Preservice Social Studies Teachers’ Beliefs about Global Education: Tying the Global and Local Together

Todd W. Kenreich
Towson University

Abstract

This study explores preservice teacher beliefs about global education. With a mixed-methods design, data were collected from a pre- and post-survey, interview, and an assignment from 12 participants enrolled in an undergraduate social studies methods course at a metropolitan university in the United States. A significant finding is that a majority of participants shifted their beliefs about the importance of the interconnectedness of local and global issues. An immediate implication from the study is a call for social studies teacher educators to place greater emphasis on global education in social studies methods courses. In an era of high-stakes testing and a narrowing of the curriculum, savvy social studies teachers must be creative as they find space within the curriculum to integrate a global perspective.

Introduction

Popular awareness of globalization has increased (Appiah, 2006; Barber, 1996; Friedman, 2004; Stiglitz, 2002; Zakaria, 2008), and at the same time, the curriculum reform movement for global education has galvanized support in a number of nations (Fujikane, 2003; Gaudelli, 2003; Tye, 1999). Despite the growing interest in global education, many teachers are not well prepared to teach from a global perspective (Alazzi, 2011; Hicks & Bord, 2001; Torney-Purta, 1982; Tucker & Cistone, 1991). The purpose of this study is to explore preservice social studies teacher beliefs about global issues. The study draws on the fields of global education and teacher thinking to situate research on teachers’ beliefs about global issues.
Global Education as a Curriculum Reform Movement

For more than four decades, numerous appeals have been made for U.S. schools to promote a deeper understanding of global interdependence, multiple perspectives, and the connection between local and global issues (Barker, 2000; Becker, 1979; Case, 1993; Council of Chief State School Officers, 2011; Collins, Czarra & Smith, 1998; Hanvey, 1976; Kniep, 1986; Merryfield & Wilson, 2005; Misco, 2012; Pike & Selby, 1988; Woyach & Remy, 1982). The field of global education lies at the intersection of multiple fields including civic education (Banks, 2003; Parker, 2003), geography education (Kenreich, 2013), peace education (Carter, 2008), and education for sustainable development (Orr, 2004; Selby, 1999). While the goals and names for global education have been vigorously contested (Kirkwood, 2001; Lamy, 1991; Landorf, 2013; Lucas, 2010; O’Connor & Zeichner, 2011; Parker, 2008; Popkewitz, 1980; Subedi, 2010; Zong et al., 2008), the overarching aim is to promote global citizenship. But, what does this mean? All students need to develop a global perspective, one that includes what Hanvey (1976) called “perspective consciousness.” This refers to the awareness that one’s world-view is “... not universally shared, that [it] has been and continues to be shaped by influences that often escape conscious detection . . .” (p. 5). Developing a global perspective also requires the complementary dispositions of open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, resistance to stereotyping, and empathy (Case, 1993). These dispositions can equip students to deeply explore global issues. Based on a review of more than 70 documents on global education, Collins et. al (1998) identified ten global issue clusters including the big ideas of conflict, human rights, and sustainable development. Taken together, the appeals for global education identify key dispositions and content for learners in an interdependent world.

Teacher Thinking

This section introduces the field of teacher thinking to situate research on teachers’ beliefs about the content of global education. The three major categories of teacher thinking research are: teacher planning (preactive, interactive, and postactive thoughts), teacher decision-making, and teacher beliefs and theories. The concept of teacher thinking broadly includes: “teachers’ perceptions, attributions, thinking, judgments, reflections, evaluations, and routines” (Calderhead, 1996, p. 710). The current phase of teacher thinking research has shifted focus to examine the knowledge and beliefs that guide teachers’ practices.

The teacher thinking literature offers a number of theories to describe
and explain how teachers think about their practices. Changes in teacher beliefs often precede changes in teacher practices (Pajares, 1992). A need exists to build on the existing literature in global education by borrowing teacher thinking research techniques to help global educators articulate their knowledge and beliefs. Calderhead (1985) argued that an essential part of teachers’ professional development involves “. . . the process of making implicit belief systems explicit and thereby developing a language for talking and thinking about their practice” (p. 721).

Teacher Beliefs about Global Education

A growing body of empirical studies has examined what global educators believe, know, and do in the classroom (Gaudelli, 2003; Hashizaki & Kawaguchi, 2013; Kirkwood-Tucker, 2004; Mangram & Watson, 2011; Merryfield, 1998; Merryfield & Kasai, 2004; Mhlauli, 2014). Obstacles to the integration of a global perspective in the classroom are varied. Preservice teachers possess uneven content knowledge about global issues (Hashizaki & Kawaguchi, 2013). Some teachers view global issues as remote and unrelated to the lived experiences of their students (Merryfield & Kasai, 2004). Also, ethnocentrism often shapes teachers’ personal worldviews, and this can work against the development of global perspectives in the curriculum (Gaudelli, 2003; Mangram & Watson, 2011; Mhlauli, 2014).

While part of the literature points to problems in teaching for a global perspective, other studies found characteristics of exemplary global educators. Such teachers value and employ interdisciplinary approaches (Maguth & Makki, 2013) as well as in-class simulations (Kirkwood-Tucker, 2004). From an in-depth study of preservice and practicing global educators, Merryfield (1998) found three common characteristics of these teachers’ practices in global education. First, global educators focus on culture—namely the cultures of their students and then diverse cultures. Focusing on culture includes exploration of cultural universals and cultural differences. Second, teachers connect global concepts and issues to students’ interests and their lived experiences. Third, teachers challenge students to make historical and geographic connections (p. 374). In addition, Merryfield (1998) outlines characteristics of exemplary global educators. Such teachers emphasize higher-order thinking skills, cross-cultural experiential learning, interdisciplinary global themes, diverse instructional resources, and the interconnections of global and local inequity (p. 374).
Context

The context for this study is an undergraduate course in secondary social studies methods taught at a public, metropolitan university in the United States. This section describes course readings, activities, and an assignment that related to global education in the social studies curriculum. The methods instructor introduced preservice teachers to global education as a framework for curriculum reform. Preservice teachers read and discussed global education theory (Case, 1993; Collins et al., 1998; Hanvey, 1982) and practice (Hicks & Ewing, 2003). Based on Hicks and Ewing’s (2003) use of online newspapers from around the world, the instructor designed a class session for preservice teachers to examine multiple perspectives on a specific global issue. To explore the interconnectedness of global and local issues, preservice teachers examined the issue of human rights. Based on a reading of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948), they compared and contrasted provisions with more familiar guarantees in the Bill of Rights of the United States Constitution. Then they examined the historical and geographical contexts for the genocide in Darfur by reading Straus (2005). Preservice teachers concluded this topic by reading the introduction from Lewis’ (1998) guide for designing social action projects. The instructor facilitated a brainstorming session about what undergraduate students might do to raise campus awareness and money for humanitarian aid in the region. Several weeks later, the preservice teachers hosted a one-day fundraiser and contributed the proceeds to the Darfur Sister Schools Program. The Enough Project, a non-profit and non-partisan group headquartered in Washington, DC, coordinates this effort to provide schooling for children displaced by the genocide in Darfur. The readings and activities on human rights were intended, in part, to help preservice teachers understand the immediacy of the issue in order to move beyond traditional teaching about human rights as “primarily historical and national” (Myers, 2006, p. 387).

These global education readings and activities led to a course assignment entitled “Baltimore and the World.” Inspired by the New York and the World (American Forum for Global Education, 1998) program and by earlier appeals for programs with a strong focus on global and local connections (Alger, 1974; Woyach & Remy, 1982), the instructor required preservice teachers to select a global issue and prepare resources for a one-week unit of instruction on the issue and its local connections to Baltimore. Examples of project topics included: Poverty in Baltimore and Beyond, Sustainable Cities of the World, The Global Problem of Urban Segregation, Urban Growth in the Chesapeake Watershed and the Global Environment, and The Port of Baltimore: Gateway to the World.
Design and Methodology

This study explored the following two research questions: 1) What do participants report as their beliefs about global education? 2) How do participants’ beliefs about global education shape their instructional planning? To address these questions, a mixed-methods study was designed. While researchers have written at length about the epistemological divide between quantitative and qualitative research (Lather, 1993), others have argued for the complementarity of such approaches (Chatterji, 2004; Rossman & Wilson, 1994). For this study, data were collected from a pre- and post-survey, interviews, and course assignments (the Baltimore and the World Project). Borrowing heavily from Czarr’s (2002) checklist of global education, the researcher designed a pre- and post-survey of beliefs about global education. The survey also included items that focus on ten content clusters in global education identified by Collins et al. (1998). Likert-scale items measured beliefs in areas such as global issues, global systems of interdependence, and global interconnectedness. At the beginning (second week) and end (fifteenth week) of the course, the researcher administered an online survey via SurveyMonkey to all preservice teachers (n=12) in one section of a social studies methods course. The SurveyMonkey software includes tools to generate descriptive statistics including means and frequency distributions. At the close of the course, the researcher collected each participant’s “Baltimore and the World” project and conducted a brief, structured interview with each participant. The interview explored the relationship between beliefs about global education and instructional planning. Using analytic induction (Huberman & Miles, 1994), the researcher employed an iterative coding process to identify themes that emerged within and across the data sources. To strengthen the trustworthiness of the study, two participants in the study served as member checks.

Researchers are obligated to fully disclose any ethical concerns connected to their inquiry rather than hiding or ignoring such concerns (Christians, 2000). Throughout the study, the researcher remained mindful of the power differential that existed between himself as an instructor and his students who participated in the study. Despite the power of determining students’ course grades, the researcher deliberately worked to establish an environment of trust between participants and the researcher so that each participant would be free to participate or withdraw from the study without fear of jeopardizing one’s grade.

Findings

Three major findings are of interest to the broader social studies
community. First, a majority of participants shifted their beliefs about the importance of the interconnectedness of local and global issues. The pre-survey revealed that the majority of participants were undecided or did not agree that "the connection between global and local issues should be an important theme in the social studies curriculum." Yet, the post-survey, interview data, and coursework pointed to a significant increase in participants' belief about the importance of interconnectedness of local and global issues. The second major finding highlights participants' varied beliefs about their content knowledge and beliefs about the relative importance of teaching specific global topics. Participants initially identified "Human Rights and Social Justice" as the global topic about which they possessed the highest content knowledge expertise. The third major finding is the theme of "depth over breadth" for instructional planning. This theme emerged as participants explained the challenges of teaching about global issues given limited instructional time. To illustrate these major findings, this section provides more detailed results of the survey data and highlights one participant's beliefs about her Baltimore and the World project entitled, "The Port of Baltimore: Gateway to the World."

Interconnection of Global and Local Issues

The majority of respondents arrived at the beginning of the semester with a strong belief (4.75) about the importance of integrating multiple viewpoints in the curriculum. The respondents also possessed a strong belief (4.92) that different cultures view the world in different ways. These beliefs are consistent with Hanvey's (1976) conception of the perspective consciousness. Yet, several respondents were undecided or did not agree that they possessed the ability to tolerate ambiguity. This presents a challenge for global educators who teach global issues. Such issues inevitably involve competing claims about an issue's definition, scale, and causation.

At the beginning of the semester, the majority of respondents indicated a moderate belief (3.92) in their ability to analyze interconnections between local and global issues and a moderate belief (4.00) in their ability to analyze interconnections between global issues and their personal lives. At the end of the semester, the majority of respondents indicated a significantly stronger belief (4.67) in their ability to analyze interconnections between local and global issues and a stronger belief (4.42) in their ability to analyze interconnections between global issues and their personal lives.

Content Knowledge and Importance of Global Topics

On a five-point Likert scale (1=lowest expertise and 5=highest expertise), survey respondents rated their content knowledge expertise for each of ten global education topics identified by Collins et al. (1998). The
results of the pre-survey pointed to “Human Rights and Social Justice,” “Race and Ethnicity,” and “Conflict and Its Control” as the three global topics with the highest expertise ratings (see Table 1). The respondents gave the lowest expertise ratings to “Planet Management” and “Economic Systems.” The post-survey yielded modest content knowledge expertise gains for all global topics except for two topics: “Sustainable Development” (-.17) and “The Technocratic Revolution” (-.08). The largest gain was posted for “Political Systems” (+.08).

Table 1. Mean Responses on Content Knowledge Expertise for Global Topics (Pre-Survey, Post-Survey, and Net Gain/Loss)
Rate your relative expertise in the following areas (5=highest expertise to 1=lowest expertise):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Human Rights and Social Justice/Human Needs and Quality of Life</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>4.67</td>
<td>+ .42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Race and Ethnicity: Human Commonality and Diversity</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>+ .67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conflict and Its Control: Violence/Terrorism/War</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>+ .33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Political Systems: International Structures/Institutions/Actors/Procedures</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>4.75</td>
<td>+ 1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Global Belief Systems: Ideologies/Religions/Philosophies</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>+ .17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Sustainable Development: Political/Economic/Social</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>- .17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Population: Demographic Growth/Patterns/Movements/Trends</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>+ .66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Technocratic Revolution: Science/Technology/Communications</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>- .08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Planet Management: Resources/Energy/Environment</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>+ .34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On a five-point Likert scale (1=lowest importance to 5=highest importance), survey respondents rated the relative importance of teaching about each of the ten global education topics identified by Collins et al. (1998). The results of the pre-survey pointed to “Human Rights and Social Justice” and “Race and Ethnicity” as the two most important global topics (see Table 2). The respondents assigned the lowest importance to the topic of “Population.” The net gains and losses from the pre-survey to the post-survey were uneven with five topics posting minor gains, two topics posting no difference, and three topics posting minor losses.

Table 2. Mean Responses on Relative Importance of Teaching Global Topics (Pre-Survey, Post-Survey, and Net Gain/Loss)
Rate your relative importance of teaching about the following areas (5=highest importance to 1=lowest importance):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pre</th>
<th>Post</th>
<th>Gain/Loss</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Race and Ethnicity: Human Commonality and Diversity</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Human Rights and Social Justice/Human Needs and Quality of Life</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>+.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Conflict and Its Control: Violence/Terrorism/War</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>+.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Global Belief Systems: Ideologies/Religions/Philosophies</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.25</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Political Systems: International Structures/Institutions/Actors/Procedures</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>+.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Internet Management: Resources/Energy/Environment</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>+.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The Technocratic Revolution: Science/Technology/Communications</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Sustainable Development: Political/Economic/Social</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>-.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Population: Demographic Growth/Patterns/Movements/Trends</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>+.50</td>
</tr>
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Lily as a Beginning Global Educator

To illustrate some of the challenges related to instructional planning for global issues, this section introduces one preservice teacher’s experience with the Baltimore and the World course project. Lily (pseudonym) is a white, non-Hispanic, first-generation student pursuing an undergraduate degree in social sciences with teacher certification for secondary social studies. When asked about her global experiences, she explained that “I’ve only left Maryland twice—one for a wedding in Boston and once for funeral in Harrisburg [Pennsylvania].” Her response was similar to those of most other participants except for two participants who had each completed a one-semester study-abroad program and traveled extensively overseas. Lily’s evidence of her teacher thinking about global education and instructional planning are highlighted in this section because she represents the typical-albeit limited-experiential background for preservice teachers at this metropolitan university.

Lily titled her Baltimore and the World project, “The Port of Baltimore: Gateway to the World.” When asked why she selected the topic, Lily shared the following anecdote:

My uncle worked his whole life at Marietta [local steel mills]. Then, the day the plant closed, he was out of luck. He didn’t know anything else. One reason I chose the topic is that most kids I’ll teach in Essex [working-class neighborhood in southeastern edge of Baltimore] don’t know the local history. They don’t even know how important Marietta was for the community. One generation ago, it seemed like every family had someone working in the steel and shipbuilding factories. They built the ships that went into World War II. They built ships for trade. That was a really big
deal, but today you wouldn’t know it. Now, it’s just abandoned lots. If I don’t teach this story, the kids aren’t going to know it. It’s that simple. I guess what I’m saying is that it’s my responsibility to help all the kids make the connection and put Baltimore’s economy in a global frame.

Here Lily explained how her project topic grew from a devotion to local history. Clearly she was concerned that children lack an appreciation for local history and its relationship to global issues. For the course project, she also wrote a rationale to develop a case for the importance of her topic. An excerpt from the rationale illustrates her beliefs about the topic’s importance:

Students are increasingly confronted with many issues that require a global education focus, such as the wide prosperity gap between developed and underdeveloped nations. The main topic of my project is the economy, but students will be asked to analyze much more than simple statistics. Throughout the course of the unit, they will explore the evolution of Baltimore’s local economy and the world economy. Americans are not alone in the world. Our country trades with many nations around the world for everyday commodities such as clothes, food, gasoline, appliances, and automobiles. Most students probably do not even realize that the T-shirts they buy are made in Honduras or Cambodia. The sneakers they just bought were made in Indonesia, and the book bag they carry around was produced in the Philippines. These items come from countries that most students would not be able to locate on a map. My project contributes to the attainment of a global perspective by “promoting knowledge of people and places beyond students’ own community and country, and knowledge of events and issues beyond the local and immediate” (Case, 1993, p. 318).

While Lily pointed to inequality above with a reference to the gap between developed and developing nations, she again revisited this idea. What follows is another excerpt from her project rationale:

The economy of America benefited from, and indeed still does benefit from, the state of other nations around the world. Many students are not aware, or simply not concerned, with the state of underdeveloped nations. However, it is the goal of this project to have students imagine economic issues from other individuals’ or groups’ perspectives-part of Roland Case’s (1993) inclination to empathize, another factor in obtaining a
global perspective.

Lily displayed a characteristic of an exemplary global educator by describing her focus on inequalities in the global economy (Merryfield, 1998). This focus informed her instructional planning for the project.

Lily explained her early challenges as she planned her instruction. Below is an example of her thinking about the appropriate scope of the project.

At first, I tried to include too much for the Baltimore and the World project. I thought about what a tenth-grade kid knows about economics, trade, and the port [of Baltimore]. You see, I’ve done many observations in schools. I’ve seen what they [students] know and what they don’t. I didn’t feel ready to jump into a lesson on the gap between developed and underdeveloped countries. I had to set the stage, but that takes so much time. I had to narrow the topic as I went. I kept the Baltimore port focus all along the way, and I wanted to explore the economic gap between Baltimore’s main trading partners. My original plan was to include eight countries-four importers and exporters. More countries could have made the unit more global. Right? But, eight was too much. It would have confused the kids and extended well beyond the number of days in the classroom. In the end, I chose China and Canada to show the gap.

Depth versus breadth concerns are apparent as Lily made decisions about the scope of her project. Such concerns are not uncommon for instructional planning (Newmann, 1988), but the complex nature of global issues brings this into sharp relief. Lily initially equates a larger scope (eight countries rather than two) with a more global approach to her project. However, she reconsiders this in light of the purpose of the project, the needs of her target students, and limited instructional time.

Lily also addressed the challenge of limited instructional time in writing her project critique essay. An excerpt from her critique follows:

Due to time constraints, there were a few topics that I was not able to fit in the unit. I had planned on setting aside a day for a field trip to the Baltimore museum of industry, but that would not fit into the timeframe. The museum would have provided a hands-on experience for students to learn about early industry in Baltimore such as canning, printing, garment making, and shipbuilding. The museum allows students to participate in recreated workshops and assembly lines. It would be an interesting way
for students to learn, again, if there were more time.

When Lily was asked to elaborate on the excerpt above from her critique, she explained:

Well, it’s so hard to take a complex topic and boil it down. I guess that’s the point for teachers. I tried to go in-depth, but it’s hard. You’ve got to be selective. I started with eight trading partners and went down to two. That still didn’t leave enough time for the field trip. I had to leave out a lot. You’ve got to know what’s important for your students and what’s nice to know but not so important.

Lily’s thinking here is emblematic of that of other participants in this study who struggled to determine the scope of the project and balance curriculum concerns about breadth and depth. Indeed determining the scope of the issue can be one of the largest challenges with instructional planning for local and global issues.

Lily further detailed her concern about failing to address one of Hanvey’s (1976) dimensions of global education in her instructional planning. She lamented:

I feel that my project covers the problems associated with underdeveloped countries, but I do not have any resources on what can be done as a solution to those problems. I have no knowledge of an alternative or alternatives to the current situation-Hanvey’s fifth dimension of a global perspective.

This concern corroborated pre-survey (2.0) and post-survey data (2.0) for Lily, who indicated that she did not possess the ability to generate alternative projections for the future and weigh potential future scenarios. Indeed the majority of participants indicated that they were undecided about their ability to handle future scenarios. Although the instructor introduced the participants to instructional resources from international institutions and non-profit organizations, Lily’s response suggests that the course introduction did not shift Lily’s belief about future scenarios. Lily’s teacher thinking highlights her promising yet uneven growth as a beginning global educator.

Discussion

This section describes implications of the study for teacher education and future research. The study has implications for the preparation of more
cosmopolitan teachers who can teach global issues in the classroom. The first implication is an appeal for the importance of helping preservice teachers like Lily understand and value the interconnectedness of the global and local issues. In the United States, the traditional “concentric circles” scope and sequence for the K-12 social studies curriculum begin with the local community in early grades and shift to the nation and world in high school. As a result, the state and local curriculum standards for secondary social studies and state-level assessments often marginalize local issues. Teachers who “teach-to-the-test” may not see value in highlighting the interconnectedness of global and local issues. Indeed even some exemplary U.S. high school programs in global education treat global and local dimensions of issues in isolation rather than in a dynamic relationship (Myers, 2006).

Given the structural forces at work against the role of local issues in the curriculum, social studies methods instructors need to be strategic in preparing preservice teachers for global perspectives. Students and teachers do not set aside their personal beliefs when they enter school. In school, they bring perspectives that influence their interactions with others and beliefs that shape their interpretations of the curriculum. Teaching global and local issues in schools requires teachers to interpret and negotiate the formal curriculum. As new curricular priorities in U.S. schools place more emphasis on higher-order thinking, disciplinary literacy, and inquiry-based learning (CCSSO, 2010; NCSS, 2013), social studies educators need to help preservice teachers see that teaching and learning about the world is important and that it relates to new curriculum standards. Social studies methods instructors have a responsibility to encourage and enable preservice teachers to creatively view the social studies curriculum as a natural and lively place for the intersection of global and local issues. At its best, this study provides evidence of a beginning global educator who can tie together the global and local dimensions of an issue.

A second implication of this study is a call for social studies educators to place greater emphasis on global education in social studies methods courses. As colleagues, we need to discuss and debate what writing in global education might constitute essential readings for social studies methods courses. We also need to discuss the merits of specific methods activities and assignments that aim to develop global perspectives. We need to identify what Shulman (1987) described as “pedagogical content knowledge” in relation to global education and systematically include this in methods courses. With careful support in a social studies methods course, preservice teachers can begin to refine their beliefs about global education.

For researchers in global education, the current study contributes to
the field by exploring preservice teacher beliefs about global issues. There remains, however, a pressing need for more case studies of global educators at different stages in the teaching career. Case studies can illuminate the nuance and complexities of the global educators' beliefs that shape their classroom practices. This one-semester study focused on preservice teachers, but it did not follow the participants as they began their teaching careers. Longitudinal studies could provide a deeper understanding of how global educators develop their beliefs and knowledge. This study was limited by a modest sample size. Studies of larger populations of preservice and practicing teachers could allow for greater generalizability of findings. Social studies educators should coordinate a multi-site study in several countries. Varied empirical evidence from qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-method studies can contribute to the emerging literature in teacher beliefs about global education. The next era of research in teacher thinking of global educators may not only shape professional development and teacher education but also provide evidence that can be used to leverage greater political support for global education.

References


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