



Belgium
partner in development

Global Academic Teacher Education 2.0: statement

May 31 2023 – June 7 2023

Introduction

Global Academic Teacher Education is an initiative of the KU Leuven with sponsorship by VLIR UOS in which teacher educators from all around the world are coming together in Leuven for intensive discussions on the what and how of teacher education and more specifically teacher education with an academic and global orientation. The first GATE week in 2018 addressed several issues such as subject-specific educational research, the relation between theory and practice in academic teacher education, the use of technology and the integration of research in teacher education. Based on these discussions a GATE-agreement was elaborated and approved ([GATE agreement](#)).

From May 31 2023 till June 7 2023 a new GATE week was organized under the theme ‘Discussing the essentials of Global Academic Teacher Education’ ([GATE 2023](#)). During the week representatives from 9 different teacher education institutions (from 9 different countries: Belgium, Canada (First Nations), China, Ecuador, Germany, Kenya, Mexico, Philippines, South-Africa) presented what in their context teaching signifies and what context-specific practices this implies for teacher education. In follow-up morning sessions the issues addressed in these presentations were intensively and interactively discussed by the presenters and a consistent group of about 25 persons from very different institutions and contexts.

While it is hard to reflect the richness of the discussions, this document aims at solidifying a number of elements that are important to the participants of the evening and morning sessions. The elements might be inspirational to teachers, teacher educators as well as administrators and policy makers around the world.

Affirmations

- The role of the teacher is essential. It is through the endeavors of teachers that pupils may develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that enable them both to confront reality and transform it into a better world. In all this, the sustainable development goals are considered by many to be inspirational.
- Teacher education contributes in very different ways to the development of society. They do so by -in full recognition of the particularities of the context and in close collaboration with local communities- supporting future teachers to become engaged educators.
- The essential role of teachers (and hence also of teacher educators) deserves to be recognized by society (high status) and calls for high standards teachers (and teacher educators) comply with.
- Teacher education is relevant and important for teachers, continuous development and recurrent professionalization is equally relevant and important.
- Teaching excellence extends beyond the basic notion of expertise in certain disciplines. Instead, this idea of excellence, formed by distinct philosophical viewpoints, seeks to promote a feeling of commonality characterized by humanistic values, as opposed to conditions focused only on merit-based accomplishments. It also implies awareness about the limitations of disciplines and the added value of interdisciplinary cooperation.
- In global academic teacher education, research be it subject-specific or general, gets a very special place. It is the utmost ambition of global academic teacher education to integrate research and education and to be open to the world.
- Learning is a complex and intriguing process. Making errors and building on these errors is an intrinsic feature of learning.
- Assessment is a powerful tool. That power can be used to promote, neglect as well as obstruct things. Given the power of assessment, assessment practices deserve ample discussion and care.
- Although technology may help to cater for a variety of needs, may make content from very different (intercultural) perspectives available, and may help in supporting learning, the use of technological tools presupposes the consideration of multiple variables and deliberate decision-making.
- Reflectivity and reflexivity may help teachers to remain student and context sensitive and, hence, support continues professionalization.

Insights

Discussions during the GATE week have resulted in insights that deserve further analysis, reflection and discussion. Some of these insights are the following:

- Teaching, studying, learning, knowing involve phenomena that exceed the purely cognitive, they are contextualized, embodied (multisensorial), affected by emotions as well as metacognition.
- Power relations affect our cognition, our emotions, our behavior, our body, our relationships, our structures, our rituals, our 'doing and being'. We all benefit from addressing these power relations (as to decolonize and to emancipate our being, thinking, and behaving).
- Students' learning would benefit significantly from an approach to teaching that places a high value on the learning process itself and promotes critical self-reflexivity. Such an approach has important consequences for teacher education as it entails creating safe spaces in which can be learned, being aware about well-being as well as supporting students to achieve challenging goals.
- Curricula take very different forms and are extremely powerful. Formal and hidden curricula can both support and undermine one another. While in some cases a formal curriculum supports specific (teacher education) practices, in other cases formal curricula obstruct those practices.
- Teaching standards are everywhere. What these standards specify as well as how they are used is very context-specific. Given the role of teaching standards, there is continuous need to critically look at them.
- As teacher education is contextualized and situated in time. It creates the world by considering the specific location, it builds the future in the present by building on the past.
- Thinking about teacher education gets enriched by concepts and ideas that challenge widespread approaches and conceptualizations. Examples are: ecologies of knowledge, border thinking and the ability to shift between epistemologies, land-based learning and teaching, defamiliarization, and afrofuturism. A better understanding of these and other concepts stemming from diverse global perspectives, broadens mainstream concepts of knowledge and may help to deepen educational practices and address challenges such as cognitive and social injustice.
- The societal role of teacher education comes along with a recognition that (diverse) communities are extremely important. Teaching happens in communities, is oriented by communities and is done with communities. Teacher education approaches that reflect communities of practice, a social critical perspective and ample participation may help teacher education to contribute to highly esteemed transformations. (Community) service-learning and action research are examples of such approaches.

Research questions

The insights give rise to new research lines. Some of these lines that deserve urgent attention are:

- the impacts of the hidden curriculum on students' socialization, values, and beliefs, and how can educators alleviate its potential negative effects
- experiences and effects of border identities on students' academic achievement, socio-emotional development, and educational engagement, and strategies that can be implemented to support their holistic growth
- manifestations of internalized racism among young individuals, its impact on their educational experiences, and strategies that can be employed to promote anti-racist education and mitigate its effects
- integration of land-based pedagogy with experiential and service learning approaches contribute to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, and identification of key factors that influence its effectiveness in promoting transformative learning and sustainable practices
- teacher quality and assessment including (context-specific) differences between teaching standards, criteria to assess teaching quality (incl. the relationship between teaching quality and lesson quality) as well as the philosophies and epistemologies that underpin these standards and criteria
- the design of teacher education that takes inclusion and diversity seriously (not just superficially), but that leads to schools as reflexive and discrimination-critical institutions where ALL students can feel welcome in their so-ness, their life situations, their needs, and their own ideas, and can learn well
- transfer of ideas on nation building through teacher education into a global citizenship to address social injustice and to increase solidarity

Initiatives

Valuing the exchanges during the GATE week ideas for future collaboration were elaborated.

Networking

Creation of Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) hub between various countries on which discussions and idea sharing initiated during the GATE week can be continued.

- The hub can be a resource center where teacher educators in various countries are able to share and exchange their resources, research findings and innovative teaching and assessment practices.
- The hub can serve as a platform for organizing seminars with researchers, students, community members on topics of shared interest, they may address

social injustices in various contexts through mutual understanding and increased awareness.

Exchanges / visits

- Analysis of our practices from an intercultural perspective by inviting ‘others’ to have a look at our practices.
- Facilitation of short-term cultural exchanges between students and teacher educators from different institutes and countries to afford individuals the opportunity to experience diverse cultures and educational systems towards broadening perspectives and in promoting global citizenship.

Research groups

- Establish research groups that engage in joint research work on (some of) the research lines suggested above.
- Organize research groups that critically, comparatively and from multiple perspectives analyze teacher education practices and conceptualizations resulting in joint papers.

Dissemination

- Present the GATE-initiative at the “Higher Education with Impact” conference in Hasselt (December 2023).

In order to make all this concrete a (living) document was made that is accessible to all:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1gnWwGgkiD226lwx6K3zLqRSmw7GfB_qs/edit?usp=sharing&oid=104834810396316303861&rtpof=true&sd=true

Signatures

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