

[DOI: 10.20472/IAC.2015.019.033](https://doi.org/10.20472/IAC.2015.019.033)

TERESA DE FAZIO

Victoria University, Australia

TEACHER EDUCATION FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP: A CASE STUDY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS PREPARING OUR YOUNG LEARNERS FOR NEW BRAVE, NEW GLOBALISED WORLD.

Abstract:

From a socio-cultural perspective, language teachers take up the responsibility of mediating and supporting a student's language learning by designing a curriculum which goes further than just teaching the linguistic elements of a language. When language teachers draw on culture and interculturality, language becomes an instrument whilst social interaction becomes a significant driver for meaningful communication.

Australia is one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world. 23% of the population is overseas born and 25% of the Australian born has at least one or both parents born overseas. Across the total Australian school population, about 25% of all students are of a language background other than English. In short, Australian classrooms have a linguistic and cultural richness which brings a unique vibrancy to the classroom. However, schools are also aware of the unique position they are in understanding and engaging young learners in mainstream society. This paper proposes that language teachers are in a unique yet often, undervalued position of being multicultural educators as well as language educators. Further, that language teachers are often powerful mediators of a student's entry into global citizenship.

This paper reports on a case study of a pilot program where primary school teachers (elementary level) of various languages took up the challenge of addressing issues of multicultural awareness, global citizenship and interculturality through the development of communicative competence in the target language. It looks at how these teachers drew on strategies that connect culture and language in a way that moves the student towards cognitive, social and personal development whilst learning the language. The case study provides insights into a model and considerations that might be used in professional learning and teacher education courses to help students negotiate their own lived experience and entry to what is often a new linguistic and socio-cultural context for students. The case study demonstrates that teacher education has a particular role to play in preparing teachers to establishing a classroom culture of respect and cultural curiosity via subtle but considered themes around interculturality and citizenship. Moreover, that the languages teacher plays a strong role in facilitating a student's sense of these concepts and engagement in an increasing multicultural society.

Keywords:

teacher education, socio-cultural theory, globalisation, multiculturalism, intercultural education, languages, citizenship, distributed leadership model

JEL Classification: F01, A00