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Internationalization of K-12 Schools Through the Eyes of Public School Principals

Megan M. Landwehr
SIT Graduate Institute

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**INTERNATIONALIZATION OF K-12 SCHOOLS THROUGH THE
EYES OF PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS**

Megan M. Landwehr

PIM 70

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of
International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

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Adviser: Dr. Kevin Brennan

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Student Name: Megan M. Landwehr

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ABSTRACT

Today's teacher education students have more opportunities than ever to incorporate study abroad into their degree and licensure requirements. This Capstone examines the value that public school principals place on internationalization, especially when it comes to hiring teachers. I approached this qualitative study utilizing action research through case studies. Data was gathered by conducting six in-depth interviews. Of these, three are current principals and three have been principals their entire careers and are now retired. The main research question is; *what value do principals in Wake County, North Carolina place on global competence of teacher job applicants?* The findings answer much more than this question and indicate that there is a growing emphasis on global awareness in public schools. Despite the emphasis on global awareness, there is no common understanding of what that term actually means or what it looks like in the classroom. Regardless of these inconsistencies, principals place a high value on international experiences when it comes to hiring teachers. Implications for professional practice as a result of this research include a demonstrated need for consistency and structure for internationalizing the public school system. Further, this research is useful for teacher candidates and teacher education institutions to gain a deeper understanding of how to gain a competitive edge through impactful global experiences.

Introduction

The world is now smaller than ever before. Thanks to innovations in technology, connecting with people and cultures all over the world is easy and affordable.

Industries such as business, engineering, and technology have experienced the effects of globalization for decades. Businesses employ people from all over the world and more and more United States citizens are traveling or working with virtual multi-cultural teams. Employers are purposefully seeking people to hire that have extensive travel experience or strong cross-cultural communication skills.

The field of education is also feeling the far-reaching effects of globalization and has begun to recognize the values of hiring educators and public school teachers who possess a knowledge of global understanding and have the ability to teach students core subjects while imparting global themes. Further, students enrolled in the public school systems come from increasingly diverse backgrounds. Teachers are tasked with instructing classes that contain students from multiple ethnicities, different socioeconomic statuses, immigrant children learning English for the first time, children with special needs and gifted students all in the same classroom. Being a teacher in today's extremely diverse classroom is challenging and requires some very special skills and talents.

My interest in the internationalization of public schools stems from several different sources; growing up with a mother and other close family members being teachers, studying abroad and extensive travel experience myself, and my career in higher education. Hearing my mother come home every day with stories from the classroom, and having aunts, uncles, and even a grandfather who also spoke often of

their teaching careers, truly opened my eyes to the fascinating career of being a K-12 public school teacher. Juggling the needs of the multitude of students, parents, and administrators always seemed like a daunting task to me, especially as I got older and realized the importance of training students to be citizens and leaders in an ever increasing global society. When I started traveling independently and also studied abroad during college, I noticed that I learned a lot more during these adventures than I ever did sitting in a classroom. I gained skills and developed characteristics that ultimately helped me in my career. Because of traveling I learned what it felt like to be a minority, how to be resourceful and independent, and gained much more self-confidence. My career thus far has led me to multiple positions and experiences all within higher education. I've taught English as a Second Language, worked in recruiting and admissions, and now work with study abroad programs. Throughout my life though, I've always had a very special interest in K-12 education and strongly feel the importance of making sure children gain exposure to other people and cultures in their classrooms. Specifically, I am interested in learning more about what the public school systems are doing to prepare graduates with the skills they need to work with people from other cultures, work in other countries, or the skills needed to become responsible global citizens.

As the International Education Program Coordinator for the College of Education at North Carolina State University, a large part of my job involves coordinating Student Teaching Abroad Programs. A major task associated with these programs is recruiting and spreading the word about program benefits for teacher

education students. I have spoken with hundreds of undergraduate students, graduates, and faculty members about the program and the benefits of training students to become globally competent teachers. The purpose of the study abroad programs I work with is two-fold; to train teachers to be able to teach content (math, science, social studies, English, etc.) with global themes and to train them how to effectively facilitate a classroom environment of acceptance and understanding for diversity. One question that is consistently asked of me is, “Will principals be more likely to hire me if I’ve done part of my student teaching overseas?” My answer to this usually involves spouting off how great it looks on a resume and how I think principals *should* hire students who have had such valuable experience inside of a school system in Brazil, China, etc. The truth is, I have never actually asked any principal about this very topic and what they think about it. Thus, my research topic presented itself.

I wanted to find out if having study abroad experiences positively or negatively impacts a job candidate’s chances of being hired in a public school in North Carolina. I’ve heard stories from students leaning both ways. Some have reported that their principals don’t see any value in hiring a teacher with a global experience when all they need is a teacher to teach their kids in North Carolina. On the other hand, some students have reported their hiring principals of being very favorable to the idea, and even setting up Skype classes with the contacts the student teacher made overseas. I wanted to ask the principals myself and really get into some discussions about hiring practices as they relate to internationalization. My research question is; *what value do principals in Wake County, North Carolina place on global competence of teacher job applicants?*

Definition of Important Terms

Teacher Education Terms

The field of teacher education is full of specialized terms, phrases, and acronyms. Prior to conducting a literature review, a definition of technical terms is provided in order to create some background, context, and clarity of the subject matter.

First and foremost, the student teaching process needs to be explained. Student teaching occurs during the final semester of university education for students studying to be teachers. It is a requirement for all subject areas and grade levels and is sanctioned by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (DPI). Students who do not successfully complete the student teaching process will not receive a teaching license. In North Carolina, student teaching is set up like an internship where students are placed inside of a public school classroom with a teacher working in the same licensure area. North Carolina requires a minimum of ten weeks inside of a classroom, and NC State typically places students in classrooms for the entire semester of 16 to 17 weeks. During this process, students start out by observing their home classroom teacher, referred to as Cooperating Teacher (CT), for the first few weeks. Then, they gradually take over instructional time until they are teaching the full load of classes and taking on all responsibilities of their CT. Student teachers are also assigned a University Supervisor by their institution of higher education. The University Supervisor observes the student teach at least three or four times throughout the semester. In order to “pass” student teaching, both the Cooperating Teacher and

University Supervisor need to fill out state licensure paperwork officially recommending the student for licensure.

In order to become a teacher in North Carolina, a bachelor's degree and a license are required. Because there are so many requirements for licensure, teacher education students have far less flexibility in their course credits and degree requirements than most other discipline areas. For this reason, teacher education majors rarely study abroad due to the lack of electives or general education requirements in their degree plan. In fact, Garii (2009) found that less than 6% of teacher education students have any type of global experience (p. 89). This is how student teaching abroad programs came into existence. Administrators and state officials started to recognize the need for pre-service teachers to gain skills necessary to navigate linguistically diverse and multicultural public schools. In order to continue to meet the state minimum requirement of ten weeks of student teaching, the student teaching abroad programs at NC State were designed so that students are placed in North Carolina schools for the first ten weeks of the semester, then travel abroad as a cohort to gain experience in schools abroad for the final five or six weeks of the semester.

Categories of International Schools Explained

All of the interviews conducted for this study were based at public schools, but two of the three current principals interviewed are the leaders of schools with an international focus. Principal A works at an elementary school that is a part of the Global Schools Network and Principal C works at a high school that has been classified as an International Baccalaureate school. Each of the other principals I spoke with work

at, or spent their careers working at schools without any type of international focus. To offer some background to the forthcoming presentation and analysis of data, Global Schools Network and International Baccalaureate schools will be defined here.

The Global Schools Network (GSN) is an “alliance made up of schools, school districts, businesses, and organizations committed to creating collaborative approaches to international education”, according to their web site (2012). The GSN is a statewide effort in North Carolina with the main partners being the N.C. State Board of Education, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, the N.C. Department of Commerce and the N.C. Business Committee for Education. According to Principal A, their school’s membership does not involve any type of funding sources at this point. Rather, the GSN serves the purpose of providing a framework and resources to use in the classroom.

Principal C is the leader of a high school with the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. IB is an international non-profit educational foundation serving thousands of schools since 1968 in over 141 different countries (2012). Only a few schools in Wake County are permitted to have the IB status at a time and the Wake County School Board decides which schools will be considered IB. According to Principal C, having the IB status means having significant funding for international programs, including two staff positions dedicated to these efforts. The main way that IB implements itself at the school that was involved in this research study is through the diploma program. The IB diploma program is a rigorous program for juniors and seniors to receive additional

academic training to prepare them for college and the global society they will enter upon graduation.

Literature Review

The published research on the topic of internationalizing teacher education is broad and vast. Published studies that relate closest to this Capstone involve the importance of developing intercultural sensitivity skills among teachers and student teaching abroad learning outcomes. A significant focus is most often placed on teacher education students before, during, and after their participation in international field experiences or study abroad programs. There is certainly no shortage of literature outlining the rationales for why global experiences are important for teachers to have. Some of the reported rationales are discussed below and then learning outcomes of student teaching abroad programs are outlined.

Most teachers in the United States represent the majority culture of middle-class whites, while the number of minority students continues to increase (Cushner, 2002, p. 45). The need to learn the cultural context of the students they are teaching is justified across current research again and again. Multiple sources make powerful arguments for increasing opportunities for pre-service teachers to study abroad, especially considering the fact that most current teachers have very little experience traveling or working with intercultural groups of people. Research on student teaching abroad programs has shown an increase in genuine multiculturalism for participants, meaning that they are better able to relate to and communicate with people from different

cultural backgrounds. As a result of living, working, and learning in a different culture, students start to question their own culture and way of thinking, allowing them to see their own culture from a different perspective. Based on participant studies, this new perspective allows them to experience an increase in cultural sensitivity. Quezada (2004) goes on to report that student teachers often return to the United States with an enthusiasm for teaching their students a broader global perspective (p. 462). Stachowski and Mahan (1998) make the point that conventional student teachers are less likely to gain these important multicultural perspectives in the communities surrounding their schools because requirements and expectations about learning different cultural values are typically not incorporated into traditional field experiences (p. 159).

Although Student Teaching Abroad programs at NC State University are only a year old, there are a plethora of studies of learner outcomes among student teaching abroad participants at other institutions dating back over a decade. The published literature shows that teacher education students who have completed part or all of their student teaching semesters abroad, have developed or improved on a variety of skills. Are these newly developed skills characteristics that principals find important when they are considering hiring teachers? This research study will attempt to answer this question. The research conducted on student teaching abroad learning outcomes is discussed in the following section.

Throughout many different types of programs across multiple institutions, several common outcomes have been consistently documented. The common themes

include: increased confidence and self-reliance, varied teaching methods, and empathy for diverse learners.

Increased confidence and self-reliance. Student teaching abroad participants reported feeling more confident and self-assured after experiences living in unfamiliar communities and working in schools abroad. They grow both personally and professionally as a result of “feeling isolated, homesick, and out of place during their first weeks in the host country” (Quezada, 2004, p. 462). Students become more independent and mature after getting through these initial negative feelings. The study by Quezada (2004) argues that teachers with higher confidence “guide, motivate, and praise students much more” (p. 462). Similarly, Cushner and Mahon’s (2002) research suggests that this increased confidence is a result of students being on their own for the first time and having to confront fears and personal anxieties. Once their fears and anxieties are overcome, it creates a sense of empowerment (p. 51). A student teaching abroad participant in a program facilitated by Berry College stated this theme best when he said, “After this experience is over I think that I will feel much more prepared to confront the unexpected or any of the surprises that I may encounter in my teaching career” (Clement & Outlaw, 2002, p. 180).

Varied teaching methods. Teaching methodology and instructional pedagogy is the third learning outcome consistently reported throughout student teaching abroad research. Most student teaching abroad programs allow students to do part of their internship semester in schools within the United States and the second part in schools abroad. Due to this particular program design, which is also how NC State student

teaching abroad programs are designed, participants have the unique opportunity to compare and contrast schools, education systems, and pedagogy for their different placements. In many instances, they find universal teaching practices and values. For instance, Clement and Outlaw's (2002) study shows that participants learned that the following common concerns existed across cultures: classroom management issues, teachers' need for extreme multi-tasking, and language minorities being present in mainstream classrooms (p. 180). More often, participants reported differences between classrooms in the United States and classrooms in host countries. Quezada (2004) makes the strong argument that by comparing their placements, pre-service teachers were able to take the best teaching practices from both (p. 462). Participants often had fewer resources in host countries, so they had to adapt and learn how to use more creative techniques in the delivery of lessons. This skill is useful in any classroom context, including in the United States, where teachers are being faced with tight budget restrictions due to the current economic crises and specifically cuts in the education sector.

Empathy for diverse learners. Although much of the research on student teaching abroad doesn't explicitly state the word "empathy", almost everything I read alluded to this important theme in some format. Student teachers in foreign countries go through similar experiences to what immigrant children in the United States have (Quezada, 2004, p. 462). Immigrant children are often placed in mainstream classrooms with English as the only method of instruction. They feel out of place, lonely, and have difficulty communicating. Student teachers have a deeper ability to relate to English

Language Learners or immigrant children in their classrooms after they have experienced the isolation, loneliness, and have difficulties communicating in a foreign country. One student teaching abroad participant reported lessons he learned through these experiences involving nonverbal communication. He noticed that a minority language student in an Irish classroom was using mostly nonverbal communication to communicate. Understanding the child's struggles through his own difficulties, he adjusted his instruction to include more nonverbal gestures to help the student feel comfortable (Clement and Outlaw, 2002, p. 180). In a 2011 study, Aglazor, Phillion, Malewski, and Sharma report that as a result of a student teaching program in Honduras, participants were able to reflect deeply about privilege, poverty, and inequalities in education (p. 41-42). This reportedly caused them to think more critically about the role of socioeconomic statuses in the classroom in order to relate more effectively with their diverse students coming from less privileged backgrounds. This ability to empathize is crucial for educators working in diverse classroom settings, a skill increasingly more important for educators in the ever-diversifying United States.

Although there are many fascinating studies documenting the rationales for developing intercultural sensitivity among teachers as well as significant reported outcomes from student teaching abroad programs, there is little research on the value that hiring principals place on this topic. If institutions of higher education are responsible for training future teachers, then it is simple to conclude that the schools where they ultimately find jobs are aware of and supportive of the internationalization going on in teacher education. However, there is a noticeable gap in the research on

studying whether or not these themes are playing out in the schools where teachers are ultimately employed. Principals are the leaders of their schools and are responsible for hiring new teachers every year. It is important that this Capstone explores their opinions and values of internationalization to make sure that the needs and goals of K-12 schools and teacher education institutions are aligned. This study will attempt to fill the gap in existing research by asking principals if they value the outcomes and skills previously reported by others in existing internationalization of teacher education research.

Research Design

The research design for my Capstone project was to conduct interviews with principals at public schools in North Carolina. Three subjects are currently principals, and were interviewed in their offices at each one's school. The other three subjects were principals for the majority of their careers and are now retired. Each of these retired principals spent their careers in North Carolina and now work in the field of educational leadership at a large university and help train future teachers or principals. Career principal interviews were all conducted privately in my office. The interviews with current principals included an elementary, middle, and a high school principal. The length for all interviews ranged from 20 minutes to 60 minutes and each were recorded using SoundCloud technology and then downloaded to the researcher's hard drive. The subjects signed a consent form (see Appendix A) agreeing to participate

anonymously in the study. Further, their identities are protected in this written document as well as kept private in the audio files.

The subjects in this study each have a wide range of experience in schools across North Carolina, but they all currently work in Wake County, which is centrally located in the state. Wake County is where I live and work and also where the capital city of Raleigh is located. It is the largest school system in the state, with over 143 thousand students enrolled in 2011. It is also one of the most diverse counties in the state with over half of the students enrolled being of races other than white, and has a large range of socio-economic classes (*Statistical Profile Public Schools of North Carolina: Pupils in Membership by Race and Sex, School Year 2010-2011*). As a result of this, it also contains a very large range of schools in terms of quantity and quality.

The framework for my research is case studies through action research. Interview questions were designed to obtain personal opinions and have a healthy dialogue about the importance of internationalization in public schools. This study is considered action research because through the interview discussions, I sought to invoke social and attitudinal change among the school environments concerning internationalization. By sitting down with six influential people within the school system of North Carolina, I hoped to educate them on the movement to internationalize teacher education and the programs available for teacher training at their local university. If principals did not indicate currently taking global competence into consideration as a skill for hiring a new teacher candidate, the interview was structured to cause them to re-think their hiring practices.

Limitations

Limitations of this study included access to subjects and interview environment. Several principals turned my interview requests down, or did not reply to my inquiries at all. Two out of the three current principals I interviewed are working at schools with an international focus. They could have been more likely to respond to my request due to their interests and the fact that their schools have international missions, which complements my research topic. On the other hand, principals who turned down the request, or did not reply at all could have read my research topic and decided not to participate because it is of no interest to them. Thus, the results and outcomes could have turned out differently if my subjects were from a broader amount and range of principals from a variety of more traditional schools.

Another limitation that occurred during this study was the interview environment. I completed three interviews with current principals in their offices at school. In one instance, the principal was approximately 20 minutes late for our appointment because she was dealing with a student and parent issue. This could have made her more distracted than usual when answering my questions and trying to focus on an entirely different topic immediately after dealing with a serious problem. In the middle of a different interview, we were interrupted by a phone call that the subject took as well as several announcements over the loud speaker. Being able to sit down in a focused setting with out any distractions was difficult in the research study due to the nature of the duties and responsibilities that go along with the particular subjects I

chose for this study. Principals are extremely busy individuals with very important jobs to do.

Another limitation of the interview environment was the fact that half of the interviews took place in my office. The current principals were interviewed in their own offices, where they inevitably have a certain level of comfort. Retired principals were all interviewed in my office, which could have caused some varied results. Being in a new environment, where the researcher is more comfortable than the subject has the potential to sway some conversation more in favor of the researcher's beliefs and biases. Although, it is worth mentioning that my office is located on the same campus as theirs, which most likely provided a certain level of familiarity.

Presentation of Data

The interviews with all six subjects consisted of a common structure and core of interview questions. However, during the actual interviews the discussions and conversations flowed in different directions each time. For a list of the structured interview questions, see Appendix B and Appendix C. Interviews with the three current principals began by asking several demographic questions pertaining to their school of employment. The four demographic questions and the coordinating answers for all current principals are detailed in Table 1.

Question	Response from Principal A (Elementary School)	Response from Principal B (Middle School)	Response from Principal C (High School)
How many students	465	1188	2648

are currently enrolled at the school?			
How many teachers are employed here?	45	85	185
Approximately how many teachers do you hire each year?	5	2	25
How would you describe the school's diversity?	22% Free and Reduced Lunch. Highly ethnically diverse, especially a high population of students adopted from other countries.	51% minority, 42% free and reduced lunch, 15% ESL	No Response

Table 1: Demographic questions and responses from current principals.

During the interviews with retired, career principals, the first question asked each subject to describe their career. A summary of these responses is outlined in Table 2.

	Principal D	Principal E	Principal F
Licensure Area	Elementary Education	Elementary Education	Social Studies
Type of School Served as Principal	Public Middle & High School, Person County	Public Elementary, Wake County	Public Elementary, Middle & High School, Wake County
Total Number of Years Worked in Education	25	25	28

Table 2: Description of careers of retired principals.

Upon completion of the above introduction and background questions, a majority of the remaining interview questions were the same for current and retired principals. All six subjects were asked to describe their personal experience with international travel. Summaries of their responses are recorded in Table 3.

Principal	International Travel Experience
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A	Traveled internationally for the first time as an adult. All trips internationally have been of a personal nature and include Canada, the Caribbean, Ireland, and Curacao (an island off the coast of Venezuela).
B	Has visited countries in Europe, South America, and the Caribbean for leisure. Also did a mission trip in El Salvador.
C	Has visited over 20 different countries all over the world for personal travel. She enjoys going to different countries every year, and avoids visiting the same place twice. Lived in France for two years and taught English as a Second Language there while her husband worked for a computer company.
D	Traveled internationally for the first time as an adult. Two separate trips overseas to Europe and Japan. Europe was a 15-day trip for educators to learn about school systems in Germany and the Netherlands. The trip to Japan was a Fulbright program consisting of a host family stay in Hiroshima lasting approximately two months.
E	Traveled internationally for the first time as an adult. Has gone on family vacations in the Caribbean and Mexico. Traveled to Europe twice with groups of friends for personal vacation. First trip to Europe consisted of visiting London and Paris. The second trip was to Italy, where a group of friends rented a villa in Florence.
F	Personal international travel consists of motorcycle trips to Canada with his wife. Also traveled to Montreal, Canada for an International Baccalaureate conference as a principal. Traveled to Beijing, China for ten days during the summer of 2011 with a group of educators to visit a partner school.

Table 3: Principals' international travel experience.

Another common theme discussed during each interview was the concept of “global awareness”. Each subject was asked to define the term and discuss their opinions of this term showing up on the new teacher evaluation forms, as mandated by the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) in North Carolina. All six of the subjects agreed that global awareness should be present inside of the classroom and that teachers should be held accountable to demonstrate this throughout their teaching across all subject areas. Further, they all responded positively to DPI attempting to add global awareness on the teacher evaluation tool. Principal C described DPI’s mandate that all schools demonstrate global awareness as “superficial”. She said that a poster

could be hung on a school wall to prove that your school is globally aware, and went on to explain that it should go much deeper than that. Every principal also mentioned that there were hardly any resources or tools provided by DPI explaining what global awareness means, or how it looks inside of the classroom. They all felt that it was up to them individually to determine what global awareness looks like in schools, how to communicate that to their teaching staff, and finally how to evaluate teachers based on their personal understanding of global awareness. The principals all defined global awareness during their interviews.

Principal A defined global awareness as “a sense of curiosity.” She went on to say, “and because humans, whether they are kids or grown-ups, need to be comfortable in the unknown. And I think that’s the point of global awareness. Making sure that they learn about others, whether it’s other people or ways of life, and I think that sense of curiosity is the only way you’re going to get there. Fear of the unknown is something that’s hard to overcome, and I think that’s the best thing that global education does. Whether it’s out of a book or a Skype event or a conversation, we have great speakers that come into class all the time, and you know, if a kid can think back to that experience and have some kind of connection to Brazil, or to Tibet, that gives them an awareness that they will be more curious. I think that’s the goal of what we do, just to be open, because we’re not going to be able to teach them about every country, every culture. We’ve got to just open their eyes to be comfortable enough to put themselves in those experiences.”

When Principal B was asked to define global awareness, the response was: “You’re looking at economies of different countries, you’re looking at governments of different countries, you’re looking at cultures of different countries, technologies of different countries...and how they all work together as a global society.”

The definition according to Principal C is, “to know that a position we might have is formed by our experiences. And so to have more experiences, you have a broader basis for an opinion. I think that the first time you go overseas for an extended period of time it really brings that ah-ha moment, that oh my gosh, the western U.S. is not ground zero for how the rest of the world lives. It is just a country, in one continent. So many times I was stunned at how narrow my perspective was of the world and it backed me down from an American imperialistic attitude. Because I did believe do it our way or you’re wrong. Travel teaches and exposes you to so many different perspectives.”

Principal D defined global awareness, not just an awareness...but an “experience”. He emphasized the importance of traveling and seeing different places and having new experiences because it opens your eyes to new world views. As a principal, he emphasized the importance of field trips for this reason. The school took students to simple places, such as the beach, and many of the children had never been there before although they live only a few hours away. Additionally, he stressed the importance of having a diverse teaching staff because research has shown that children learn better from people who “look like them”.

Principal E was also asked to define the term. Her response follows: “You don’t have to change your social studies, you don’t have to change the labeling of everything in the room, to build cultural awareness, although it’s good. But you have to baby step it out so that they developmentally start building the concept that China is not North Carolina. And that was really how I approached it as a principal. That I didn’t want it to become a subject...it needed to be how we’re doing business and how are we building that awareness of people who are alike and different, and in different ways, and they speak different languages and how to you build that breadth into it.”

Finally, Principal F’s reply was: “I would tie it probably to my social studies background...you’ve got an idea that Syria is going to hell right now, that there’s still contamination issues in Japan, that China and Russia are the only two countries that haven’t condemned Syria, that South America, Mexico there’s issues. That global, and I have stated to a lot of people in the past several years, in a serious vain, but they don’t think so, that social studies is the most important discipline. Just that they have a handle on current events, not just in Wake County.”

Another aspect each interview had in common was questions and discussions about how global awareness is practically implemented at their school (or previous schools for the retired principals). The answers to this question also varied widely.

Principal A believes that global awareness is split evenly between curriculum and teaching methods. Referring to the curriculum aspect, she stated that it is important for teachers to infuse global ideas into the standardized North Carolina content that teachers are required to teach. The example she used was teaching about

the animals that live in Africa during the unit in elementary school where students must learn about animal habitats, rather than only teaching about the animals that live in our own backyards. The other half of that is teaching methods, which Principal A describes as, “students becoming extremely literate and being able to talk about what they are reading and argue their points and be able to collaborate effectively, that’s part of the global education”.

Principal B, at the middle school, spoke about global awareness implementing itself only within curriculum. She believes that global themes and ideas can be discussed in most subject areas, but feels that it is a lot more difficult to do in math and science. Math was specifically pointed out as having no room within the pacing guides to instruct students on global awareness.

Principal C is employed at an International Baccalaureate (IB) high school. Although she was able to share many different ways that global awareness implements itself into her school, she still commented on the fact that she thinks they have a long way to go in becoming truly international. At this particular high school, the principal accepts the maximum amount of high school exchange students allowed at a given school each year, which is a total of seven. The only other non-curricular global aspect of the school mentioned is a student club that goes to a different ethnic restaurant each month. She explained that this club has been around for years and has about 40 to 50 regular participants every month. Principal C shared the limitations of this club as being a superficial understanding of other cultures, and the fact that students must pay for the meal and provide their own transportation to the restaurant limits the type of

participant to someone who typically has more resources and privileges. Since this is an IB school, curriculum also plays a large role. Every student in ninth and tenth grade receives global instruction in every class. The upperclassmen can elect to participate in a competitive diploma program where they receive rigorous curriculum instruction in global awareness that is part of the IB program.

Retired Principal D mainly spoke about global awareness inside of the schools as being closely linked to diversity. He spoke about how diverse the student population is and how teachers should also be diverse. An appreciation for diversity and teaching children how to have a sense of understanding of all different types of people was the most important aspect of global awareness for this principal.

Career Principal E had the following to say about how global awareness looked inside of the schools where she served as an administrator:

“As a leader, I just told folks [teachers] that I just wanted them to build the concept that the world is bigger than they think. That when they read, for example, I got these laminated maps, of the world. Then they get out the map and say well you know China is located here and here’s a big body of water and let’s find out where we are. Here we are and look over there. And you can tell this one has more mountains that we do, or whatever. And then you move on with the reading lesson. That you don’t derail reading but you don’t read China like it’s North Carolina. And there’s a balancing of that that’s very tricky.”

Finally, when Principal F was asked about what global awareness specifically looks like in the schools in his opinion, he also spoke about it being a curriculum as well as a diversity issue. Referring to mainly his social studies background, he explained the importance of talking about world current events in the classroom, not just things happening locally. Further, he explain the idea of the U.S. being a melting pot and that

this should be reflected in the schools. He articulated this idea by saying, “as I travel around the state now working with school systems and just even at Wake County, try and think about what it would be like if we were not diverse. It would not be a good thing.”

When principals were asked if they felt that it’s important for teachers to have knowledge of other cultures, all responded “yes”. The rationales for *why* they felt it important for teachers to have knowledge of other cultures involved diversity of schools and community, almost across the board. Principal C stated the rationale very succinctly when she said, “Because those are the kinds of students that we’re teaching. And when you meet students who think differently and act differently, and who have had different experiences, we have got to meet that.”

During the final part of every interview, five out of six of the principals were asked a series of questions relating to hiring practices of teachers. Although the researcher’s main concern revolved around international experiences of teachers and how that affects their likeliness to be hired, discussions inevitably led to more general hiring practices, beliefs, qualities, and trends. When the principals were asked to share overall qualities they look for when hiring new teachers, a wide variety of qualities and traits were given as answers. Summaries of these responses are given in Table 5.

Principal	Top qualities to look for when hiring teachers.
A	Differentiation and assessment skills. Ability to balance state expectations, standardized testing, and inquiry-based learning.
B	Persistence, kindness, intelligence, good communication skills, teamwork,

	and subject area knowledge.
C	Quality of their undergraduate educational institution, experience, extroversion, ability to communicate.
D	Life experience, diverse ethnicity, knowledge of subject area.
E	No response
F	A good person, someone who's coming into the field of education for the right reasons, people who have family members who are teachers, good communication skills, strong academics.

Table 5: Qualities principals look for when hiring teachers.

The next interview questions are based on findings from the literature review. There are four qualities and traits that have shown to be developed or improved after teacher education students had participated in some type of student teaching or practicum abroad experience. The principals in this research study were asked to rate the four traits (empathy for diverse learners, confidence, self-reliance, and varied teaching methods) on a scale of one to ten. Ten being most important, and one being not important at all; subjects were asked to rate the importance of these traits when hiring new teachers. The principals were not told where these traits came from or why the researcher chose them until *after* they assigned a number to all four traits. The results from this line of questioning are recorded in Table 6.

Principal	Empathy for Diverse Learners	Confidence	Self-reliance	Varied Teaching Methods
A	10	8	8	10
B	8	9	9	4
C	8	8	6	9
D	8	6	6	10
E	10	6	8	10
F	9	8	9	10

Table 6: Student teaching abroad outcomes/traits rated according to principals.

The lowest number rated in Table 6 was a four assigned to the *varied teaching methods* trait by Principal B. The explanation she provided stated that this is something

teachers can learn, so she didn't think of it as very important to consider when hiring new teachers. The other low ratings of sixes were found in the *confidence* and *self-reliance* categories. Several principals mentioned that this could be learned or obtained after several years of teaching experience. Though Principal E explained that she doesn't want to hire teachers that are "too confident" and think they know everything. After eliciting responses and number ratings for these four traits, the researcher explained where they came from and why they were selected for this particular study. It was explained that all of these have been proven outcomes of student teaching abroad research. All subjects demonstrated some level of interest and intrigue when this information was shared.

Finally, all principals were asked if they would hire a teacher that has international experience over a candidate who has never left the country, but has similar background and qualifications otherwise. The answer to this was overwhelmingly yes. All six subjects communicated this as being an important thing to look for when hiring teachers. Although, many of them stressed the importance of teachers with international experiences still being of high quality and demonstrating the other traits they look for in teacher candidates. In other words, the subjects did not believe that international experience should be a determining factor in hiring teachers, but that it is an important value-added quality to consider. Several quoted responses from the principals when referring to hiring teachers with international experiences are:

- "If all things were equal and they had an international background, here I think that's pretty crucial. But I think you can be a global teacher and have

never left the state. If you know good practices and know how to use your resources. When I pull up resumes, that is something that I absolutely look for. So, the professionalism of it, how it comes across is very important. But I really do look for folks that have done things abroad.” (Principal A)

- “I think any time anybody has two languages, that’s something I always look for...is knowledge in another language because you know our kids are so diverse. And you want to be able to communicate with them.” (Principal B)
- “Absolutely...shows resourcefulness, resilience, risk-taking, it fits in with our IB, yeah. Absolutely. Would it be a strong preference, no. It’s experience, teaching experience [I look for] because I can always expose folks.” (Principal C)
- “If all things being equal, and someone had foreign experience, certainly they would be one of my folks to finalist to interview. Yeah, they’d have a leg up. I think it tells me something about the teacher I want to hire. It rounds out that picture. I mean it’s a good thing. It’s a value-add.” Principal F)

Other discussions throughout the data collection process included more in-depth conversations about their individual schools. Since the principals came from a variety of schools, including schools with no international focus, International Baccalaureate, and Global Schools Network, the subjects shared information about the resources, or lack of resources, they receive for these types of internationalization efforts inside of their schools. It became apparent that schools holding the IB focus receive the most financial, curricular, and staffing resources to be able to offer more international

programs and curriculum at their institution. The Global Schools Network school does not involve any type of financial support as of now, but it does provide a structure and resources for a common definition of global awareness and how to do that in the classroom. Schools without any international focus do not receive any funding, staffing, or curriculum resources towards this effort at all. So, if the principal, as the leader of the school, deems internationalization a priority, then it will be. Otherwise, they are tasked with carrying out their every day jobs of supporting teachers, worrying about standardized testing, parent issues, funding issues, and all of the other problems that principals must face on a daily basis to keep their schools up and running.

Conversations within all six interviews varied widely and touched on a range of different topics. The clarity and depth of internationalization within the public school system topics also varied widely depending on the opinions and passion for each principal. The data presented in the above section represents the common core discussed during the interviews and contains data that is most relevant to the research question. Analysis of data is presented in the next section.

Analysis of Data

Data collected from the interviews demonstrates several major findings. First, there is a significant amount of inconsistency regarding what global competence means and how it looks in a public school classroom. Further, there is no link between personal experience with international travel and opinions of the importance of internationalization within the schools. Another finding is that high quality teacher

candidates are more likely to be interviewed and obtain a teaching position if they have a significant and substantial background traveling internationally. Finally, the data indicates that public schools in Wake County, North Carolina vary widely in terms of global awareness, but all have a long way to go to become truly international 21st century institutions.

The first major finding clearly indicates that there is no common understanding on what global awareness is. The principals interviewed for this study provided very different definitions of global awareness. Some mentioned that knowledge of current events fits into that definition, while others defined it as a curiosity of the world. Yet others defined global awareness as an experience, or having experiences that expose one to different cultures, ideas, and ways of being. The common thread is that all subjects interviewed agreed that it is important to be aware of, and sensitive to, others who are different.

Along the same lines as having completely different definitions of global awareness, the principals who participated in the study explained global awareness as being practically implemented in their schools in very different ways. Some thought that it is only necessary within curriculum, and some thought it deals with diversity of the student body, and others feel it is a combination of both. This demonstrates a need for a clear definition and practical use for teachers inside of K-12 classrooms. How are principals supposed to lead their schools into the 21st century, including being considered “international”, if there is no common structure in place that is standardized and implemented across the entire school district? Before schools, and principals, can

move forward with this idea of implementing global awareness into the classroom, and evaluating teachers based on this standard, there really needs to be a common definition of global awareness as well as a practical structure for how it can be implemented. Teachers need a clear structure and definition so they know what to and how to teach global awareness. This needs to be clearly communicated across all public school education institutions and training needs to be done beginning with principals. Teachers will get a lot of their information and training from principals, which was communicated during the interviews, so proper training is imperative. If principals are given a structure and definition for global awareness in the schools, it will be much easier for them to implement in their schools. It should also be noted that this structure must allow for a certain degree of grey area, so that principals can continue to work within their own realm of understanding while systemizing a concept that desperately needs clarification.

Another interesting finding of this research study is that principals' personal experience with travel had little to no impact on the value they placed on internationalization. Only one principal interviewed had really significant travel experience and had lived and taught in a country outside of the U.S. Most of the others had limited travel experience, and four out of the six explicitly stated that they traveled outside of the U.S. for the very first time as adults with careers and families. It is important to note that regardless of travel background, they all see the significance and importance of internationalization.

The third major finding is that principals seem very favorable to hiring teachers with international experience. 100 percent of interview respondents said that they would be more likely to hire someone with international experience as long as they are still top quality teacher candidates. The principals mentioned both personal and professional growth opportunities that occur as a result of traveling internationally. Teaching is a profession where disposition, personality, and ethics play a major role. All principals spoke about the personal growth that takes place when one travels abroad, either referring to their own personal travel experiences, or with general travel experiences. They all seemed to care about the teacher as a person and felt that the growth that often occurs due to traveling will impact them in a positive way inside of the classroom as teachers. Other skills discussed include resourcefulness, adventurousness, and appreciation for diversity. Further, the principals interviewed stressed the importance of being able to articulate these skills learned, what they learned while abroad, and how they plan to use those skills as teachers during the interview and hiring process. Most stated that the type of travel experience, whether they went abroad for leisure or study, was irrelevant, as long as they could communicate their learning and growth that came out of these experiences. Finally, it was very clear that experience with international travel is only a value-add when it comes to hiring new teachers. Teacher candidates must still demonstrate their ability to be effective classroom teachers, have good experiences and qualifications outside of their travel experience.

Although there was hardly anything in common that principals look for when hiring new teachers over all, they all seemed very favorable to the four traits mentioned that link back to the literature review. A strong majority of ratings of the student teaching abroad outcomes (empathy for diverse learners, confidence, self-reliance, and varied teaching methods) were assigned a number from eight to ten, which clearly shows a link of student teaching abroad outcomes and traits that principals value in hiring new teachers. The few sixes that were assigned referred to confidence and self-reliance. These numbers were explained as being lower due to a few reasons. One reason is that teachers should always be learning new things and shouldn't get overly confident. Another reasoning provided is that new teachers will gain those traits after teaching for a while, so that's not a top important quality when hiring brand new teachers. Similarly, the lowest number assigned was a four. The only four given was linked to varied teaching methods for the same reason; the principal said that this skill comes with experience and does not need to be present in new teachers. The generally strong numbers throughout all categories indicates that student teaching abroad programs are succeeding in developing skills in new teachers that hiring principals find very important.

The final significant finding of this research study is the alarming disparity of resources towards internationalization efforts in the public schools. Although five of the six participants in this study are current or retired principals in the same county, Wake, in North Carolina, the institutions they represent have a wide discrepancy between the resources available to them. The only principal interviewed outside of

Wake County, spent his career in a neighboring and more rural county, which is still located quite close in proximity to the other principal locations.

Considering the massive size of the Wake County school system, it is not surprising that every school does not have access to the same resources. Only a few schools within the county are labeled with the IB status. The school board is in charge of the selection of which schools retain this status, according to Principal B. The IB status comes along with a certain prestige and definitely involves funding. When schools are identified as IB they receive staff positions solely dedicated to working with the teachers towards internationalizing the curriculum. These IB coordinators provide training, resources, and guidance on how to implement global awareness in the classrooms. Schools that do not have the official IB status have virtually no way of providing funding for a position dedicated to these efforts, or resources that could substitute for positions.

This issue was only brought up during the final interview with Principal F after the researcher pondered this concept upon completion of the first five interviews. Principal F thinks that it is completely possible, and necessary, for every single school in Wake County to be an “international” school regardless of their IB status or funding sources. He feels that there are plenty of free resources and collaborative efforts that exist through technology. For example, schools can find numerous sample lessons, primary sources, and ideas for how to implement global awareness in the classroom by simply perusing the Internet. Also, Skype and other free web conferencing tools exist today that could be used to collaborate with classrooms all over the world.

The question then becomes, why isn't every teacher and school using these free resources? Again, it links back to the disparity in resources between schools, but instead of financial resources, it could be due to time and priorities. The schools that have some sort of international focus are required to prioritize these efforts, while all other schools are not. If it is not a priority, then it will be very rare for any principal or teacher to take the time to implement more internationalization efforts.

Discussion

Practical Applicability

Several major groups may benefit from the findings and conclusions of this inquiry. First, organizations that have a vested interest in the internationalization of public schools could gain from reading this study. There is clearly no common definition or practical guide towards how to implement global awareness into the schools. This shows a major gap in educational materials and serious potential for an organization to develop a common definition and use for public schools. If there was a kit, lessons, or other resources developed primarily for teachers that they could use free of charge, it is much more likely that these ideas would find their way into the curriculum and classroom environment.

Possible organizations to lead this charge are many. The Department of Public Instruction on the state level has been the organization to include global awareness on the teacher evaluation tool and to list it as a necessary 21st century skill for students and teachers to possess. If they are the ones tracking this skill and mandating its' presence

in the schools, it seems obvious that they are one of the major players that could be responsible for developing a standard and common resources for the classroom.

Another potential organization to lead this charge could be any of the public, state universities that have teacher education programs. Universities that train teachers have the expertise, resources, and research abilities to be able to develop a really strong standardized implementation of global awareness in the schools. There are faculty who have the education and research interests who would be able to develop research-based tools and resources for teachers to use.

Another organization that is part of the University of North Carolina is the Center for International Understanding, which helps the community and schools become more internationalized. On the state level, their main goal is to have North Carolina become one of the most globally engaged states (The Center for International Understanding, n.d.). A few of the principals interviewed mentioned this organization because some of their teachers have participated in study trips overseas specifically designed for teachers. However, they did not mention the organization in terms of providing standardized and free resources although this could be due to lack of marketing or understanding the full scope of the Center. Providing K-12 teaching resources is one of the services provided by this organization, but it is not clear that their resources and expertise are currently being efficiently utilized in Wake County.

Finally, other institutions that have the ability to lead the state, or even nation, in institutionalizing a standard for internationalizing the public schools are organizations such as the Longview Foundation or the Asia Society. Both of these organizations are

independent of the public school system or the university system, but they work towards the same goal of offering a truly global education to students and future leaders. They have already put forth many efforts and resources towards defining global competence and describing what that looks like in the schools. It would be a matter of having all stakeholders communicate and agree on a common standard. Then, the agreed upon standards would have to be implemented in the schools, and prioritized to do so. This study illustrates the need for this type of communication and project to be successfully completed and then implemented in schools. Regardless of who leads this effort, it needs to be done.

The second group of people that could benefit from the results of this inquiry are teacher candidates. People applying for teaching positions can see from this study how important it is to gain some world experience. All principals agreed that they would hire teachers with global experience if they were also strong candidates otherwise. Current teacher education students may read this and decide to implement some sort of study abroad experience into their program of study. Further, it may encourage them to teach abroad for a set amount of time upon graduating in order to gain some valuable experience prior to pursuing their teaching careers inside of North Carolina, or any other state within the U.S. for that matter. They should also gain the knowledge of stressed importance of having the ability to articulate their international experience. Principals want to hear about what they learned, how they became better people, and how they are going to use these experiences in the classroom. It isn't enough to just talk about the fun they had while abroad during the interview. Teacher candidates should

practice and prepare a professional and academic response as to how they gained and were affected by their international travel.

Recommendations for Further Research

The findings in this study are by no means definitive. The inquiry approach in this case study provokes questions for further research. A recommended next step would be to conduct in-depth interviews among teachers in and out of Wake County. Teachers should be asked similar questions that principals were asked in this study in order to see if their opinions and thoughts on internationalization are similar or different from the leaders in their schools. Interviews with teachers would also offer a powerful insight into the gaps of understanding as well as the possibilities and opportunities to increase global awareness in the classroom. Although interviews with school leaders offers an insight into the overall themes and goals of a school, gathering data from actual teachers would provide a practical and realistic approach to figuring out ways to internationalize the curriculum and classroom environment.

Another suggestion for further research is to follow up with teachers who do have an international background or travel experience. If principals are more likely to hire teachers who have some type of experience abroad, are these hiring decisions paying off in the long run? Effectiveness of teachers with international experiences verses teachers who have never left the U.S. could be compared, analyzed, and studied to provide further evidence of rationales towards hiring a teaching staff with diversified and worldly experiences. If principals perceive world travelers to be resourceful,

confident, adventurous, and empathetic, these teachers should be evaluated, interviewed, and observed to see if these qualities are of use years into their teaching careers. Solid research demonstrating evidence of teachers using practical skills gained while abroad in the classroom could offer much stronger rationales for principals in regards to selecting their teaching staff.

A final recommendation for further research is to widen the scope of this study. This particular case study research only scratched the surface regarding the value that principals place on internationalization. The study presented in this research offers only a small glimpse of one very specific area in the U.S. What do other school systems do to internationalize schools outside of North Carolina? Outside of the U.S.? It would be interesting to study effective internationalized public schools anywhere in the world and figure out the structure and method used in order to potentially apply it to schools that need serious help towards these efforts, like the ones discussed in this study.

Conclusions

The initial rationale for partaking in this study involved a desire to find out whether or not principals are more likely to hire teachers that have had international experiences, like ones offered in student teaching abroad programs. The study actually gained much more information than this and brought up many more questions regarding internationalization in public schools. Data gathered indicated the inconsistency of understandings of global awareness and the applicability to the classroom. Further, it provided some insights into the depth of inequalities within

schools systems in North Carolina. Not all schools are equal, have equal funding and resources, nor to they all have the same priorities.

This study did, however, demonstrate the value of internationalization in the public schools of Wake County. The desire is there. The students within this school system are incredibly diverse. Principals overwhelmingly view diversity as a good thing and show the desire to incorporate this melting pot of a community right inside the classrooms on a regular basis. The ultimate findings of this study were very positive in that clearly the need and intention is there to further enhance global awareness in the schools. There is a long way to go before these desires, intentions, and needs are actually implemented in every school in Wake County. With the right principals, teachers, and higher administration in place, the future looks positive for moving North Carolina towards a global 21st century educational state.

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APPENDIX A: Informed Consent Form

The Value of Internationalization through the Eyes of Public School Principals

You are invited to participate in a research study that is being conducted by Megan Landwehr, who is a Master of Arts in International Education candidate at the School for International Training located in Brattleboro, Vermont. The purpose of this research is to determine the value that hiring principals in Wake County place on global awareness when hiring new teachers.

Approximately 6-10 subjects will participate in the study, and each individual's participation will last approximately one

hour. The study procedures include completion of an interview. The interview will be audio-recorded via SoundCloud technology. The audio will be recorded with a SoundCloud app on the researcher's iPhone and then uploaded to a secure and private web portal where only the researcher has log-in access. Subjects will not state their names or the name of their exact school of employment on the audio recording. A code will be assigned to each interview, thus subjects and schools will remain anonymous.

- Subjects will first be asked a series of short background and demographic information about their position and the school itself.
- Then, questions will follow about the subject's personal opinions on the topic.
- The final phase will be some value scale questions concerning qualities and traits the subjects look for in new teacher applicants.

If you agree to take part in the study, your responses will be kept anonymous. Further, the name of the school in which you are employed will also be kept anonymous. Only the general school profile will be published in the research. There will be no way to link your responses back to you. Therefore, data collection is anonymous.

There are no foreseeable risks to participation in this study. No compensation is available for this study. If you would like to see the research results, you may do so by contacting Megan Landwehr via e-mail at mmlandwehr@gmail.com.

Participation in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to participate, and you may withdraw at any time during the study procedures. In addition, you may choose not to answer any questions with which you are not comfortable.

If you have any questions about the study procedures, you may contact Megan Landwehr at (919) 946-0417 or mmlandwehr@gmail.com. If you have any questions about your rights as a research subject, you may contact the research advisor, Dr. Kevin Brennan at kevinbrennan2@gmail.com. You will be given a copy of this consent form for your records.

Sign below if you agree to participate in this research study:

Subject _____ Date _____

Researcher _____ Date _____

APPENDIX B: Interview Questions / Current Principals

OPENING:

- Introduce myself and research.
- Sign Consent Form
- Start recording

DEMOGRAPHICS:

- How many students are currently enrolled at the school?
- How many teachers are employed here?
- Approximately how many teachers do you hire each year?
- How would you describe the school's diversity?

OPINION QUESTIONS:

- What is your personal experience with international travel or working with different cultures within the U.S?
- How do you define "global awareness"?
- Why do you think DPI has included "global awareness" as a necessary 21st century skill for teachers? What's your opinion on this and how is it implemented at your school (if at all)?
- Do you provide any workshops, training, or opportunities for your employees to develop global awareness/intercultural skills?
- Does the school currently have any programs or resources geared towards "global awareness" or internationalization for students?
- In your opinion, is it important for teachers to have knowledge of other cultures? Why or why not?
- Would you hire a teacher that has international teaching experience over a candidate who has never left the U.S., but has similar qualifications otherwise?
- What are the qualities you look for when hiring new teachers?
- On a scale of 1 to 10 (10 being most important) – how do you rate the importance of the following traits when you are hiring new teachers: *empathy for diverse learners, confidence, self-reliance, varied teaching methods*. (All taken from student teaching abroad learning outcomes research.)
- Are you aware of opportunities within teacher education programs in NC to internationalize the profession?
- Do you see student teaching abroad programs as having a potential impact (in the future, if it doesn't currently impact the school) on your school and the classrooms/kids inside of it?
- Is there anything else you would like to share with me about the role internationalization plays when it comes to your teaching staff or school in general?

APPENDIX C: Interview Questions / Career Principals

Demographics:

- Please describe your experiences as a career principal.
- How long were you a principal? What county? Level, etc?
- What is your involvement now with training new principals at NC State?
- How diverse were the student/teacher populations where you spent most of your career?

Opinion:

- Personal experience with traveling or working with people from different cultures?
- Definition of global awareness.

- How has “global awareness/internationalization” changed over time in your career? The role it plays in schools. Now, it’s on the teacher evaluation. How do you think that looks in a classroom? How would a teacher get that checked off on their evaluation if you were the principal?
- Do you think it’s important for teachers and students to have cross-cultural skills? Why or why not?
- Do principals take classes or receive training on how to effectively hire good teachers? Are there any standards resources for what types of things to look for? The ones I interviewed had very different ideas of what makes a good teacher – even what types of traits can be learned, verses wanting them to come in with set traits.
- For you, would it make a difference if a teacher candidate had international experience or not?
- What types of things did you look for in hiring?
- Rate 4 qualities/traits from STA research.
- In your opinion, where do you see internationalization fitting into the public schools in NC?