

# The Future of International Studies in Teacher Education

*David C. Smith*

It is one of the contradictions of our time that, in an age of internationalism, education in all countries continues to be oriented very much towards the nation state. There are two principal reasons for this predicament. The first is that education is still financed and prescribed by local, provincial and, in some cases, national governments without being exposed appreciably to the broadening influences of supra-national organizations. The second is that educational institutions are prone to resist change and, indeed, as they find uncertainty in the complexities of the contemporary world, prefer, as McLuhan says, to look in the rear-view mirror.

Put in another way, there is a dangerous gap between the academic system and contemporary world society. Teaching resources and courses of study in our elementary and high schools invariably convey an image of the world as a mosaic of richly varied lands and peoples: each country has its own particular history, culture, social structure, economic system and political organization. While they may show that countries interact with each other, essentially they are perpetuating a conception of our world as a collection of disunified and spatially isolated states.

Is this an adequate concept of the world and of the human condition in the second half of the twentieth century? Is it sufficient to help children to understand the world now and the world of the twenty-first century in which most of them will live? Although this view may be correct, it is at the same time seriously incomplete, since it does not take into consideration many of the new and emergent characteristics of world affairs.<sup>1</sup>

A fragmented view of the world does not help today's students understand why a song may be a simultaneous hit in London, Johannesburg and Toronto, or why people are wearing the same style of clothes in Paris, New York and Tokyo. At a more serious level, it does not help them to understand the current wheat crisis in Canada's prairie provinces, and only partly will it offer an explanation of the unrest in Canadian universities or of the renaissance of French Canada. These phenomena can only be understood ultimately with reference to the developing world-wide communications system, to the world economic system, or to nascent global political forces. Modern technology has created a new environment in which there is increased human interaction and cultural diffusion over the surface of the globe, whole new networks of international organization and a higher level of economic interdependence among the peoples of the world. What we need to do in the schools is to help young people to understand the nature of the global village.

#### *The Educational Response*

For many decades educators have been attempting to come to grips with the international dimensions of their profession, but in no era has there been more impetus for change than in the period since World War II. Since its founding, UNESCO has provided genuine leadership for those concerned with world aspects of education. It has, from the start, recognized that in any existing national system of education, all the components are interlocked with each other in such a way that advances in school education are dependent upon simultaneous developments in teacher-training colleges, universities, professional organizations, school boards and departments of education. While initiatives may come from any one part of the system, a component that advances too far and too fast may, to some extent, become alienated from the rest of the system. UNESCO has therefore attempted to promote education for world understanding at all levels.

In fostering international approaches to teacher education, UNESCO has worked closely with such other international organizations as the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession and the World Education Fellowship. It has organized numerous conferences and seminars to examine the role of teacher

training in developing international perspectives. As the thinking at these conferences became distilled, it became evident that the only way in which educational institutions could at once adjust to changing world conditions and simultaneously become creators of the world community was not simply for them to introduce new courses in world studies — for although these would be required, such action would be mere patchwork — but to infuse the whole process of education with a new spirit, to refurbish education with multiple perspectives so that the local region and the nation could be understood as working parts of a larger system.

Goals of this kind necessitated a thorough reassessment of curricula in colleges of education. At conferences in Turkey (1960)<sup>2</sup> and Sweden (1961)<sup>3</sup>, for example, delegates formulated guidelines for bringing into a world view such foundation studies as educational psychology, educational sociology, and the history and philosophy of education. They recommended that comparative education be included in all programs of teacher education and that courses in methods of instruction in such subjects as geography, history, science, literature, foreign languages, art, music and religion be taught with a view to showing their contributions to understanding world society. Geography, for instance, has for some time been organized around national, regional or continental units of study. These seminars presented schema for developing the subject both downward into more concrete levels of study and upward to deal with such topics as world population, urbanization, world food resources, world raw materials and energy resources, and world transportation and trade patterns.

More recently the question has been raised by conference participants as to whether the rigidly compartmentalized conventional subjects can, in fact, make their full contribution towards creating a world view if they continue to be taught in a way that isolates them from one another. Seeking solutions to global problems requires nothing less than interdisciplinary studies. UNESCO itself, for example, in its project on arid zone research, combined the efforts of geographers, biologists, chemists, physicists and other scientists. Any study of mankind's most urgent problems — whether of urban renewal and development or of environmental contamination — requires an integration of knowledge not normally recognized by specialists in the conventional disciplines.

In addition to making these proposals about the more formal course work in teacher education, UNESCO has also urged that student teachers be given opportunities to know people from other cultures and to spend part of their practice teaching or internship in another country. Experiences of this kind would be invaluable in developing a sensitivity to and tolerance of cultural differences.

What kind of teacher will emerge from such training? He will be a new breed of teacher: one who is equipped in terms of knowledge to teach about the modern world; one who has the necessary psychological and philosophical background to take the world as his campus; and one who has a deep longing to serve humanity as a whole. In a phrase coined by James Henderson, he will be the "terrestrial teacher<sup>4</sup>."

#### *An Estimate of Progress*

It is not easy to estimate the extent to which teacher education, at least in the West, has gained ground in implementing these proposals. Few national surveys of colleges and faculties of education have been made, and those that have been completed have not always appraised comprehensively all aspects of teacher training. However, a rough estimate can be gained from surveys made in Canada, the United States and England.

No comprehensive survey has been made as far as Canadian teacher training institutions are concerned; however, a survey of thirty English-language institutions engaged in teacher training and educational research was conducted in 1968 to find out to what extent Comparative Education was offered in these institutions and what resources in International Education they possessed.<sup>5</sup> Of the thirty institutions surveyed, only fourteen were found to offer systematically one or more courses in Comparative Education at the undergraduate or graduate levels. For the most part these courses attracted only small numbers of students and involved a limited number of staff members. While all of the institutions reported that they carried on various kinds of international studies or activities, such as maintaining foreign student advisors or conducting international exchanges of scholars, taken as a whole, Canadian institutions have only very modest undertakings in any scheme of world education.

A not dissimilar picture emerges from a 1965 survey of the 689 member institutions of the American Association of Colleges of Teacher Education.<sup>6</sup> In this survey of practice in the United States, only 20 per cent of the total were then offering courses designed "to introduce prospective teachers to educational problems outside the United States." Attempts to bring a world view to education in these colleges usually consisted only of the isolated work of individual professors. There were practically no examples of institutions where a reassessment of programs in terms of their international orientation was made by faculties as a whole.

In England and Wales a survey of teacher training colleges was conducted in 1961 by the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education.<sup>7</sup> Replies were received from 70 institutions (although in all there are nearly 200 teacher training colleges and university departments of education in England and Wales). The proportion of colleges reporting that subjects contributed to a world view was as follows: foundation studies in education 42 per cent, history 50 per cent, geography 75 per cent, literature 18 per cent, science 24 per cent and religious education 57 per cent. The figures here may represent genuine achievement in internationalizing the subjects of teacher education in England and Wales. On the other hand they may reflect either the buoyant interest in international affairs manifested in academic circles as Britain moved towards closer economic integration with Europe in the 1960's, or spuriously high percentages if the survey sample was not representative of the colleges as a whole, or both.

What conclusion may be drawn from this limited evidence? Obviously some attempts have been made by those concerned with teacher education and research to square their programs with the vital concerns and realities of the modern world. A few institutions like the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and Teachers College, Columbia University have developed imaginative and enterprising programs of great relevance. But perhaps the writer who described international studies in American education as "feeble but growing" was a spokesman for more countries than his own.<sup>8</sup>

The inadequacy of world affairs education may be one of the underlying causes for student unrest in many of the world's universities. After completing visits to a large number of universities and colleges of education in the United States, Harold Taylor wrote:

"[Students] found that in the way their own education was organized, with its emphasis on the academic intelligence, none of the issues which truly concerned them in national and world affairs was the subject of analysis, discussion or treatment in the courses they were taught."<sup>9</sup> Such phenomena as the "teach-in," the Peace Corps and student operated courses and colleges, Taylor claims, may be interpreted as attempts by students to overcome the irrelevance of their education.

Taylor's views are shared by many others such as Norman Cousins, the Editor of *Saturday Review*, and anthropologist, Margaret Mead. Cousins believes that the real issues in campus unrest (apart from the immediate events that have precipitated the crises) are the problems of war and peace, environmental contamination, population pressures and racial strife. If education is to be relevant, he says, "it must address itself to the problems of the human species."<sup>10</sup> Margaret Mead sees the younger generation as having been born into a whole world that is bound together in a totally new way. "No one has ever been young before in the world they live in and its an awfully lonely world to them."<sup>11</sup>

As many see it, the future task of education is for both adults and youth to make sense out of the world society that has emerged and that they are creating together.

#### *Future Prospects*

When trying to speculate on what will happen to international studies in teacher education over the next decade, it is necessary to distinguish clearly between what one would like to see happen and, by extrapolating current trends, what will probably happen. As teacher education in Canada and elsewhere appears to be ever more closely linked with the destiny of the university, it may be worth looking first at what may be the role of the university as a whole. An insightful attempt to predict the relationship between the university and the world in 1980 has been made by William Marvel.<sup>12</sup>

By first looking backwards to see ahead, Marvel contrasts the place of international studies in American universities in 1936 with that in the 1960's. He notes that in 1936 the content of teaching was "parochial, underdeveloped and Europe-focused" with little attention being devoted to the affairs of the Middle East, Asia, Africa and Latin America. (The situation in Europe was no different. While reform was being actively promoted, international

studies found little place in university undergraduate and post-graduate studies.<sup>13</sup>)

When the offerings of 1936 are compared with those of today, it is apparent that many major advances have been made both in curriculum development through area studies and in the more abundant opportunities for education and service abroad. But whereas generally adequate facilities exist today only for the specialist student in the international field, by 1980 Marvel predicts that the overall curriculum for "the great body of American students" will provide them with a basic literacy in world affairs. Every discipline will have been infused with an international dimension. At the same time, all trend curves showing the number of foreign students coming to this continent, the number of Americans participating in programs abroad, and the number of international exchanges of university professors will be up. Terms, such as "the brain drain," will be out of fashion since by then people's larger loyalties will admit to the fact that no matter where experts move over the globe, their intellectual resources will still be at work in the world for the betterment of mankind.

How will teacher education fit into and contribute towards the world role of the university? There are differing views concerning the role of a faculty of education in bringing about world education in the larger system. On the one hand, there is the school of thought that considers the matter of such great urgency that every college of education must take swift initiatives. Wresting itself free from the relatively slow-moving university machinery, the faculty of education must go ahead and forge its own links with institutions abroad, with them and with other interested persons in the university, develop its own world-oriented curriculum, engage its own staff of international scholars, and set up its own programs of student practice at home and abroad. It must revolutionize its role to become "a staging ground for expeditions into the world."<sup>14</sup>

On the other hand there are those who believe that a faculty of education should aim to effect change in close cooperation with the rest of the university and with other institutions so that the whole may undergo simultaneous evolution.<sup>15</sup> Teacher educators should begin with a period of critical self-appraisal, examining the relevance of existing courses of study to the immediate community, to the nation and to world society. When new objectives have been formulated, professors of education should then coordinate their

reforms with those of their colleagues in other faculties, each providing mutual assistance in devising new courses within the larger framework of dialogue between administration, teachers and students. The changes that would follow in all likelihood would affect every phase and subject of teacher training much as envisaged in the UNESCO reports. Stress is also laid upon building workable mechanisms that would allow students to acquire multi-cultural teaching and learning experiences — within Canada among French-Canadians, Indians, Eskimos and other minority groups, as well as abroad.

In the long run it may well be that the best course of action is for faculties of education to press ahead with their own international initiatives, but for them also to ensure that their moves are understood, accepted, supported and consolidated by the rest of the system. While these major adjustments will require the efforts of all those connected with teacher education, no sector of study will need to be developed more than that of educational research. The general direction in which teacher education must change is clear, but accompanying experimentation and research into a multitude of problems in comparative and international education will require high priority. With feedback from research to program development, an improving quality of world education will be assured.

There will probably, however, be little room for complacency in 1980. By then the task of world education may be partially or, more hopefully, largely achieved. At that time with more extensive space exploration and travel within the solar system — and who knows, maybe beyond — the human species will be faced with the challenge of taking another enormous step: extending its consciousness from the earth to the universe.

### References

1. A very lucid analysis of international education has been made by Lee F. Anderson in "An Examination of the Structure and Objectives of International Education," *Social Education*, November 1968, pp. 639-647.
2. D. J. Cobb (ed.), *Mutual Appreciation of Eastern and Western Cultural Values: The Teacher's Role*, Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, 1961.



3. J. B. Willcock, (ed.), *Preparing Teachers for Education for International Understanding*, Hamburg: UNESCO Institute for Education, 1962.
4. James L. Henderson, "The Educational Requirements for World Citizenship and Government," in George Z. F. Bereday and Joseph A. Lauwerys, *Education and International Life: The Yearbook of Education 1964*, New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1964, p. 277.
5. R. Magnuson, "A Survey of Comparative and International Education Resources and Facilities in Selected English-Language Colleges and Universities in Canada," in A. F. Skinner (ed.), *The Comparative and International Education Society of Canada, Papers 1968*, pp. 49-60.
6. T. Keith Glennan (ed.), *The Professional School and World Affairs: Report of the Task Force on Education*, New York: Education and World Affairs, 1967, pp. 24-25.
7. Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education, *The Teaching of World Affairs in Teacher Training Colleges*, London: The Association, 1961.
8. Fred F. Harclerod, "International Studies in Education: Feeble but Growing," *Phi Delta Kappan*, Vol. XLIX, No. 4, December 1967, pp. 194-196.
9. Harold Taylor, *The World As Teacher*, New York: Doubleday, 1969, p. 96.
10. Norman Cousins, Address delivered at the annual meeting of the Education Writers' Association, Atlantic City, February 1969.
11. Margaret Mead, Address delivered before the alumni of Teachers College, Columbia University at Atlantic City, February 1969.
12. William Marvel, "The University and the World," *Campus 1980: The Shape of the Future in American Higher Education*, New York: Dell, 1968, pp. 64-91.
13. S. H. Bailey, *International Studies in Modern Education*, London: Oxford University Press, 1938, p. 78.
14. Harold Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 90.
15. Claude A. Eggertsen, "Reformulating Higher Education to Improve the International Orientation of the Teacher," in Harold G. Shane (ed.), *The United States and International Education: The Sixty-eighth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969, pp. 318-343.