

# Developing Educators' Global Leadership Competencies through Intercultural Immersion Experiences: Theory and Practice



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## INTRODUCTION

Global leadership is an important skill for today's educators to demonstrate. As the world becomes more interconnected and interdependent, students must develop skills to work with people whose experiences, cultures, and values are very different from their own (Cushner, 2007). This means educators should develop the relevant knowledge and skills to lead globally competent future citizens. The term "global" implies more than geographic reach; it encompasses "cultural reach in terms of people and intellectual reach in the development of global mindset" (Osland, Bird, Mendenhall, & Osland, 2006, p. 220). According to Lovvorn and Chen (2011), a global mindset is the ability to search for unexpected trends and opportunities that expand and refine a person's points of view. It is a combination of self-awareness, openness to different cultures, and an appreciation of the existence of differences.

Scholars have attested that having an intercultural experience is one of the most powerful ways to promote a global mindset (Gregersen, Morrison, & Black, 1998; Lovvorn & Chen, 2011; Crowne, 2008). Exposure to different cultures allows an individual to develop insights into a new place and become familiar with new social norms, values, and assumptions (Crowne, 2008). The purpose of this chapter is to examine the competencies and cultural intelligence that global leaders need to develop and identify ways to promote them. The chapter will also introduce a teacher professional development program, Global Studies in Education-South Korea, designed to promote educators' global understanding and global leadership.

## Global Leadership Competencies

Clark (2015) has defined a global leader as "a person who leads across cultures with systems, processes, and relationships in a complex environment" (p. 5). Scholars have asserted that in order to be effective global leaders, a number of competencies must be established (Conner, 2001; Jokinen, 2005; Moran & Riesenberger, 1994). Jokinen (2005) conducted extensive research on global leadership competencies and proposed a framework composed of three dimensions:

1. Core global leadership competencies,
2. Desired mental characteristics, and
3. Behavioral-level global leadership competencies.

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The core competencies are the abilities that lead to the emergence of other critical skills and consist of self-awareness, engagement in personal transformation, and inquisitiveness. Self-awareness is the ability to identify one's own strengths, weaknesses, values, and assumptions and to question personal beliefs and assumptions. Engagement in personal transformation refers to a commitment to continuous self-development. Global leaders need to demonstrate a proactive learning approach, seeking out new learning opportunities and improving performance capabilities. Inquisitiveness is also known as curiosity, and it refers to a leader's ability to search for answers and expertise beyond standard expectations.

The next dimension features desired mental characteristics of global leaders. These traits influence the way a person acts and responds to challenging tasks and include optimism, self-regulation, empathy, and cognitive skills. Optimism refers to a positive "can-do" attitude, even in an uncertain environment, and self-regulation is the "ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods" (Jokinen, 2004, p. 206). Empathy means caring about people's needs and projecting a flexible and respectful approach to others. Killick (2012) explained how the concept of empathy encourages people to extend the notion of "we" to include "those global others." Cognitive skills refer to a global leader's ability to develop a creative solution based on previous knowledge and analysis of complex problems.

Finally, behavioral global-level competency is related to a leader's ability to execute a plan and produce a concrete result. These competencies include social skills and networking skills. Social skills emphasize a leader's ability to motivate people to pursue excellence, manage conflicts, and build strong teamwork skills. While social skills are reflected more at the personal level, networking skills are associated with an organization. They include the ability to build and maintain a partnership as well as develop a collaborative community.

Tuleja (2014) claims that global leadership requires a person to demonstrate intercultural competencies, also known as cultural intelligence. This ability is "an indication of the capability to effectively adapt to new cultural contexts" (Malik, Cooper-Thomas, & Zikic, 2014, p. 196).

## **Cultural Intelligence**

Cultural intelligence (CQ) refers to an outsider's ability to interpret unfamiliar cultural behaviors or signals and respond in an appropriate way (Earley & Mosakowski, 2004). CQ allows individuals to decipher unique cultural codes and act effectively in multiple settings (Crowne, 2008). People need to make continuous adjustments of mental models because the behaviors of people who are most accepted in certain groups may be difficult for outsiders to understand (Brislin, Worthley, & MacNab, 2006; Triandis, 2006). Those who have high CQ can identify specific behaviors that most people in a cultural group present. These people are consciously aware of cultural norms and preferences while interacting with others. It is essential for those who work with people from other cultures to demonstrate high CQ (Crowne, 2008).

According to Earley and Ang (2003), CQ consists of four parts, all of which are applied by people with high CQ: metacognitive intelligence, cognitive intelligence, motivational intelligence, and behavioral intelligence. Metacognitive intelligence refers to control of the cognition that is used for deep information processing. This component includes planning, monitoring, and evaluating processes to acquire new understanding (Livingston, 1997). Cognitive intelligence refers to knowledge and knowledge structures. It includes knowledge of self, social norms, and the structures and practices of a culture (Ang et al., 2007). Motivational intelligence is the ability to direct attention and sustain energy in order to learn and adjust in cross-cultural situations. Those with high motivational intelligence challenge themselves to successfully adapt to new cultural settings (Earley, Ang, & Tan, 2006). Behavioral intelligence is the

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