

Transforming Global Competence Education in the Universities: Conceptual Development, Epistemological Framework, and Global Delivery

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This study examines the status quo and issues of global competence education in North American universities. It starts with introducing the definitions of global competence developed in basic education sector, highlighting their transcendent nature. From there, this study goes on to identify a dozen cases of offering global competence education in American and Canadian universities. On this basis, it sheds light on the fact that basic education sector is currently leading the way of advancing and defining global competence suited to an Anthropocene epoch, which, however, is not yet matched and supported by developing and delivering compatible curriculum; the university sector is more structural in offering global competence education, yet to largely utilizes existing inter/cross-cultural competence courses and thus engages rather “inertial” concepts and knowledge. Therefore, this study argues that global competence education in the university requires a profound transcendence that draws on the progressive conceptualization in basic education sector, and, more importantly, a transformative epistemological framework. It then demonstrates how the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can serve this purpose.

In addition, this study addresses the discourse of framing global competence education with non-Western indigenous knowledge traditions, and showcases how the traditional Chinese thoughts have a good fit with the SDGs-framed global competence via those notions embedded in the Confucian ecology and the *Tianxia* heuristic. Arguably, the SDGs-based global competence could find compatibility and supplementality with other cultures or traditions as well, like the Islamic, Hindu, African, which might usher in further strength and future research opportunities, and in turn implies a new space for decolonization in higher education. Furthermore, the SDGs-driven global competence should help rectify or offset the current anti-globalization nationalism and populism. Hence, this study contributes to literature in term of filling out a practical-knowledge gap, that is, a gap between professional practices and research findings or whereby the latter fails to inform the former (Müller-Bloch & Kranz, 2014; Miles, 2017). Explicitly, there appear to be lacking research bridging theoretical aspects and practice of global competence education, while this is an important topic and absolutely worthy investigation in the context of shifting currents of globalization.