners' diverse strength and needs	**Professionals' views of learner difference** Attitudes and beliefs: Variability in human development is natural; teacher is a key influence on learner's self-esteem Knowledge: It is *normal to be different*; learners learn in different ways Skills: Identifying the most appropriate ways of responding to diversity in all situations; intercultural dialogue, mediation and peace education to create cohesive classroom communities; offering guidance among colleagues	
Profile's core value: Supporting all learners		
Promoting all learner's learning (academic, practical, social and emotional) Attitudes and beliefs: Learning is primarily a social activity Knowledge: Different models of learning Skills: Effective verbal and non-verbal communication	**Supporting all learners' well-being** Attitudes and beliefs: The importance of being sensitive to learners' emotional needs Knowledge: Positive behavior and classroom management approaches Skills: Removing social barriers in group arrangements	**Effective teaching approaches and flexible organization of support** Attitudes and beliefs: Effective teaching seeks to represent all learners Knowledge: Culturally responsive pedagogies and differentiation of curriculum content Skills: Working with individual learners as well as heterogeneous groups

(Continuing Table 1)

Profile's core value: Working with others		
Giving learners a true voice Attitudes and beliefs: Learners' personal dreams, goals and fears matter and must be heard, particularly those learners with complex needs or who belong to vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups Knowledge: The risk of marginalization of particular groups of learners Skills: Considering learners' views and acknowledging them as an equal and integral part in discussions	**Working with parents and families** Attitudes and beliefs: Respect for parents' and families' cultural and social backgrounds and perspectives Knowledge: the importance of issues of identity, representation and self-advocacy of marginalized groups Skills: communicating effectively with parents and family members of different cultural, ethnic, linguistic and social backgrounds	**Working with a range of education professionals** Attitudes and beliefs: Awareness of colleagues' professional backgrounds, experience and perspectives Knowledge: Multi-agency working models, where teachers in inclusive classrooms cooperate with other experts and staff Skills: Collaborative problem-solving among all education professionals
Profile's core value: Personal and collaborative professional development		
Professionals as members of an inclusive learning community Attitudes and beliefs: teaching requires on-going and systematic planning & reflection Knowledge: Problem-solving strategies Skills: critically examining one's own beliefs	**Professional Learning for inclusion builds on initial education** Attitudes and beliefs: An educator cannot be an expert in all questions related to inclusive education Knowledge: the educational law and the legal context Skills: flexibility in teaching strategies that promote innovation and personal learning	

4 Internationalization and Teachers' Competences for Inclusive Education

This paragraph focuses on the influence of internationalization of teacher education on (future) teachers' competences for inclusive education. Firstly, the supposed development of (future) teachers' competences and secondly, studies, which have examined the influence of internationalization on (future) teachers' competences, are concentrated on.

4.1 Internationalization and the Supposed Development of Students' Competences

According to the German Rectors' Conference (HRK, 2017) students shall be equipped "adequately to practice responsible global citizenship" (ibid., p. 3). By formulating some objectives of the internationalization of curricula, they refer to the development of students' intercultural competences, intercultural communication and critical reflection of their own perspective. By achieving these goals, students shall be equipped to participate in a multicultural, democratic society. Above that, students shall be enabled

to work interdisciplinary, in international teams, and their language abilities shall be improved. Additionally, students shall be provided with subject-related knowledge from international perspectives so that they achieve a global understanding of their studied disciplines and their future professions (ibid., p. 4 ff.).

Referring to the education of teachers, about 150 experts of teacher education met in Berlin and formulated a resolution for internationalization of teacher education in Germany in 2013. Appealing to the (future) national government, to the governments of the federal states, to the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs and to the German Rector's Conference, they emphasized the importance of experiences in foreign countries and the acquisition of intercultural competences. To be able to use the diversity in classrooms, to get to know other cultures and to be able to serve as role models for transnational learning, the conditions of teacher education should be changed (DAAD, 2013).

Pachler & Redondo (2015) describe different competences which internationalization of teacher education should address. They speak about intercultural communicative competences (ICC) so that students are able to interact with native speakers and to really understand what the other person intends to say (ibid., p. 23). In reference to Zeichner they speak about "socio-cultural consciousness" (ibid., p. 26) so that students learn about histories and cultures of the world, can position their own views of the world, develop intercultural competences, and a sense of social justice.

In context of the DAAD (DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service) program *Lehramt.International*[1] Rakhkochkine emphasized that a stay abroad is meant to develop students' personality, their awareness of international dimensions of their subjects and their knowledge for international education (Janert, 2022).

4.2   Influence of Internationalization on (Future) Teachers' Inclusive Competences

International and national studies analyzed effects of internationalization on students' competences. Firstly, this section focuses on intercultural competences. Afterwards, professional knowledge and abilities, and personal competences are dealt with.

One aspect, which is often stated to be an important aim of internationalization in higher education, is that of intercultural competences. Yet, studies are based on different definitions of intercultural competences and intercultural learning so that their results are only comparable in a limited way (Gerlach & Lüke, 2021; Wolff, 2017). In the Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study former Erasmus+ students reported improvements in intercultural competences (European Union, 2019). In the first benchmark report of international students' mobility (DAAD, 2023b) 62 % of the German students stated cultural experiences as being an essential result of their stay abroad, with regard to teacher education students as many as 70 %. Referring to teacher education, 94 % of the students who spent time abroad in the context of the German DAAD-

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[1]   Since 2019 the DAAD (DAAD, German Academic Exchange Service) has been running the program *Lehramt.International* (in English: teacher education international) to offer students more opportunities of intercultural experiences (Janert, 2022; for project examples in context of Lehramt.International see Nierste, 2024, and Morbach et al., 2024, both in this anthology).

program *Lehramt.International* in 2022 reported that their intercultural abilities have improved and 87 % stated that they felt prepared for multicultural classrooms in a better way (Janert, 2022). In a meta-analysis of 33 international studies Kercher & Schifferings found intercultural competences and cultural sensitivity as effects of study-related stays abroad (2019).

Some studies also analyzed conditions for the development of intercultural competences. Gerlach and Lüke (2021) refer to several studies, which empirically found evidence for a fostering of intercultural competences through a stay abroad, yet the students' company and reflection are important to intensify intercultural learning and to prevent a reproduction of prejudices. In their meta-analysis Kercher and Schifferings (2019) identified time as a positive contributor: the longer students stayed abroad, the more distinctive the effects were. Yet, positive effects of a short stay abroad were already observed on intercultural competences and cultural sensitivity (ibid.). Kercher and Schifferings also detected company as an important positive factor through direct exchange with domestic people and in well-directed conversation about intercultural communalities and differences (ibid.). In his online survey with more than 250 students Wolff (2017) also identified a rise of intercultural competences through stays abroad after three months. Neither the form, organization or culture nor the attributes of openness for experiences, extraversion or general self-efficacy of students before their stay abroad seemed to be determiners of intercultural competences (ibid.).

Another aspect is knowledge and abilities. 35 % of German students who stayed abroad reported a gain of in-depth knowledges (DAAD, 2023b). The meta-analysis of Kercher and Schifferings (2019) found students' improvement in in-depth knowledges as well. 54 % of German students stated an improvement of language abilities through a stay abroad (DAAD, 2023b), which Kercher and Schifferings (2019) identified in their meta-analysis as well.

Students' personal competences were also effects of internationalization. The meta-analysis of Kercher and Schifferings (2019) refers to self-reflection of teaching competences, self-confidence in teaching abilities, and a rise of pedagogical self-efficacy. About 25 % of German students regarded practical experiences as being an effect of their stay abroad (DAAD, 2023b). Further personal competences were also discovered in research. The first benchmark report of international students' mobility and the Erasmus+ Higher Education Impact Study found that students state largest improvements for self-confidence through a stay abroad (DAAD, 2023b; European Union, 2019). A lot of German students (77 %) see a positive effect of their stay abroad for their personal development. The development of personal competences was named by more students who stayed abroad in more distant regions in contrast to students who stayed in neighboring countries (DAAD, 2023b). Baedorf (2015) refers to studies, which discovered higher rates of openness for experiences and compatibility and lower rates of neuroticism, which is seen in connection to teacher's perception of stress, through stays abroad.

5   Discussion and Conclusion

The UNESCO et al. (2015) highlighted the importance of teachers and teacher education for achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 of quality education. Internationalization is meant to promote (future) teachers' competences to cope with special educational needs in diverse classrooms (Council of the European, 2020; Janert, 2022; HRK, 2017; Pachler & Redondo, 2015; DAAD, 2013). As presented in this article, the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2022) has developed a profile for inclusive teacher professional learning. This article has summarized studies which analyzed the influence of internationalization on teachers' competences. Research findings, especially on students' stays abroad, show that students improve their intercultural competences (European Union, 2019; DAAD, 2023b; Janert, 2022; Kercher & Schifferings, 2019), while time, company and reflection seem to be positive contributors (Gerlach & Lüke, 2021; Kercher & Schifferings, 2019; for further reading towards intercultural reflexivity see Brück-Hübner, 2024, in this anthology). Effects of internationalization on in-depth knowledges and language abilities were reported as well (DAAD, 2023b; Kercher & Schifferings, 2019; DAAD, 2023b). Largest improvements through stays abroad were stated by students in regard of their self-confidence (DAAD, 2023b; European Union, 2019). Personal teaching competences such as professional self-reflection, self-confidence in teaching abilities, and rise of pedagogical self-efficacy were found to be influenced positively as well (Kercher & Schifferings, 2019). All these findings on students' development can be seen in relation to the profile for inclusive teacher professional learning, as intercultural competences, in-depth knowledges, language abilities and personal competences could be important components of the profile for inclusive teacher professional learning (see Table 1). The four core values of this profile, which the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2022) has proven to be important for the professionalization of teachers for inclusive education, should be aimed at more intensively and concretely by research (for further reading: Müller, 2024), as the core values *Valuing learner diversity, supporting all learners, working with others, and personal and collaborative professional development* refer to a broad understanding of inclusion and inclusive education.

Internationalization of teacher education in Germany is implemented extensively and holistically in comparison to other European countries (DAAD, 2021; for primary school education: Müller, Seifert, Brück-Hübner, et al., 2024). Yet, there is a lack of research findings, especially of (longitudinal) empirical studies, which focus on different formats of internationalization measures and which address competences such as (future) teacher's professional identity and knowledge of experiences (Gerlach & Lüke, 2021). Ainscow underpins the importance of the use of evidence as "evidence is the lifeblood of inclusive development", as it requires care "what kinds of evidence to collect and how to use it", "since, within education systems, *what gets measured gets done*" (2020, p. 10). He highlights evidence to be "such a potent lever for change" (ibid.) and this potent lever should be used to improve inclusive education.

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