

**Collaborative, Online, and International Learning to Promote Civic Competence in Japan and the U.S.**

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**Abstract:**

This paper describes a mixed-methods investigation into whether an asynchronous, virtual collaboration with Japanese peers helped pre-service social studies teachers in the U.S. demonstrate civic competence as it relates to international and global education. After the collaboration, most students described themselves as better-prepared world citizens; however, analysis of pre- and post-intervention surveys revealed only one statistically significant U-test result concerning participants' pedagogical thinking. This investigation suggests education programs can better prepare novice teachers to think and act globally by providing international telecollaborative experiences and explicitly emphasizing classroom instruction (practice) informed by civic competence as it relates to international and global education (theory).

**Key words:** international education, global education, social studies, civic competence

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**Introduction**

The notions of internationalization and globalization are often found within contemporary conversations concerning education policy, curriculum reform, and instructional practice in the U.S. (see de Wit, 2020; Engel, 2019) and around the world (see Pushpanadham, 2020; Tye, 2014;

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Zapp & Lerch, 2020). Scholars have even suggested that the 21<sup>st</sup> century could be considered a type of “golden age” for internationalization because of sustained public discourse surrounding “global citizenship” and “global citizenship education” (Grossman, 2017, p. 530). Yet, despite the evident need for teachers to think globally, have international experience, and to incorporate a global dimension into their practice, teacher-education programs tend to be some of the least internationalized on campuses in the U.S. (Heyl & McCarthy, 2003) and around the world (see Leutwyler, Popov, & Wolhuter, 2017).

While the benefits of globalized teacher-education programs are clear (e.g., promoting a type of re-imagined active participatory citizenship for the world), so too are the challenges and costs. Travel and in-person collaboration—mostly by wealthy students—tend to characterize traditional internationalization of higher-education programs (de Wit, 2019). Recent efforts, however, have focused on making participation in international experiences more inclusive. For example, one innovative internationalization strategy minimizes costs and increases participation by featuring virtual collaboration (see SUNY COIL Center, 2020).

Here, the authors share a mixed-methods investigation into a five-week, collaborative, and online international experience for pre-service social studies teachers facilitated by the American Council on Education and its U.S.-Japan COIL Initiative. The project modeled a pedagogical approach developed by the State University of New York COIL Center (see <http://coil.suny.edu>) and began to answer: *To what degree can an asynchronous, virtual collaboration with international peers help pre-service social studies teachers demonstrate civic competence for international and global education?* This article presents data related to a cohort of pre-service social studies teachers in the U.S. as they joined with Japanese peers to explore current trends in social studies education and design wise-practice activities for secondary students in both nations. When writing at the end of the project, most students demonstrated a better understanding of civic competence (e.g., explained philosophical tenets, specifically described real-world applications), and many students described ways they had become better prepared as world citizens. Analysis of the pre- and post-intervention surveys, however, revealed only one statistically significant U-test value concerning participants’ thinking about teaching and learning. This study suggests that social studies teacher-education programs could better prepare novice teachers to think and act globally by providing opportunities, even if limited in scope and duration, to interact socially and academically with international peers, and by explicitly emphasizing real-world classroom applications of civic competence for international and global education.

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**Review of Related Literature**

**Social Studies**

Because of its emphasis on citizenship, the discipline of social studies is a logical context for pre-service teachers in Japan and the U.S. to explore internationalization and globalization. For example, recent national and prefectural education reforms have compelled many Japanese teachers and teacher-educators to rethink the purpose of teaching students social studies courses and how to best promote citizenship (Harada, 2018). While stakeholders in Japan tend to agree that social studies courses should help students develop “qualities that are necessary in the people who make up a peaceful and democratic nation and society” (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology-Japan, 2006, Article 1), there is no consensus about how to best accomplish the goal. The resulting discussions—which have included, for example, the proper balance of knowledge and skills with empathy and values, and the correct emphasis on traditional culture and customs—have distilled opinions into at least two viewpoints. One viewpoint, called Academic Social Studies (Ikeno, 2012), considers paramount the disciplinary knowledge and skills that social studies courses can introduce and strengthen. Citizenship from this perspective is an outcome of students developing the thinking habits and processing skills of social scientists (i.e., economists, geographers, historians, political scientists, sociologists, etc.). Another viewpoint, called Applied Social Studies (Ikeno, 2012), maintains that citizenship must be built through students’ reasoning about value-conflicts that underpin real-world issues and attempting to solve complex social problems. Strong opinions exist on both sides of this ideological divide (see Fujiwara, 2011).

Observers of social studies education in the United States will find familiar arguments in Japan’s contemporary debate over effective approaches to promote citizenship. Strikingly similar categories can be used to describe approaches practiced by social studies teachers and teacher-educators in the U.S., where at least two overarching philosophies exist. One philosophy is called Traditional and its proponents emphasize the “retention of prescribed facts, narratives, images, and content” and the transmission of “specific traditions from the past” (Fallace, 2017, p. 44). Proponents argue that if students were to retain common (pre-determined and objective) information, a common understanding of culture would form (i.e., “cultural literacy;” Hirsch, Kett, & Trefil, 2002). Advocates of a second philosophy, called Progressive, promote learning facts in the context of real-world problems and applying facts to advance social progress (Fallace, 2017). For example, advocates of a Progressive approach to social studies promote students

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using facts to posit solutions to authentic problems which can be “substantiated and critiqued using rules of evidence and reasoning” (Saye, 2017, p. 336).

The collaborative project shared here added an international element to the pre-service teachers’ experiences of exploring the dual approaches to social studies education. They were to identify potential benefits and challenges posited by advocates of each approach in both nations and evaluate which approach, or a synthesis of the approaches, could best help secondary students develop the skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary for robust participation in a democracy.

### **Civic Competence**

Supporting learners’ efforts to interpret information, weigh contrastive evidence, make and support arguments about solutions to public issues, and take action according to their well-informed consciences—i.e., developing civic competence—is a tremendous challenge for many social studies teachers (Callahan, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2015). To develop civic competence within a context of international and global education only compounds the difficulty. Yet, contemporary surveys and international research studies consistently suggest that K-16 students would greatly benefit from additional opportunities to further develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for civic competence in their often pluralistic and multicultural communities (see Almond & Verba, 2015; Banks, 2008; Council of Foreign Relations, 2016; Hoskins et al., 2011; Kahne & Middaugh, 2010; Longview Foundation, 2008; Merryfield, 2000; Myers, 2006; National Assessment of Educational Progress, 2015; Noddings, 2005; Rapoport, 2013; Shah et al., 2009; Ukpokodu, 2020; Zeichner, 2010). Therefore, the researchers designed this project to simultaneously provide pre-service teachers with 1) guided international experiences to further develop their individual civic competence, and 2) scaffolded opportunities to develop their capacity to design activities for secondary students to do the same.

### **Civic Competence for International and Global Education**

The researchers’ review of literature related to integrating global and international elements into teacher-education programs and K-12 curricula revealed a complicated web of related concepts with little consensus. They read advocacy articles or empirical investigations into globalization (Friedman, 2007), global education (Grossman, 2017; Ukpokodu, 2020), global perspective (Hanvey, 1976), world-mindedness (Parker et al., 1997; Samson & Smith, 1957), global-mindedness (Hett, 1993), cultural competence (Jenks, 2011), intercultural competence (Cui, 2013), global citizenship (UNESCO, 2012), global citizenship education (Krutka & Carano, 2016;

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White, 2020), global mindset (Vassar, 2006), cosmopolitan citizenship (Nussbaum, 2002), and global citizenry (Shulsky et al., 2017). Deciding which term(s) to use to describe phenomena was itself a challenge.<sup>1</sup> They also found concerns about the concepts and their implementation (i.e., their coherence can be less than desirable [see Myers, 2006] and U.S. practitioners tend to be less enthusiastic than teachers in other nations about introducing them [see Rapoport, 2015]). Yet, the researchers distilled the following common principles from this review of related literature.

### ***Interconnectedness***

Thinking deeply about global facts and interpreting resources from multiple international perspectives can help students achieve powerful learning outcomes; however, those tasks seem to constitute only one element of civic competence as it relates to international and global education. A more robust experience would feature students using information about people, societies, and events from around the globe to explore relationships between cultures and nations (Hanvey, 1976; Hicks, 2003; Nussbaum, 1996; Parker, 2008; Shulsky et al., 2017). More specifically, students could explore connections between their lives and concerns and those of peers from around the world. This “interconnectedness” was a common theme and the first principle of civic competence for international and global education. These connections could strongly emphasize how issues of public interest around the world are interconnected and often interdependent (see Merryfield, 2000; Selby, 1999; UNESCO, 1989). Exploring these connections could help students recognize a “shared humanity” and empower students to see themselves as global citizens prepared to make positive contributions to the world (Barrow, 2017, p. 163; Shulsky et al., 2017). As it relates to this study, the researchers began to determine the degree to which students demonstrated “interconnectedness” by evaluating whether they, for example, explicitly connected their personal and professional concerns to those of their international peers.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Council for the Social Studies (2016, para. 3-4) states: “Global education and international education are complementary approaches with different emphases.... Global education focuses on the interrelated nature of conditions, issues, trends, processes, and events while international education emphasizes specific world regions, problems, and cultures.” The authors use the combined term “international and global education” because this study emphasized both.

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### ***Cosmopolitanism***

The second principle, cosmopolitanism, is a notion with a long history (Nussbaum, 1994, 2002) and many definitions. Here it is used to describe one's willful acceptance of—and comfortable interaction within—a multiplicity of rational ways to build and understand social realities (Delanty, 2006; Parker, 2008). Cosmopolitanism can positively motivate individuals to comfortably and confidently participate in diverse settings without paternalistic or parochial attitudes. As it relates to this study, the researchers began to determine the degree to which students demonstrated “cosmopolitanism” by evaluating whether they, for example, demonstrated respect for their international peers' contributions to their collaborative efforts and allowed those contributions to inform their construction of new knowledge about teaching in general and social studies education in particular.

### ***Inquiry into Global Issues***

The literature reviewed also suggested that attempts to facilitate students' international and global learning should be nested within a problem-based instructional approach. For example, a recent position statement from the National Council for the Social Studies claims that “an important characteristic of global studies is the analysis of problems” (NCSS, 2016, para. 6). Additionally, scholars have stated that inquiry is an “ideal framework for teaching about global issues” (McCall, 2017, p. 137) and an inquiry arc, such as Dimension One of the C3 Framework, is in “direct conversation” with global and international education (Harshman, 2016, p. 162). Merryfield, Lo, Po, and Kansai (2008, p. 9) reported a problem-based approach into issues of international concern can help students synthesize “important lessons of history over hundreds of years and (link) them to contemporary events.” Therefore, Inquiry into Global Issues is the third principle. As it relates to this study, the researchers' curricular design centered around authentic ill-structured problems to help each participant work through the problem-solving process (Barrows, 2002; Brush & Saye, 2014) and thereby further develop a “capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance” (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011, p. xiii). The researchers began to determine, for example, the degree to which students demonstrated the principle by evaluating whether they clearly crafted and supported positions on the fairness and desirability of solutions to global issue, and whether they similarly designed instructional activities for K-12 students.

The above research-based principles—and components subsequently derived from them—were synthesized from a review of related literature and informed the researchers' design and

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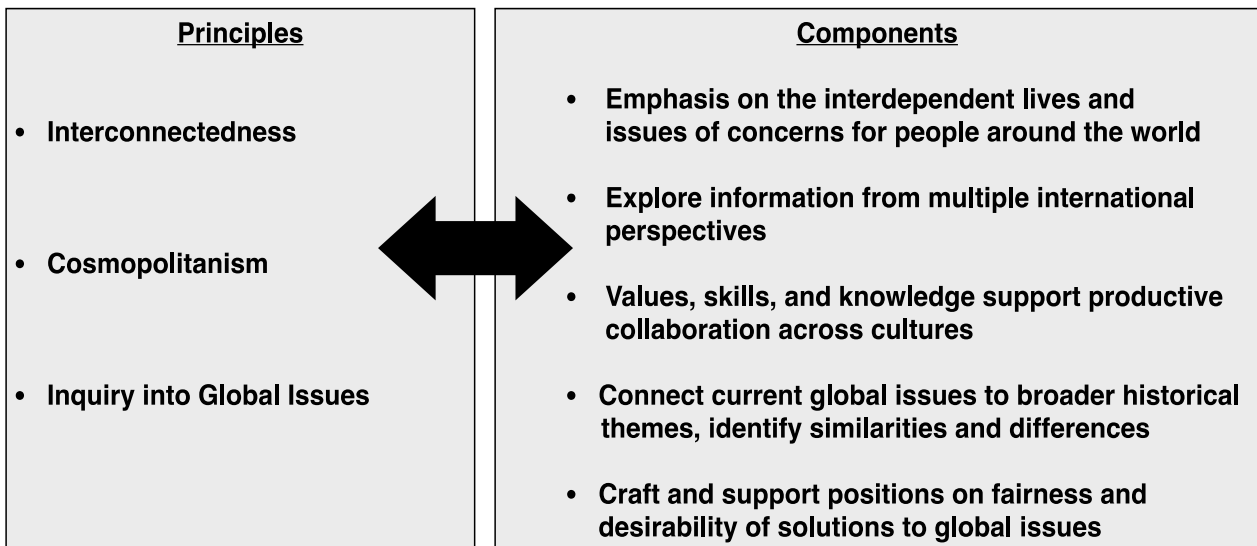
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implementation of this study. Moreover, the notion of “Civic Competence for International and Global Education” (see Figure 1) also established measurable criteria for assessing students’ outcomes and experiences; these criteria are further described below in the Methodology section.

**Figure 1**

*Civic Competence for International and Global Education*



The above Principles and Components are informed by and synthesized from: Grossman, D (2017). Global education. In M. M. Manfra & C. M. Bolick (Eds.), *The Wiley Handbook of Social Studies Research* (pp. 518-568). Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell; Hicks, D. (2015, January). The global dimension [Author website]. Retrieved from <http://www.teaching4abetterworld.co.uk/global.html>; Nussbaum, Martha (1996). Patriotism and cosmopolitanism. In Martha Nussbaum et al. (Eds.), *For love of country: Debating the limits of patriotism* (pp. 2-20). Boston: Beacon Press; Banks, J. (2008). Diversity, group identity, and citizenship education in a global age. *Educational Researcher*, 37(3), 129–139; Parker, W. (2008). International Education—What’s in a name? *Phi Delta Kappan*, 90(3), 196–202.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Knowing that social interactions would frame (and be framed by) the students’ exploration of Civic Competence for International and Global Education, the researchers selected the social-cultural theory of mediated action to guide their research. The theory posits that social interactions tend to mediate a person’s making sense of the world and can involve a wide variety of material and immaterial phenomena with which they develop conclusions about the world (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991; Zhang et al., 2018). Consequently, the theory underscores the importance of a person’s context: the surrounding tools, language, signs, activities, resources, etc. The theory provided deductive guidance for the quantitative aspects of the study as its

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activities and assignments were intended to help inform and expand participants' existing ideas about social studies education, civic competence, and international and global education. The theory also informed the study's qualitative aspects as it helped the researchers explain participants' experiences throughout the project and its influence, if any, on their beliefs about teaching and learning in context of international education, global education, and civic competence.

### **Methodology**

This study was an investigation into the degree to which a collaborative, online, and international learning project may have helped pre-service secondary social studies teachers demonstrate civic competence as it relates to international and global education. The researchers employed a basic type of convergent mixed-methods design with a parallel database variant; they collected both quantitative and qualitative data, analyzed them independently, and combined emerging results for further interpretation (see Figure 2). Specifically, they used results from a pre- and post-intervention survey to test whether a significant correlation existed between the project and the participants' prioritizing of instructional practices. The researchers also used results from participants' summaries of an individually designed classroom activity to describe their understanding of civic competence. The collection of different yet complementary types of data allowed the researchers to compare and potentially corroborate findings. They presumed a mixed-methods approach would provide greater guidance for exploring the research question than either type of data could provide separately.

### **Participants**

Because of space limitations, this article only concerns data associated with students in the U.S.; a future article is planned to explore data from the Japanese participants. Eighteen students at a large public university in the Southeastern United States participated in this study: 50% were female, 50% were male, all were Caucasian, and all but one were between the ages of 20 and 24. The study occurred during the students' penultimate semester before an internship and, upon its successful completion, graduation from an initial teacher licensure program. The students' secondary social studies program included 36 hours of social studies content courses, six hours of social studies methods courses, and 15 hours of field experiences courses.

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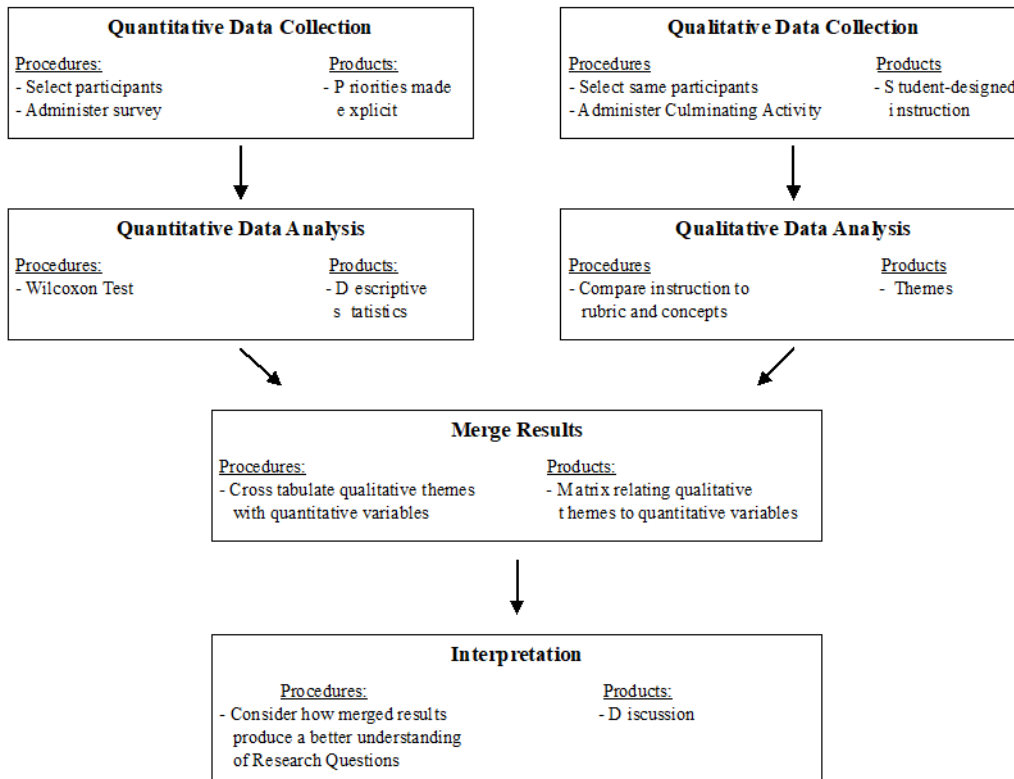
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Figure 2

Data Map: Convergent Mixed Methods Design, Parallel-Database Variant



### The Collaborative, Online, and International Learning Project

Below is a brief description of each week that comprised the project.

**Week One.** In Japan, a professor introduced nearly 30 students—pre-service teachers and social studies majors—to the goal, objectives, and logistics of the project. In the U.S., a professor did the same for the 18 students described above. All students were afforded class time to explore specific online tools (e.g., Flipgrid) that would facilitate their future interactions, and they were encouraged to ask questions to better understand the multimedia interface(s). Students were grouped into small, internationally diverse teams upon which the professors agreed. Next, students were assigned Task One: “Create a 3-5 minute video that introduces yourself to your

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international partners.” The U.S. students posted their videos first; the Japanese students then posted their videos. Both professors viewed all of the students’ videos throughout the project and offered formative feedback as appropriate.

**Week Two.** Students were asked to view their international partners’ introduction videos and reply (i.e, answer questions they were asked; correct inaccuracies, stereotypes). Then, they were assigned Task Two: “Create a 3-5 minute video that introduces your current understanding of the culture(s) found within your international partners’ nation. Be sure to ask several questions.” The Japanese students posted their videos first; the U.S. students then posted their videos.

**Week Three.** Students were asked to view their international partners’ cultural understanding videos and reply. They were then assigned to read lengthy excerpts from an article about competing visions of social studies education in their international partners’ nation. Japanese students read about “Traditional” and “Progressive” approaches to social studies education in the U.S. (see Fallace, 2017) while U.S. students read about “Academic” and “Applied” approaches to social studies education in Japan (see Ikeno, 2012). Each student was then assigned to complete Task Three: “Using the letters in the Japanese word ‘shimin’ (which can be translated to mean ‘citizen’ or ‘citizenship’ in English) create an acrostic poem to demonstrate a meaningful understanding of the reading assigned to you.” Upon completing the above interpretive task and receiving formative feedback from their respective professor, students were asked to complete Task Four: “Create a 3-5 minute video that introduces your current understanding of the similarities (and differences) between visions of social studies education in Japan and the U.S.”

**Week Four.** Students were asked to view their international partners’ social studies education videos and reply. They were then assigned to read a National Council for the Social Studies (2016) statement about global and international education in social studies. Each student was assigned to complete Task Five: “Develop an interpretive, annotated, and illustrated bookmark that demonstrates your understanding of how global and international education can inform our social studies instruction.” Upon completing this second interpretive task and receiving formative feedback from their respective professor, students were then introduced to, and subsequently discussed thoroughly, the notion of Civic Competence for International and Global Education as developed by the professors’ review of related literature (see Figure 1).

**Week Five.** Students were assigned Task Six: “Collaborate with your international partners to develop a brief activity—between 10 and 20 minutes—to help secondary social studies students in both nations demonstrate civic competence for international and global education (i.e., “the

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activity should reflect the principles and components that we have explored throughout the project”). The content-specific topic for the activity should help students to think critically about a geography standard provided.” The professors designed two geography standards from a synthesis from Japan’s New Curriculum Standards (e.g., Geography A, Objective [MEXT (2009)]) and a recent Course of Study Standards (i.e., Geography 9-12, 10) from a state in the U.S. The students’ teams were to select one of the two geography standards and complete the task. A week later, U.S. students were asked to individually select the other standard and create a new, original activity; the participants’ descriptions of these activities were evaluated for this study.

### **Reflexivity/Positionality Statement**

This study’s methodology positioned the researchers as types of “research instruments” as they designed the study and analyzed the data. The researchers recognized that the ways they interacted with data were shaped by this close proximity and their underlying positive beliefs about the project. The mixed-method design was therefore more subjective than a purely quantitative study because of the decreased distance between the researchers and the data. Therefore, they emphasized reflexivity when making sense of qualitative data.

Along a priori codes suggested by related literature (Saldaña, 2009), the researchers also specifically allowed phenomena made relevant by the participants’ experiences to inform their thematic analysis approach (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2013). Additionally, they made reflexive reports to two U.S. colleagues for peer critique (see Creswell & Miller, 2000).

### **Quantitative Data**

A portion of this study was modeled upon the work of education researchers John Saye and Thomas Brush and their work with pre-service social studies teachers; they used a cohort survey protocol where participants completed the same survey more than once “to determine differences in responses to various items over the course of an intervention” (Brush & Saye, 2014, p. 85). Here, the U.S. professor twice employed a survey to assess the degree to which participants in the U.S. may have allowed their participation in the aforementioned program to inform their pedagogical thinking. He sought to learn if the intervention could help students emphasize principles and components associated with civic competence for global and international education. Participants completed the survey before and after the program, and the researchers compared results to draw tentative conclusions about any possible variations in their thinking about social studies instruction.

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### ***Survey***

The survey consisted of three questions that asked participants to prioritize five possible student-outcomes in the design of: 1) Learning Targets, 2) Instructional Activities, and 3) Culminating Tasks. For each survey question, the options for participants to rank-order included several traditional strategies and at least one strategy that clearly represented Civic Competence for Global and International Education. The survey afforded space for participants to describe in their own words the rationale for their decision-making (i.e., prioritization), although this was not overtly emphasized during either administration of the survey.

### ***Validity***

Content validity was established by way of a review of the survey by an ad hoc committee of the U.S. researcher's peers with experiences in international and global education. The committee reviewed the survey to determine if the items intended to be exemplars of civic competence for international and global education were indeed valid indicators of the concept. After an independent review and a collective conversation, the committee concluded that the survey seemed to represent the concept of civic competence for international and global education as described above.

### ***Data Analysis***

Social science researchers often design studies to “test for differences in the central tendency between two experimental treatments... whether one variable of interest is, on average, higher or lower in one treatment than in another” (Feltovich, 2003, p. 273). When treatments feature larger sample sizes, standard parametric analytical strategies such as the T-test are appropriate; however, smaller sample sizes require a different type of statistical test. Because this aspect of the study featured fewer than 20 participants, the researchers determined that a non-parametric statistical test—one that would not require data normality distribution assumptions or a large sample size—was best. They employed a robust rank-order test to compare participants' survey responses: the Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test (also called the U-test). The U-test is the most commonly used non-parametric hypothesis test to measure if two related samples, including repeated measurement of the same instrument, correspond to the same distribution (Feltovich, 2003; Green & Salkind, 2008; Noether, 1992; Wilcoxon, 1945). For this study, U-tests measured the degree of difference in the central tendency between U.S. students' prioritization of civic competence as it relates to international and global education before and after the five-week collaborative project.

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The researchers decided against using a multiple-comparison adjustment (i.e., Bonferroni correction) that is sometimes employed when multiple inferential tests are conducted (Napierala, 2012; Weisstein, 2004). While a multiple-comparison adjustment is used to reduce the likelihood of Type I errors, it may increase the likelihood of Type II errors (Cabin & Mitchell, 2000). Thus, for this study, the researchers used the traditionally accepted .05 level of significance (i.e.,  $p < .05$ ) and a one-tailed hypothesis.

### **Qualitative Data**

The researchers also designed this project to qualitatively analyze the participants' words to complement quantitative analysis of their survey rankings. After they joined with peers to collaboratively develop a classroom activity for secondary social studies students, U.S. participants then completed an individual assignment. They crafted a new, completely original classroom activity for secondary students centered around a different geography standard. The only additional instruction participants received was to include an approximately 250-word description of how their individual activity "demonstrates what you've learned from the asynchronous, collaborative project (i.e., Civic Competence for International and Global Education)."

### **Data Analysis**

Because of space limitations, this article's qualitative analysis includes only the participants' descriptions of their activities. These descriptions were reviewed for references to the collaborative project with Japanese peers and, moreover, for direct explanations of principles and components of Civic Competence for International and Global Education. The researchers completed the following four-step systematic analysis: (1) multiple, intense readings of data; (2) making notes and generating interpretations and codes; (3) re-reading data through a socio-cultural lens; and (4) reflexive reporting. The above approach grounded their findings in the dataset and helped establish validity and credibility. Also helping to establish trustworthiness were the weeks the researchers spent interacting with the participants (i.e., engaged time in the field; Lochmiller & Lester, 2017) and that colleagues critiqued the reflexive reports (i.e., peer debriefing; Creswell & Miller, 2000).

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### **Findings**

The following findings are presented according to the study's methodological approach, with quantitative data presented first and qualitative data second. The combination of the two approaches (i.e., convergent data) is presented and discussed in the Implications section.

#### **Quantitative Data**

The U.S. professor twice administered a survey to begin to answer whether the collaborative, online, and international learning project with Japanese peers could help the U.S. pre-service social studies teachers prioritize instructional strategies designed to promote Civic Competence for Global and International Education.

The survey asked students to prioritize five elements within three different aspects of social studies instruction: Learning Targets, Instructional Activities, and Culminating Tasks. Therefore, in total there were 15 individual U-test values that resulted from a comparison of the pre-project and post-project survey responses. Because 16 students completed the pre-program survey and 15 students completed the post-program survey, the critical value of U in this study was 77 ( $p < .05$ , one-tailed hypothesis).

#### ***Culminating Tasks***

Fourteen of the U-test values measured above the critical value and therefore did not refute a null hypothesis. There was only one value difference that proved to be statistically significant: selection A in the Culminating Tasks aspect. Students were asked to rank the following five Culminating Tasks in order of importance: 1 (most important) to 5 (least important):

- A. Students will craft and support positions that make clear connections to broad, frequently recurring historical themes.
- B. Students will craft and support positions that evaluate potential solutions to issues of local and national importance.
- C. Students will craft and support positions that identify multiple perspectives of a nation's solutions to domestic problems.
- D. Students will craft and support positions that include evidence from primary and secondary historical sources.

E. Students will craft and support positions on the fairness and desirability of solutions to global issues.

An overall summary of the participants' responses is provided in Table 1. In the survey completed before the project, 62.5% of the time students listed selection A as first or second "most important." This was not surprising to the researchers because "craft(ing) and support(ing) positions that make clear connections to broad, frequently recurring historical themes" is a tenet of the pedagogical approach that the U.S. professor promotes for secondary social studies education (a type of problem-based historical inquiry). Nor was it a surprise that after the project, students listed selection A as first or second "most important" only 33.3% of the time; the researchers thought it possible that students would slightly devalue selection A as a consequence of subsequently prioritizing another selection (i.e., selection E). The U-value (77) of this change proved statistically significant.

**Table 1**

*Percentage of participants who ranked each Culminating Task as first or second "most important," and U-value*

	Pre-project	Post-project	U-Value
A	62.5%	33.3%	77
B	50.0%	60.0%	103
C	12.5%	33.3%	110
D	31.2%	33.3%	112.5
E *	43.8%	40.0%	110

\* Indicates the Culminating Task that most closely represents Civic Competence for International and Global Education as operationalized for this study.

The researchers were surprised, however, that both selection A and selection E were deemed less important in the second administration of the survey (A: from 62.5% to 33.3%, and E: from 43.8% to 40%). Rather than prioritizing the globally and internationally focused option of selection E, participants placed greater value on the more nationally-focused selections B and C. It seemed that after five weeks of working with Japanese peers, the U.S. students' attention was drawn away from international issues and toward issues of "national importance" or "domestic

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problems.” This nationalist shift may be due, in part, to the context in which participants took the second survey. The post-survey was administered during the public hearings phase of the U.S. president’s impeachment trial. Coverage by the media—traditional and social—of the impeachment may have occupied the social studies education students’ minds as they completed the survey.

### ***Learning Targets***

There were no statistically significant differences in students’ responses to the surveys as it relates to prioritizing Learning Targets. Students were asked to rank the following five learning targets in order of importance: 1 (most important) to 5 (least important):

- A. Students will be able to describe the causes of a social or political movement in another nation.
- B. Students will be able to describe how the lives of people from various nations are interrelated.
- C. Students will be able to describe the effects of various cultural or social movements in a nation other than their own.
- D. Students will be able to describe how aspects of a culture have developed within a nation.
- E. Students will be able to describe themes across different cultures or societies in their nation and within other nations.

Table 2 is a summary of students’ responses to this survey question. The most valued learning target before and after the project was selection E, an option focused on international education. Its mode was 1 in both surveys. The other selection that could be identified as having an international focus was selection B; its mode moved from 5 to 2. In the second administration of the survey, selections A, C, and D were each ranked as first or second “most important” only 26.7% of the time. Also, it may be of interest to note that all three of those options were focused on a single nation, while selections B and E involved two or more nations.



**Table 2**

*Percentage of participants who ranked each Learning Target as first or second “most important,” and U-values*

	Pre-project	Post-project	U-Value
A	12.5%	26.7%	106
B *	43.8%	40.0%	117.5
C	50.0%	26.7%	106.5
D	25.0%	26.7%	117
E *	68.8%	80.0%	102

\* Indicates the Learning Targets that most closely represent Civic Competence for International and Global Education as operationalized for this study.

### ***Instructional Activities***

Students were asked to rank the following five Instructional Activities in order of importance: 1 (most important) to 5 (least important):

- A. Students will interpret primary documents to compare and contrast socio-economic arguments from multiple international perspectives.
- B. Students will interpret primary documents to compare and contrast socio-economic themes within one country’s recent national history.
- C. Students will interpret primary documents to compare and contrast advantages and disadvantages of a more cosmopolitanism approach to socio-economic decisions.
- D. Students will interpret primary documents to compare and contrast advantages and disadvantages of a more nationalistic approach to socio-economic decisions.
- E. Students will interpret primary documents to compare and contrast socio-economic arguments from different perspectives within one country.

A summary of participants’ responses is provided in Table 3. While there were no statistically significant differences in students’ responses to the surveys as it relates to prioritizing the

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instructional activities, it may be of interest to note that before the program, students ranked selection E as first or second most important 81.3% of the time and its mode was 2. This was not surprising to the researchers because thinking deeply about “arguments from different perspectives” is another tenet of the pedagogical approach the U.S. professor promotes. After the program, students continued to value selection E, ranking it first or second 53% of the time; its mode changed to 1. The other option involving more than one “perspective” was selection A, which participants ranked first or second 25% of the time before the program and 33.3% after. Selection A had a mode of 1 during the first administration of the survey and at its second administration, selection A had a mode of 1 (tied with 2).

**Table 3**

*Percentage of participants who ranked each Instructional Activity as first or second “most important,” and U-values*

	Pre-project	Post-project	U-Value
A *	68.8%	66.7%	111
B	25.0%	33.3%	115.5
C	18.8%	20.0%	95
D	6.2%	26.7%	114.5
E	81.3%	53.3%	105

\* Indicates the Instructional Activity that most closely represents Civic Competence for International and Global Education as operationalized for this study.

Another option with an international focus was selection C, which mentioned “cosmopolitanism,” a globally related theme. Selection C was ranked either the lowest or the second lowest priority by students in both surveys; its mode was 5 before the program and 4 after. Selection D was deemed first or second most important only 6.2% of the time during the first survey, and then 26.7% of the time in the second survey.

In brief answer to the study’s research question, the quantitative data (i.e., only one statistically significant U-test result) suggest that the asynchronous collaboration with Japanese peers was not very helpful for participants to prioritize instructional strategies designed to promote Civic Competence for International and Global Education. While the quantitative data suggest that the

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project had little impact on students' thinking about instructional strategies, the qualitative data suggest it may have been helpful in other ways.

### **Qualitative Data**

The qualitative data helped the researchers begin to assess whether the asynchronous collaboration with Japanese peers helped U.S. participants identify the principles and components of Civic Competence for International and Global Education and explain how those principles could be made real in a classroom. As they described in their own words their experiences in the project, students made references to a principle or a component of civic competence as it relates to international and global education. Also, many students seemed interested in productive communication and several thought that they became more civically competent world citizens. These themes are further explored below.

### ***Principles of Civic Competence***

Each student made a reference to at least one principle of Civic Competence for International and Global Education, some cited two, and a few mentioned all three. The most commonly cited principle was Interconnectedness; however, the majority of responses included only a vague reference to the notion. For example, one student wrote "the project helped me further my understanding of Japan's social studies education (sic) and interconnect that with our own... (it) provided me with insight on how interconnected our educational practices are." The researchers attempted to determine the degree to which students demonstrated Interconnectedness by evaluating whether they, for example, explicitly connected their personal or professional lives and concerns to those of their international peers. There were more direct responses that suggested students more thoroughly understood the notion; for example:

This project showed me how we like some of the same things. Out of the four Japanese partners in my group, two were [sports team] fans, and had [sports team] gear before we even met them, which was awesome. We also had the same favorite baseball team. It just proves that no matter how different two people, countries, languages, etc., are, there can still be similarities found, which I think is a big part of being civically competent and recognizing those similarities.

A similar response by another student also attempted to explicate the notion of Interconnectedness: "This project helped develop my understanding of how certain aspects of society are connected... nearly all of us attend festivals or sporting events, and we hold some of

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or all of our identity in the events we attend.” There were several students who seemed to describe the notion of Interconnectedness in ways that were brought about by the project.

The researchers attempted to determine to what degree students demonstrated another principle by evaluating whether they clearly crafted and supported descriptions of the educative power of “Inquiry into Global Issues.” Several students made specific and thorough references to the principle; for example, when describing their individually developed activity, a student wrote:

It challenges and benefits students to build a global response to complicated issues, such as natural disaster response and relief. By studying and then representing their host countries, students will experience a diverse array of global responses, concerns, and problems that people from all over the world will experience when trying to come up with solutions to this issue... By studying natural disasters from across the world, students will be better educated in the multiple global perspectives and concerns about this issue, and they will be better prepared to be active and aware participants in a 21st-century globalized society.

Another student wrote that “students should acknowledge the reach that issues in other regions of the world can have on the global community. Analyzing these issues from different perspectives allows students to create... a well-rounded idea about a solution to a global issue.” The quotes above describe several aspects of Inquiry into Global Issues: multiple international perspectives, positing a solution to complex global issues, and how practicing these skills in the classroom can better prepare students for their present and future away from school. These aspects were introduced and reinforced throughout the project.

The least-mentioned principle was Cosmopolitanism. The researchers attempted to determine the degree to which each student demonstrated Cosmopolitanism by evaluating their collaborative efforts and if they allowed contributions from their international peers to inform their construction of new knowledge about teaching in general and social studies education in particular. For example, one student wrote:

What I have learned from the project is to have relational bandwidth. What this means is the ability to communicate with strangers with relative ease. This is something as a future educator that is of utmost importance and goes along with effectively communicating information to others. All it means is that having a conversation with somebody needs to not be hard and anxiety-ridden. Overall, I think the project was an awesome experience.

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Another student wrote that the project helped “me develop... (the) knowledge that supports productive collaboration across cultures, since I had the opportunity to talk to Japanese students via video recordings and learn more about not just them but aspects of Japanese culture and way of life.” The above quotes reveal that students considered their interaction with international peers to be “positive” and without “anxiety.” They seemed to revise their understanding (i.e., schema) about social realities.

### ***Communication***

An emergent theme was the need for real-time, interpersonal communication to supplement the asynchronous collaboration. One student wrote that “communication skills like those learned and practiced in [the project] are essential to global education because understanding not only language but cultural reference and background is part of effective communication (sic).” Another student wrote, “The project did not work as a two-way street, mainly due to the lack of real time communications.” A third student wrote, “I had the chance to communicate with students outside of the United States... I believe being able to communicate effectively is a big part of civic competence.” A final example is as follows: “There were downsides, however specifically in the time allotted for this project... we just did not have enough time to communicate to the best of our ability having to wait several days to receive responses.” Students wanted real-time, interpersonal communication to supplement the asynchronous collaboration within the project.

### ***Global Citizenship***

Another theme was personal growth in Global Citizenship. Many students perceived positive development in their personal civic competence as it relates to international and global education. For example, one student wrote, “We can take the knowledge of the Japanese culture we learned and apply it to our thoughts and ideas on international relations and come up with ways to apply it to our roles as citizens.” An additional example of a student expressing the belief that their personal Civic Competence for International and Global Education had developed is as follows:

Before this class, being a social studies teacher to me meant that we are to create civically competent citizens for our own country. What the last several weeks in this class taught me is that to be a social studies teacher means more than to just create civically competent citizens for the United States. It means that we have to create civically and globally competent citizens.

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Another example is as follows:

My biggest takeaway this semester came as a result of the project we started with our Japanese counterparts. When preparing for the project, we began looking at issues from a different perspective than we usually do. While we are used to placing a large emphasis on citizenship education, it is often that I find myself condensing this to American citizenship education. Social Science education should be approached with a well-rounded understanding of how to contribute a global citizenship education; oftentimes this is done through examining topics with different perspectives.

These students strongly believed that they personally grew in the development of the knowledge and skills associated with Global Citizenship. They considered themselves more civically competent as it related to international and global education.

Therefore, the brief answer to the research question is that qualitative data suggest that the asynchronous collaboration with Japanese peers was helpful for participants to identify the principles and components of Civic Competence for Global and International Education and explain how those principles benefited them personally and could be made real in a classroom.

### **Convergent Data and Implications**

Contemporary teacher education programs need to better prepare pre-service teachers by helping them develop skills, knowledge, and experiences that promote civic competence as it relates to international and global education. This project seemed to reinforce several of the participants' positive beliefs about global education (i.e., the need to include multiple perspectives, an international focus). The study also seemed to help participants develop new positive beliefs about international education (i.e., personal growth in civic competence, communication). What follows are implications for further research drawn from the convergence of collected data.

### **Synchronous Communication**

Students engaged in international collaborations would benefit from real-time, synchronous communication with their partners. This project called for at least six exchanges between international partners; they were all asynchronous. The class in the U.S. met for three hours on Wednesdays, and the class in Japan met for three hours on Mondays. Also, the two classes did not attempt to overcome the 14-hour time difference by having one of the classes meet very early or very late one day to participate in a synchronous teleconference with the other. As it

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occurred, one class made videos and waited several days before the other class responded (i.e., it was often a week between the initial video and the reply video). Students in this project may have benefited from participating in some type of real-time communication: formal classroom-to-classroom video-conferencing or informal person-to-person social media interaction (see Arnold, 2019). In future iterations of projects similar to the one described here, professors should plan to have students interact synchronously to supplement the asynchronous collaboration.

### **Connect Theory to Practice**

Students engaged in international collaborations would benefit from explicit connections between the theory they study and the practice they simultaneously experience. Transparent discussions of the rationale underpinning their learning activities and assignments would better prepare students to recognize, internalize, and implement pedagogical exemplars. The project described in this article was positioned as an exemplar of the type of instruction it promoted; however, the researchers were not explicitly transparent about this fact. Only a few students mentioned this overlap of theory and practice. Ideally, all participants would have been able to make direct connections between their classroom experience and the educational rationale it modeled. There are several ways in which future iterations of projects similar to this one could help students connect theory to practice. The survey could include more overt references to the theoretical basis for its questions; students may then see a direct connection between what they have read and experienced within the instructional choices manifest in the project. The professors could also make specific references to how the students' learning experiences model the type of instruction under consideration (i.e., Modelling Instruction; Brewe & Sawtelle, 2018).

### **Additional International Experiences**

To better understand and implement the lessons learned from this project, students would benefit from more time invested in international experiences. First, the project's timeline could be moved up within the semester to include more collaboration. For example, this iteration of the five-week project began in late October and was complete by the end of the U.S. students' fall semester. It may be more beneficial for the project to start earlier in the semester to allow participants more time to collaborate. Relatedly, additional international and global experiences could be added to earlier and later semesters to afford students more activities over an increased duration. It is this type of intensive commitment over several semesters—or perhaps several years—that research suggests is needed for lasting instructional change (see Kohlmeier et al., 2020).

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### **Conclusion**

The researchers found it encouraging that all U.S. participants could describe in their own words at least one principle of Civic Competence for International and Global Education, a notion with which they were not familiar prior to the study. Most participants, in fact, could describe at least two principles, and a few could describe all three. It was also encouraging that several students claimed that they personally grew in their preparedness as world citizens and offered convincing supporting evidence. Future studies into similar international and asynchronous telecollaborative projects could better emphasize subjective portions of a prioritization survey (i.e., "Please explain your rationale") to help make sense of its objective results. Researchers may also prefer to increase both the duration of the project and the depth of interaction between the international peers. This study attempts to contribute to current research into wise practices for further internationalizing a teacher-education program and for helping teachers develop the knowledge and skills necessary to support students' civic competence as it relates to international and global education.

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