Preparing Globally Competent Graduates: A Content Analysis of a B.Ed. in TEFL Curriculum at a Rural University in Cambodia

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Abstract

Global competence is an essential skill for 21st century learners. It is unclear however whether a curriculum of a Bachelor of Education in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (B.Ed. in TEFL) in Cambodia has fully embraced this notion of global competence. The study is therefore aimed at analyzing the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum at a rural Cambodian university to find out the extent to which the curriculum can prepare students in the B.Ed. in TEFL program for their lives and work in a globalized world after graduation. For the purpose of the analysis, a checklist of themes of global competence was developed and all course outlines in the B.Ed. in TEFL were analyzed. The findings show that a theme related to subject matter knowledge occupies nearly half of the whole teaching hours of the program, while global competence-related themes receive relatively low attention in the curriculum. The study suggests that the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum at the university under study be revised to include more themes related to building students' global competence so that they can become globally competent graduates who will succeed in their lives outside the university setting.

Keywords: Global competence; Global education; B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum

I. Introduction

Over the last two decades, Cambodia has seen a significant increase in the use of English as a medium of instruction and communication. English language learning and teaching have rapidly grown, for English, an official language of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), is the main foreign language for business, technology, and higher education in Cambodia. Schools, institutes and centers providing English training programs have mushroomed across the country. A similar growth is seen in the higher education sector where a bachelor's degree in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (B.Ed. in TEFL) is offered at many higher education institutions, both in Phnom Penh, a Cambodian capital, and in the provinces.

Fourteen years ago, Neau (2003) stated that a major concern facing English Language Teaching (ELT) in Cambodia was the fact that many teachers of English have severely limited English proficiency. Although this seems not to be the case a decade and a half later, ELT in Cambodia, in particular in public schools, is still facing many problems, including lack of proper facilities and teaching materials and equipment (Tith, 2015). Through his observations and experiences, Tith argues that ELT practice in schools and universities in Cambodia varies from one place to another, without a standardized system of practice (2015).

With regard to how globally competent Cambodian students and teachers are, Marginson, Kaur, and Sawir (2011) pointed out that the majority of Cambodian students and teachers are still on the outside edge of global knowledge, meaning that their knowledge about global matters is relatively low. The Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport (MoEYS) of Cambodia has also acknowledged its inability to equip teachers and students with proper skills to be ready to live and work in the ASEAN and the globalized society (MoEYS, 2014).

Given the limited global knowledge among many Cambodian teachers and students, it is interesting to find out what constitutes this seemingly low knowledge base and what should be done to improve it. This paper is therefore aimed at analyzing a current curriculum of a B.Ed. in TEFL program at a university in rural Cambodia to see whether there are elements or attributes of global competence included in the curriculum. The study also intends to put forward suggestions on how to successfully prepare

Cambodian students, particularly undergraduate students majoring in English, to work and live in a globalized world.

II. Literature Review

Given the limited knowledge of Cambodian English teachers and their pivotal role in preparing their students to respond to the changes in today's world and the impact of globalization, English teachers in Cambodia nowadays must transform themselves from mere transmitters of English knowledge to instructors whose major goal is to equip their students with English for global competence. This section discusses knowledge base of second language teacher education, defines global competence and global education, and examines the role of information and communication technology (ICT) as well as research in second language teacher education, all of which are defining characteristics of global competence.

1. Knowledge base of second language teacher education

To be a qualified teacher of English, one should at least have good English language proficiency, and having a good knowledge of their discipline is a must for any teachers to teach effectively (Bransford, Derry, Berliner, & Hammerness, 2005). Effective teachers, however, need to develop pedagogical knowledge that goes well beyond the content knowledge of the discipline (Shulman, 1987, as cited in Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005). Beside linguistic and pedagogical knowledge, both teacher and pre-service student teachers of English must possess process knowledge, including interpersonal and team skills, observation and inquiry skills, and language analysis skills. Furthermore, a good understanding of curricular can help teachers decide on what to teach, who to teach and how to teach (Grave, 2009; Marsh, 2004). It also helps them understand education policy goals and purposes, principles of instructional design, and teaching options and possibilities (Bransford, Darling-Hammond, & LePage, 2005).

According Richards (1998), there are six domains of content which are the core knowledge base of second language teacher education (SLTE). Knowledge in all the six domains is crucial for teachers to make informed decisions to use any teaching approaches that are contextually and situationally appropriate for their students. These domains of content include (1) theories of teaching, (2) teaching skills, (3) communication skills, (4)

subject matter knowledge, (5) pedagogical reasoning and decision making, and (6) contextual knowledge. Table 1 illustrates each of these domains.

Table 1. *Knowledge base of second language teacher education* (Adapted from Richards (1998))

Domains of content	Descriptions
1. Theories of teaching	Teacher's personal theories
2. Teaching skills	Essential general repertoire and specific language teaching repertoire
3. Communication skills	General communication skills and target language proficiency
4. Subject matter knowledge	Knowledge of specialized concepts and theories and disciplinary knowledge
5. Pedagogical reasoning and decision making	Ability to make decisions when preparing and during teaching
6. Contextual knowledge	Knowledge of how a society, community, and institution affects and shapes language teaching

A decade later, Richards (2009), considering the unpredictable changes in the world today, called for a redefinition of SLTE in order to respond to the impact of globalization and the growing need for effective approaches to teacher preparation and professional development programs. Globalization has been transforming the world to be more interconnected and interdependent, shaping the landscape of education that requires teacher training programs to provide prospective student teachers with sound pedagogical knowledge and skills to educate their students for the global citizenry (Guo, 2014). As Ibrahim (2005) pointed out, the concept of global citizenship is related to "political, economic, technological and cultural trends summed up by processes of globalization" (p. 177).

Remarkably, language classrooms have become more demographically diverse, requiring teacher training centers or schools to equip student teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their prospective students' varied needs intellectually, socially, culturally and personally (Ambe, 2006). Therefore, the content of foreign/second language teaching and learning programs should not only be confined to mastering linguistic features and stressing what and how particular students should learn and be

taught, but it also needs to consider the inclusivity of other social and cultural positions across the world as well as its impact on their lives and professions (Graves, 2009).

2. Global Competence

The term global competence is defined by the Longview Foundation (2008) as "a body of knowledge about world regions, cultures, and global issues, and the skills and dispositions to engage responsibly and effectively in a global environment" (p. 7). Similarly, the term is described by Mansilla and Jackson (2011) as a human ability and attitude to comprehend and act on matters of global significance, and it involves the knowledge and skills needed for surviving in the 21st century. For National Education Association (NEA, 2010), global competence refers to knowledge and understanding of international issues, ability to learn and work with others from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds and skills to function in an interdependent world.

A globally competent student, according to Mansilla and Jackson (2011), should be able to:

1. **Investigate the world beyond their immediate environment**, framing significant problems and conducting well-crafted and age-appropriate research.
2. **Recognize perspectives, others' and their own**, articulating and explaining such perspectives thoughtfully and respectfully.
3. **Communicate ideas effectively with diverse audiences**, bridging geographic, linguistic, ideological, and cultural barriers.
4. **Take action to improve conditions**, viewing themselves as players in the world and participating reflectively. (p. 11)

In a similar vein, according to Longview Foundation (2008), a globally competent student has:

- Knowledge of and curiosity about the world's history, geography, cultures, environmental and economic systems, and current international issues
- Language and cross-cultural skills to communicate effectively with people from other countries, understand multiple perspectives, and use primary sources from around the globe

• A commitment to ethical citizenship. (p. 7)

For globally competent teachers, they should possess three competency domains: knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Table 2 below illustrates each competency domain.

Table 2. *Globally competent teachers by knowledge, skill and disposition* (Adapted from Kirby and Crawford, 2012)

Competency Domain	Attributes
Knowledge	Global issues and problems
	Human diversity and global interdependence
	Technology and intercultural communication
	World regions and current events
Skills	Creative and critical thinking skills
	Cross-cultural skills, digital literacy skills, and second language skills
	Social and political action skills
	Skills to create a classroom environment that values diversity and global engagement
Dispositions	Concern for environment and sustainability
	Curiosity, empathy, justice and fairness
	Open-mindedness to new ideas and experiences
	Value and respect for diversity

3. Global education and global citizenship education

Global education and global citizenship education play crucial roles in preparing students to live and work in the interdependent ever-changing world. The Global Educational Network (GLEN) defines global education as an active learning process grounded in the universal values of inclusion, solidarity, co-operation, justice, equality tolerance, and non-violence (GLEN, 2009). Its main purposes are to promote positive values and assist students to take responsibility for their actions and to see themselves as global citizens who can contribute to a more peaceful, just and sustainable world (GLEN, 2009).

Global Education (Oxfam, 2006) and Global Citizenship Education (UNESCO, 2015) are aimed at helping students to strengthen their ability in

investigation, analysis, and discussion of local and global matters. They give learners competencies and opportunities to realize their rights and obligations to promote a better world and future for all (UNESCO, 2015). Global citizenship education can equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to cope with the realities of the world of interconnected societies, cultures and politics (Guo, 2014).

4. ICT in second language teacher education

The sociologist Manuel Castells strongly argued that any individual or society that is facilitated by technology can gain more advantages from the global economy than those that remain unplugged (Christie, 2008). Similarly, in second language education, the significance of ICT is beyond the core subject itself. The effective use of ICT can truly enhance the delivery of topics across the core curriculum, promoting interactivity among students and teachers (Williams & Easingwood, 2007). Second language teachers are turning to computer-assisted technologies to make many of their tasks more efficient and make learning faster, easier, less painful, and more engaging (Hanson-Smith & Rilling, 2006). Furthermore, the inclusion of ICT in pre-service teacher training programs enables student teachers to learn independently using web-based resources (Cheng, Tsui, Chow, & Mok, 2002).

To prepare students to work and live in a globalized world, teachers need to have a good understanding of ICT and be capable of using it to facilitate their teaching and students' learning. However, successfully integrating ICT into the classroom is based largely on the teachers' ability to harness the technology to make their classroom environment more socially active, engaging and collaborative (UNESCO, 2011). Therefore, it is important that language curriculum developers consider the crucial role of ICT and teachers' actual capacity in their curriculum development process.

5. Research in second language teacher education

The notion of the role of a teacher as a researcher is not new, and there is a need for the inclusion of a research responsibility in teaching roles (Loughran, 2002). Action research, for instance, offers many benefits for teacher researchers to observe and investigate their school policy and performance for improvement (Hine & Lavery, 2014). This type of research helps teachers identify the gaps between theory and practice and bridge them

(Johnson, 2012) and develop new knowledge concerning their pedagogical and instructional decision making (Hensen, 1996).

Burns (2009) asserted that language teachers should be encouraged to become action researchers to be able to cope with contemporary issues in their teaching practices. The main reason to teach research skills to student teachers, according to Griffith University (n.d.), is to develop and enhance their skills and capacity to think critically and analytically, to retrieve and assess information, and to solve problems. However, Borg (2017) recently argues that teacher research may not be suitable for all teachers. To help teachers engage in research productively, Borg offers twelve helpful tips for doing teacher research. Those tips are categorized onto four groups: quality/rigor, relevance, feasibility and collaboration.

III. Research Methodology

1. Research setting

The present study was conducted at a university in a Cambodian province where youth migration to Thailand for better employment is popular. It is therefore interesting to explore whether the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum at this well-chosen university has considered and integrated the concept of global competence to prepare the student teachers for their future employment in Cambodia as well as in Southeast Asia.

2. Research instrument and data analysis

A document analysis or content analysis was used to analyze the existing content of a B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum at a university in rural Cambodia. The content analysis is useful for the examination and interpretation of materials, such as personal documents, public records, and curriculum standards (Springer, 2009). Therefore, to identify whether the themes related to preparing globally competent teachers exist in the B.Ed.in TEFL curriculum at the chosen university, the researchers created a checklist of themes of global competence for the basis of analysis. The checklist which can be seen in Appendix A consists of 14 themes relevant to the concept of global competence. Through a review of the literature on second language teacher education, global competence, global education, and global citizenship education, the authors developed the checklist by drawing on ideas and insights from a number of sources, including Leask (2009); GLEN

(2009); Graves (2009); Longview Foundation (2008); Oxfam (2006, 2015); Richards (1998); Roberts (1998); and UNESCO (2015).

During the analysis, any themes in the curriculum similar to the 14 themes of the global competence the authors had developed were classified and coded under their respective themes. To this end, all course outlines for each unit/course in the whole program of the B.Ed. in TEFL were examined and analyzed. A frequency count of the category contents was then conducted and entered into Microsoft Excel 2010 for analysis.

IV. Results and Discussion

1. The proportion of the 14 themes in the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum

A detailed analysis of the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum at the selected university reveals that all of the 14 themes are incorporated into the B.Ed. program's curriculum.
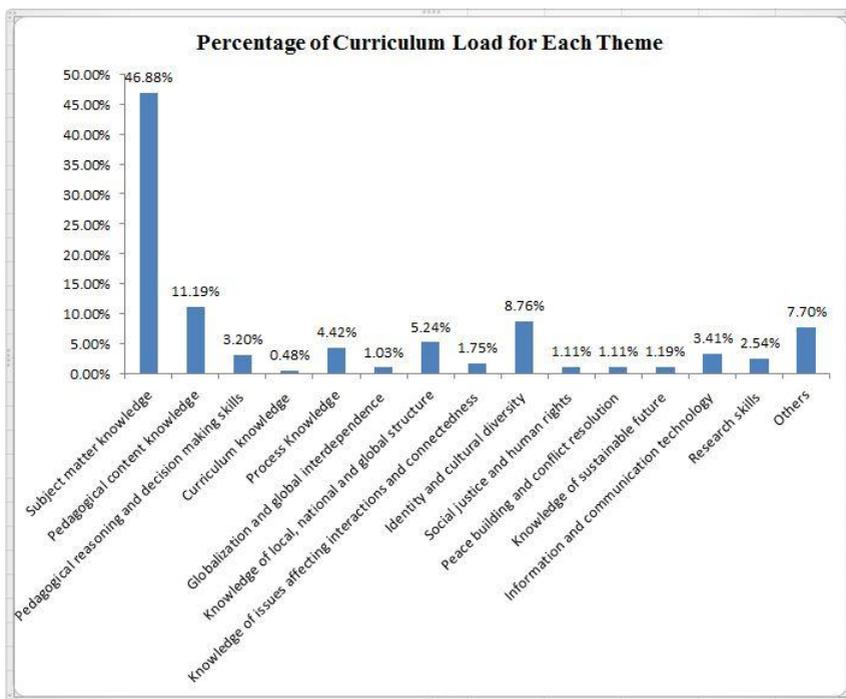

Figure 1: The proportion of each of the 14 themes in the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum

As Figure 1 above shows, among the 14 themes, a theme related to the subject matter knowledge takes up almost half of the whole teaching hours of the program, accounting for 46.88%. The second largest proportion (11.19%) is allocated for the theme of pedagogical content. The theme of identity and cultural diversity is the third largest standing at 8.76%, while curriculum knowledge receives the least attention among other themes.

Figure 1 further illustrates that the proportion of themes which are literally and thematically related to the notion of global competence is very low. Globalization and global interdependence; issues affecting interactions and connectedness of communities at local, national and international levels; social justice and human rights; peace building and conflict resolution; and sustainable future each receive only around 1% of the whole teaching hours of the B.Ed. in TEFL program. ICT and research skills, the two main defining characteristics of global competence and the 21st century skills, are also found to receive relatively low attention in the curriculum. They stood at 3.41% and 2.54%, respectively. It should be noted that 7.70% of the whole teaching times in the program, labeled as 'Others', are used for exams and other units whose themes are not related to building students' global competence.

The content analysis of the curriculum of the B.Ed. in TEFL program at the selected university in the rural Cambodian province revealed that all of the 14 main themes are found, despite their varying degrees, in the current curriculum under investigation. However, the curriculum loads for the major themes related to building students' global knowledge and skills seem to be negligible, constituting around one fifth of the whole curriculum. This limited time allocation for the themes highly related to global competence could not provide students with plenty of opportunities to gain critical knowledge and skills needed to become globally competent students and graduates. Thus, the B.Ed. in TEFL program in this study is unlikely to succeed in achieving the themes or the subthemes of Oxfam's (2006) Global Education and UNESCO's (2015) Global Citizenship Education, which primarily involve teaching students to learn to investigate, analyze, and discuss any issues relevant to their lives and work in a globalized society. A global citizen should possess critical thinking skills, ability to argue, cooperate, and solve conflicts, and ability to challenge the injustice and inequalities (Oxfam, 2006).

2. The superficial focus of the course

The limited teaching time allocated for ICT and research may show that the courses on ICT and research skills are only designed to build students' general knowledge of research, such as identifying research topics and writing research proposals, not conducting an actual research study. This seems to reveal that ICT and research skills are not given due attention at all, which in turn affects the success of the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum in building students' global competence. This finding reveals that the curriculum of the B.Ed. in TEFL program at the selected university places a great emphasis on building students' knowledge of the subject matter and pedagogical content, rather than preparing students for working and living in a globalized world as a global citizen. In this regard, it can be concluded that the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum follows a model of a knowledge-based curriculum (Richards, 1998), mainly aimed at building student teachers' English proficiency.

Apparently, the B.Ed. in TEFL program at this university focuses solely on building students' English proficiency at the expense of their global competence. This seems, through the researchers' observations and experiences, to be the case of the B.Ed. in TEFL program at many other universities across the country. Therefore, teaching or integrating more themes of global competence into the B.Ed. in TEFL program at the surveyed university needs to be done systematically and cautiously to accommodate the needs of the students (Grave, 2009).

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

Global competence may be a new concept for Cambodian English teachers to embrace, but it should be seen as a necessity for teachers to prepare their students to become globally competent graduates. Although being competent in the English language is indispensable for both teachers and students of English at the chosen university and other universities in Cambodia, having practical knowledge and skills to live and work in a globalized society is even more important. From the document analysis, the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum content at this rural university tends to be more knowledge-based, focusing mainly on building students' English language proficiency and pedagogical skills. However, to design a good B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum which is aimed at producing globally competent graduates, some modifications are required. Modifications such as increasing the presence of

themes of global competence and updating course content to include knowledge and skills characteristic of global competence should be taken into consideration.

1. Recommendations

Even though it is true that students in the B.Ed. in TEFL program at the university under investigation primarily need subject matter and pedagogical knowledge to be qualified as teachers of English, this university's B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum should be revised and updated to take into account the value of global competence and incorporate more global competence-related themes to offer students in the program the opportunity to build their knowledge and skills to become globally competent graduates and citizens.

Thus, to prepare the B.Ed. in TEFL students to work and live in a globalized world successfully, it is recommended that the university consider the following suggestions:

- Integrate more themes of Global Education (Oxfam, 2006) and Global Citizenship (UNESCO, 2015) which seem to be absent in the existing curriculum.
- Increase curriculum loads on the themes related to building students' global competence. An increase in the curriculum loads is essential to provide students with more learning hours that allow them to learn to investigate, analyze, and discuss the themes taught (Oxfam, 2006). Furthermore, the increase in the curriculum loads gives students more opportunities to reflect and relate their learning to the local and international communities.
- Balance curriculum loads to ensure that students' English language proficiency is taken good care of, so is their global competence. This seems to contradict the previous suggestions; however, a good balance should be achieved to ensure that students will not only become qualified teachers of English, the main goal of the curriculum, but also globally competent citizens.
- Redesign the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum content to place greater emphasis on the themes of global competence so that students can enhance both their English and their knowledge of global matters.
- Increase the time allocated for ICT-related units to provide students with ample opportunities to engage themselves with ICT. This

engagement is useful for them as they learn to make use of ICT for their learning and later for their lives.

- Allocate more teaching time for courses related to building students' research skills, as they will need these skills in their future personal and professional lives outside the classroom.

2. Limitations of the study

It is obvious that the study has several flaws. Firstly, it is limited in scope as it only analyses the B.Ed. in TEFL curriculum of a single university in rural Cambodia, leaving out the B.Ed. curricula at many other universities across the country. Secondly, the research method used in the study is seriously flawed. The study fails in include more valid research methods using interviews, observations and/or questionnaires to better understand the issues discussed in this study. Thus, it appears impossible to determine the success or failure of the B.Ed. in TEFL program at this university by just analyzing the curriculum content. Further research should include larger samples and use mixed methods to collect data from multiple institutions so that a more generalizable finding can be reported.

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Appendix A

A Checklist for the Frequencies and Teaching Hours of the Themes of Global Competence

Unit name…………………………………
Credit points: ……. ………………………
Year:…………. Semester: ……………….

Nº	Themes of Global Competence	Codes	Total hours	Comments
1	Subject matter knowledge (i.e. English phonetics and phonology, syntax, sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis)	SMK		
2	Pedagogical content knowledge (i.e. teaching methodology, classroom management, educational psychology, and student assessment)	PCK		
3	Pedagogical reasoning and decision making skills (i.e. how to teach students from different abilities and backgrounds)	PRDMS		
4	Curriculum knowledge (i.e. curriculum development and syllabus design)	CK		
5	Process Knowledge (i.e. communication, cross-cultural communication, critical thinking, and management and leadership)	PK		
6	Knowledge of globalisation and global interdependence (i.e. globalisation and its effects, global economy, global culture, and global partnership)	GGI		
7	Knowledge of local, national and global structure (i.e. identification, discussion and analysis of global governance systems, structure and process)	LNGS		

8	Knowledge of issues affecting interactions and connectedness of communities at local, national, and global levels (i.e. investigation, assessment and examination of local, national and global issues, responsibilities and consequences of decision making)	IAICC		
9	Knowledge of identity and cultural diversity (i.e. sense of individual and collective responsibility)	ICD		
10	Knowledge of social justice and human rights (i.e. human equity, gender equity, human rights, and democracy).	SJHR		
11	Knowledge of peace building and conflict resolution (i.e. conflict analysis, negotiation, dialogue and communication in order to live and work effectively with groups in diverse contexts).	PBCR		
12	Knowledge of sustainable future (i.e. environmental studies, climate change, greenhouse gas, natural disasters)	KSF		
13	Knowledge of information and communication technology (computer knowledge, web-surfing, emailing, and ICT application for learning and teaching English).	ICT		
14	Knowledge of research skills (i.e. research methods, action research)	RS		

General comments:

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