Online intercultural dialogue amongst student teachers from seven countries: a study of IPC global discussions

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Abstract

This article shares qualitative analysis of online discussion threads between student teachers in seven countries. The student teachers engaged together online to share intercultural perspectives and experiences on a range of topics of relevance to education systems, policy, teacher education, and childhood. In 2017, participating countries were: Australia, Bulgaria, Germany, Japan, Spain, Sweden, and the USA. Through the process of discussing and documenting diverse cultural and educational practices – for example the age children start school, the involvement of parents in education, uniforms, daily routines, inclusion, and technology – student teachers reflected on values, beliefs, traditions and aspirations. Findings relate to intercultural communication and intercultural praxis. Thematic analysis of 675 posts identified a range of open and closed discourses, and three intercultural positions. The conclusion of the study is that online engagement provides a sustainable and accessible strategy to enrich interculturality in teacher education.

Keywords: globalisation, internationalisation, intercultural dialogue, online engagement, teacher education

Internationalisation policy and rationale

Teachers are seen as one of the most influential groups in preparing children for the demands of a society undergoing ever-increasing glob-

alisation and a "growing sociocultural complexity" (Sieber & Mantel, 2012, p. 6). Insightful international perspectives are, thus, an important part of teacher training programmes, if teachers are to be able to "take a proactive role in promoting knowledge and actions which will be favourable towards greater intercultural understanding", as Dooly and Villanueva (2006, p. 225) put it. However, teacher education programmes are reported to be less internationalised than other higher education programmes in Sweden (SOU, 2018).

> Including the competences and abilities specific to intercultural education in the field of lifelong learning strategies for future teachers and the appropriate motivation of trainers in this direction is, in our opinion, one of the fundamental priorities of the reform of the teacher training system and a basic condition the functioning of diversity-based societies. (Stan & Manea, 2018, p. 296).

A large part of the literature on internationalisation of teacher training programmes focusses on the need to develop greater understanding of different cultures, as a means to handle the changing societal fabric and to enable future teachers to teach in culturally diverse classrooms. The Swedish early childhood curriculum mandates a response to cultural diversity as follows: "The preschool's task includes transferring and developing a cultural heritage – values, traditions and history, language and knowledge – from one generation to the next. The preschool should also make sure that different cultures are visible in education" (SNAE 2018, p. 9).

Increasing globalisation (cf. Larsen, 2016, for a discussion on relations between internationalisation and globalisation), and a situation where different cultures intermix in many schools, mean that future teachers need both intercultural theory and practice. Teacher training institutions need to help future teachers to develop intercultural awareness through practicing intercultural communication (Dooly, 2005; Dooly & Villanueva, 2006). However, intercultural awareness is a complex and dynamic activity, requiring critical teacher reflection (Benade, 2015).

International political organisations like the UNESCO (2013), the EU, ministries of education, teacher associations and universities worldwide consider internationalisation, globalisation and cross-cultural awareness as crucial elements of their policies and mission statements. "Global Competence" is considered as one of the major skills for the 21st century (OECD 2018). According to Sieber and Mantel (2012), the importance of "social cohesion and social justice" (p. 10) has come into greater focus among organisations such as the UNESCO and the

EU, as well as among researchers. UNESCO (2009) not only encourages recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity, but also strategies for intercultural dialogue. Connection between dialogue and difference is evident in Bennett's (1993) developmental model for intercultural sensitivity, in which response to difference has a hierarchy of six steps: denial, defence, minimisation, acceptance, adaptation and integration.

Internationalisation of teacher education is seen as a way to foster "interculturally competent students" also by Deardorff (2006, p. 241). This competence is also connected to foreign language proficiency, according to Quezada (2010) who discusses what it means "to be a competent twenty-first century global teacher" (p. 1) and how teacher training institutions can give future teachers that competence.

Regarding the policies and programs aiming to foster global competence in the educational context, there is an underlying assumption that intercultural experience, for example gained by study abroad, is by definition transformative and leads to intercultural competence (Beaven & Borghetti, 2015), including all the benefits mentioned above. However, studies on student mobility prove that simply staying in a foreign country is not a sufficient condition for the development of just intercultural awareness (Anquetil, 2006; Dervin 2008). Beaven and Borghetti (2015) emphasize that Higher Education institutions need to care for providing students "with opportunities for reflection and analysis, as well as with the concepts of identity, socialization and culture" (p. 2). There is almost no research about the outcome, methods and practices of such initiatives and concepts. Researching and analysing the process of intercultural learning in an international online learning environment, through this study, can contribute to the improvement of projects focusing on the internationalisation of teacher training.

Student mobility and study abroad are one way to enhance students' intercultural experience. But these must not be the only ways. Mahon (2010) argues that overseas experiences have become more feasible, but considering current global environmental concerns, we would argue that other options also need to be considered. Online interaction provides a sustainable method for internationalisation. The term "internationalisation@home" gains importance in this context (Schultheis & Hiebl, 2017). Using online platforms for international collaboration and projects in teacher training provides low cost opportunities and access for a larger number of students than studying abroad, and also enhances digital communication skills.

Dooly and Sadler (2013) report on a project where computer-mediated communication was used for collaboration between student teachers in Spain and the USA. Future language teachers worked and discussed together online, a project that helped the students improve not only their professional reflections, but also their collaborative skills. Other examples of online and distance projects of internationalisation in teacher education were conducted by Mellgren and Margrain (2015), who had students compare international examples of environmental text, and Gilmore, Margrain and Mellgren (2020), who engaged in international student moderation.

The IPC project and the global discussion

The *International Project (IPC)* (http://www.internationalproject-ipc.com/en/) supports internationalisation and international experience in teacher education by providing a forum for student teachers from differing countries to meet together online and discuss aspects of teaching and education systems (Ausband & Schultheis, 2010; Schultheis & Hiebl, 2017). The project website states:

> Globalization shrinks the world and brings a wider range of cultures into closer contact than ever before. Inevitably, economic, social and cultural boundaries are shifting. As a result, cultural diversity and intercultural contact have become facts of modern life … Teacher training needs to respond to the challenges of globalization and the development of cultural literacy and intercultural competence as an objective for education in general. Providing international experience in teacher training contributes to this objective and supports the teacher students to develop cultural awareness, teaching methods and skills to transfer and implement the global perspective in their future classrooms. (http://www.internationalproject-ipc.com/en/internationalization-of-teacher-training)

In 2017, five countries engaged in a 12-week online collaboration, with an additional two countries participating in a three-week intensive discussion termed the 'Global Discussion'. These seven countries were: Australia, Bulgaria, Germany, Japan, Spain, Sweden, and the USA. Countries variously engaged with IPC as either major or minor components of local course requirement, or as voluntary student participation. Assessment was managed at local country level.

The discussions were managed with 11 groups of student teachers, each with mixed-country membership. Student teachers engaged with one discussion topic but had access to read the discussions of all 11 if they wished to. Global discussion topics included:

• Preservice teacher education;
• School start age and transition to school;

- Involvement of parents in education;
- Inclusive/special education and connection to mainstream;
- Uniforms and gender issues;
- School/preschool lunch and snack routines;
- School/preschool start/finish and routine of the day;
- Information Communication Technology (ICT);
- National language learning.

These topics were discussed within the Global Discussion for three weeks. In the first week, student teachers shared their knowledge with one another. In the second week, they shared resources such as policy links and statistics. In the final week, comparisons were collated, and later these were compiled by students in some countries as posters, which were shared back with all the groups. The sharing of posters ensured that students had shared access to findings of all topics, regardless of the discussion group they were allocated. The project language was English, a second language for five of the seven participating countries.

Aim and research questions

The aim of the present study is to analyse and describe how teacher students from seven countries engaged in online intercultural discussion within the IPC Project's Global Discussion. The study reports the topics discussed and the extent of the discussion, after which analysis is guided by the following research questions:

- How was openness towards diverse perspectives demonstrated by student teachers in the international online discussions?
- What intercultural positions can be found in the student teachers' online comments?

Methodology

In this methodology section, the concept of reflexive learning is introduced as the theoretical basis and conceptual approach guiding this research, as well as the method of text analysis. Ethical considerations are also presented.

Theoretical perspective

The primary theoretical perspective informing this study is based on an understanding of learning, presuming that critical thinking and reflection can only develop through providing students with knowledge and new perspectives. The confrontation with conflicting and inconsistent experiences and perspectives is crucial to initiate reflection and critical thinking. According to Prange (2005), reflexive learning enables students to take, defend and reason a position, to finally reach the ca-

pability of critical judgement. Action follows the critical reflection, accompanied by a transformation of consciousness or a new or renewed understanding (Cunningham, 2001).

Text analysis as method

The material analysed in this study was a set of 675 student discussion posts between student teachers from seven countries. The method used to analyse this data was thematic text analysis (Clarke, Braun, Terry & Hayfield, 2019; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The six steps described by Clarke, et al. are: Step 1, Become familiar with the data; Step 2, Generate initial codes; Step 3, Search for themes; Step 4, Review themes; Step 5, Define themes; Step 6, Write-up. These steps supported a process in which the transcripts were then de-identified and analysed through multiple readings, searching for key themes, terms, discourses and beliefs. This approach to data analysis aimed to ensure "a careful, detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of a particular body of material in an effort to identify patterns, themes, biases and meanings" (Berg, 2007, pp. 303-304). However, Maguire and Delahunt (2017) note that steps may be more complex and less linear.

Analysis of the data suggested multiple narratives of interest that emerged from the findings. The first, reported in this article, focuses on critical analysis of the activity of *intercultural interaction and learning* between student teachers online. Aspects of this critical interculturality include analysis of how students identified cultural points of connection and contradiction, expressed cultural insights and reflection, and engaged in cultural knowledge-seeking and reflection. The second aspect of analysis, to be reported in a later publication, considers *communicative patterns* within the online interactions, including feedback, feedforward, feed-up, provocations, peer motivation, reinforcement and peer teaching.

Ethics

Ethical considerations were considered, to ensure that the project met both expectations of the Swedish Research Council (2017) and General Data Protection Guidelines (GDPR; 2018). In review with a university ethics advisor, it was determined that the discussion post entries did not contain sensitive personal data. As the data were discussion posts, there was no direct contact with students as research participants. Research analysis was conducted subsequent to the completion of coursework and assessment so as to have no influence on grading. Ethical principles include beneficence through sharing findings, the principle of doing no harm, respect for student perspectives, and confidentiality. All data examples reported in this article have been pseudonymised.

Findings

Findings here are reported in three parts. Firstly, a summary of the data is provided. Secondly, findings relating to open and closed discourses are shared. Thirdly, three intercultural positions were identified within student discussions.

Overview of the data

The original data set consisted of 777 online postings in the IPC Global Discussion (see Table 1) from November to December 2017. Participants from Australia, Bulgaria, Germany, Japan, Spain, Sweden, and the USA were randomly allocated to one of 11 mixed-group topics. 87% of all of the original 777 online posts were from students (n=675) and just 13% from lecturers (n=102), reinforcing that the IPC Global Discussion provided a forum in which students took the primary discussion role in sharing with one another. Lecturer posts tended to be administrative in nature, such as reminder of dates, introductions, acknowledgement of participation, reinforcement, and so forth. As it is the student posts that provided intercultural sharing, the lecturer posts were deleted from the analysis, leaving the data set of 675 student posts for thematic analysis.

Table 1. Discussion Posts by Number and Percentage of Group Topic Thread

Discussion Topic Thread	All Posts	% of all posts	Lecturer Posts (13%)	Student Posts (87%)	% from all student posts
National language learning	78	10	11	67	9.9
Lunchtime routines	94	12.1	11	83	12.4
School start age	74	9.5	8	66	9.8
Parent choice of school	86	11.1	14	72	10.8
Transition to school	76	9.8	8	68	10.1
Hours children attend	54	6.9	5	49	7.3
Teacher education	33	4.2	7	26	3.9
ICT resources in classrooms	100	12.9	12	88	13
Parent involvement	77	9.9	10	67	9.9
Clothes and gender	48	6.2	8	40	5.9
Special learning needs	57	7.3	8	49	7.3
TOTAL	777		102	675	

The quote below is an excerpt from a posting from a student who responded to an attachment shared earlier by a Swedish student. The example is not from Sweden, but one of the other six countries in the project. The full response included some common elements of online student conversation in this project: introduction and greeting; point

of view; new questions; sharing of new information from a student's own context; and cultural/contextual comparisons.

> We all talk about the duration of the preschool, some peculiarities about the education, the transition to school, but some children don't have the opportunity to go to preschool. According to the World Bank regional study on "Closing the Early Learning Gap", out-of-pocket expenses [are] an important barrier for many poor households in expanding access to preschool. I'm going to attach an image, showing the reasons for not sending the child to preschool in Bulgaria. I want you to tell me do you have situations like that in your counties and what are the reasons? (Transition to School Thread)

The discussions involved more than information-sharing. The example below reinforces that students discussed *with each other* interactively. The discussions were collegial rather than in response to a teacher requirement. In the example below, students Maria and Sara are pseudonyms. Sara had in an earlier post described that preschool children in her country were given a test before they began school. This sharing of a cultural phenomenon which was not common to all countries inspired discussion between the students, illustrating differing sociocultural points of view on childhood and education systems.

> Hi Maria! Wow, how do you feel about the test? I mean, it sounds a little rough to put so much pressure on such a little child. And how many times can the child do the test before it's too old for the preschool? Very interesting...

> Hi Sara. Thanks for asking and your interest. The oldest child in this kindergarten was 7 years old. I think they can do the test as often as they want. I think the children do not perceive this test as an examination, but as a playful task. The test is made to recognize weaknesses in the children. For example, if they hear poorly, they get a hearing aid. In my opinion the test is good because it can detect potential development problems before the children attend school. But it would be interesting, if there is a better alternative for this test. Greetings:) (Transition to School thread)

The final student teacher quote shared here illustrates that the discussions did not only look for differences, but also commonalities. The student teachers also brought positivity to the discussions.

> I think it is really interesting to see that the transition is very similar despite all the different countries. (Transition to School thread)

Open and closed discourses
The review of the teacher students' discussions highlighted dis-

courses that were variously open or closed towards diverse perspectives. At an early stage of analysis, these were loosely labelled positive and negative discourses, but further analysis led to our rejection of these labels of positive and negative as too simplistic. Table 2 illustrates the oppositional nature of the open and closed discourses. Of course, something that one student saw as interesting, another might see as a problem. Examples of student quotes for each of the identified discourses are presented in the subsections 5.2.1 to 5.2.6 of this publication.

Examples of discourses that we labelled "open", because they were open to change and were positive in nature, were: education is an investment; teaching is exciting; choices; collegiality and partnership; noting things that were differing, diverse and varied; and noting things that were interesting.

The discourses that we labelled "closed" reflected aspects that were challenging for students or which they had no control over, such as policy. Examples of closed discourses included: "teaching is tough"; being forced, obliged or having to do something; problems; an "of course" discourse which held a view that there is a "normal or usual" approach; and reference to educational costs and expenses.

Table 2. Open and Closed Discourses amongst Intercultural Student Teacher Online Discussions

Open Discourses	Closed Discourses
Education is an investment	Educational costs
Teaching is exciting	Teaching is tough
Choices	Being forced, obliged or having to …
Differing, diverse, varying	'Of course', 'normal' or 'usual'
Interesting	Problems
Collective	Individualistic

Investment vs Cost

The investment-versus-cost discourses reflected differing views on education costs, views that are common also in wider society. A predominantly positive focus on costs being inevitable and justified could be identified, as well as more deficit-focused views on absence of investments or on unjustified costs, as shown in the excerpts below.

I think students are typically more engaged when they have ICT in the classrooms. With tablets and iPads, schools have used effective apps that make learning versatile for the students. I think ICT is also a very good investment for all the schools. (ICT thread)

We really have problems with inclusion because the state doesn't invest

enough money in the process. Inclusion can be seen as a huge aim of our society but it will take much more time – and money! I got to know lots of teachers who are pretty frustrated because they don't know how to teach so many pupils with so many different needs with so less support. (Special Learning Needs Thread)

Exciting vs Tough teaching career

Students invested up to five years of academic study and significant costs in their commitment to become a teacher, so it is interesting that they held both positive and negative views on the career of teaching. The discourses of the profession of teaching being exciting and tough are both valid and simultaneous, and may help the students to become more aware of the complexity of the teacher profession.

> I was blessed in being able to engage in my practicum from my first year of my degree. This allowed me to have a sound understanding of teaching in a variety of contexts and equipped me for my now full time teaching position. (Teacher Education Thread)

> Yes, it does seem to be a global issue that the respect for teachers is not there … Coming from a family of teachers, I've seen that the teachers who have the problems with parents are also the teachers who have troubles with their students. (Parent Involvement Thread)

Choices vs Obligations

Discussions on freedom to choose included possibilities for pupils, with such topics as school uniforms. Other decision-making involved both pupils and parents, for example selection of school, or at time the absence of choice. Positions endorsing free choice were contrasted with other comments highlighting obligations or regulations which minimise choice.

> What regards the clothes children wear to school, that's most of the time the decision of the pupils themselves … there are some schools (usually religious schools) with certain provisions like "the trousers don't have to be above the knees", "belly tops aren't allowed" and "the shoulders have to be covered". I really like the idea of [no] school uniforms and I agree with the statement that it should be in humans' free will and in their free choice to express themselves. (School Clothes and Gender Thread)

> I found it really interesting to see how the different school uniforms [look]. But why is there only a school uniform in high school and not usually for primary school? In my opinion a school uniform [has] many advantages. For example there are no class differences, no conflicts because of brands and I think it's a financial discharge for the parents. On the other side it restricts the individuality and if it don't please you (like the short skirts of the girl uniforms) you can't do anything against it. (School Clothes and Gender Thread)

Diversity vs Normality

The discourses of diversity and normality were informed by differing education systems of the student teachers' home countries. In some of these countries, students with significant learning needs were required to enroll in separate education settings,while in other countries parents had the choice of integrated or segregated settings, and in yet others community inclusion was the most common outcome. Sharing these different experiences gave student teachers new insights and began to challenge their wider discourse, for example words like "normal" or "problem".

> It was a lot of fun to see how the "special" children and the pupils of the regular class worked together. They didn't [have] a problem with each other, they helped each other and had a lot of fun. (Special Learning Needs Thread)

> Many parents weren't happy when they knew their child needs to be in a "special school". They want their children give the chance to have a normal life. (Special Learning Needs Thread)

> It is so interesting to read about how other countries handle the problem of inclusion. [Student name], you said that pupils with special needs are in normal, regular schools. Even when they have heavy disabilities? Are there any teachers who are educated how to treat them? I would love to hear more about it! (Special Learning Needs Thread)

Interesting vs Problem-focused perspective

Some students gave feedback to each other describing their view that the new information learned through the IPC discussion was interesting and fascinating. Other students used the experience as a provocation to engage in further research of their own, whereas yet other students primarily had emotional responses or discussed systemic problems and limitations. Experiencing differing perspectives may help students, especially those with a more closed mind-set, to understand intercultural diversity better.

> I have read the attachment with huge interest. I find it fascinating that the children in preschool are encouraged to develop their mother tongue and also the Swedish language. (Language Learning Thread)

> Hey there! Thanks for the interesting question. I am from Bulgaria and to be honest I wasn't quite informed on this topic, but I [did some] research. (Language Learning Thread)

> I think that somehow they are under that risk because children of their class are ignoring or even bullying them, why not tackling the problem from the roots, showing children how to be more tolerant? … the reality

is that we have a lot of students that are willing to participate but they don't have the option. It is quite sad, I feel sometimes that children aren't not given the attention they need and afterwards we complain that they are developing certain behaviours … how could we show teachers the benefits of these kind of programs? (Language Learning Thread)

Partnership and Autonomy

Open and closed attitudes were presented with regard to teachers' autonomy, as opposed to collaboration with other teachers, assistants and specialists. Again, we would argue, encountering these differing perspectives may help students to reflect upon the structures they see in their own community and diverse responsibilities.

> From my personal experiences, I have seen parents and kindergarten teachers discuss each child in terms of his or her interests, learning and development. Sometimes the kindergarten teacher has the responsibility to suggest to the parents that the child is referred to a specialist if there is perhaps a developmental delay or learning difficulty and the child may not be ready for school the following year. (Transition to School Thread)

> A successful transition requires teamwork, all team members must give input from their area of expertise. In the end it all comes down to what the parents believe is the best placement for their child. (Transition to School Thread)

> Actually I can't imagine something similar … [happening] in [my country] because our teachers are not used to hav[ing] an assistant in their classroom (except assistance for children with special needs). I made the experience during an internship that lots of teachers are not open for this. (Parent involvement thread)

Intercultural positions: "Here", "There" and "Share"

Rather than the six intercultural positions in Bennett's (1993) study, we identified three intercultural positions amongst the discussions. The three positons which emerged from our data analysis we refer to as "here", "there" and "share". These positions and illustrative quotes are shown in Table 3 (see next page).

The first intercultural position was one where the individual student and his/her own context was strongest. In this example, the students primarily described or reported how things were in their own country. We describe this descriptive reporting as an intercultural position of "here". The main value of this discourse was one of information-sharing and learning, and it provided a basis for further basic sociocultural comparisons — for example, that some countries have religious schools whereas others do not.

Table 3. Three Intercultural Positions of Student Teachers in Online Discussion

Position	Examples	Activity	Quote
Here	In my country … let me tell you	Reporting	"There are no religious schools in [my country]." (Choice of School Thread)
There	What is it like in your country? I want to learn more	Investigating	"Hello S. That sounds interesting. Why do students have to eat in their classrooms? Is there no dining hall for you?" (Lunchtime Routines Thread).
Share	I wonder … What might my learning mean for classroom practice or my work with culturally diverse children and families?	Applying to professional practice	[reflection on trilingual learning] "We clearly have a very important role to play as teachers in preschool and there are no easy solutions but at the end we can get to see the development of the children we meet which I find amazing." (Language Learning Thread)

The second intercultural position we have described as "there". In this second position, the student teachers actively sought new information from each other by asking probe questions and giving each other feedback. These discussions stimulated some deeper discussions, identified points of comparison and contradiction, and indicated a desire amongst the students to learn more from the intercultural interactions. They realised, for example, that where school pupils eat lunch actually reflects bigger sociocultural routines such as whether the state provides free lunch for all pupils, or for only some pupils, and why this is important in some contexts.

The third intercultural position that we identified was one in which the student teachers made explicit connections to the teaching profession. The student teachers engaging in this intercultural position wanted to connect their learning about different cultural practices and viewpoints to their future classroom teaching and work with culturally diverse children and families. An example given was reflecting on the responsibility to support children who had multiple languages. The student teachers had been discussing children with three or more languages and how some countries do (or do not) support children's language development in mother tongue language where this differs from the national language.

Discussion and conclusion

The IPC project and findings shared in this article illustrate that international and intercultural learning indeed can occur online, without face-to-face or physical contact. While we do not deny that experiential learning is beneficial, it is not an option that is available to everyone: individuals have various family commitments and financial circumstances, for instance. Online interaction provides an opportunity for equitable access to intercultural learning experiences. In addition, we

have increasing awareness of the environmental impact of travel and the benefit of digital communication skills.

In this project, student teachers engaged in various open and closed discourses as they reflected on issues such as investment vs cost, diversity vs normality and partnership vs autonomy. To some extent, these discussions occurred without direct reference to intercultural difference or commonality. However, a sociocultural perspective argues that all dialogue is framed by culture, and all discussion is necessarily intercultural. The cultural contexts of student teachers necessarily influence their experience, perspective and assumptions. Through the online IPC discussions, the student teachers shared alternative realities and points of view with one another, and their discussions provided opportunity for critical intercultural interaction and learning. Encountering opposing views on the same topic, we argue, helps the students to widen their world views and to understand differences of opinions that they may meet also in their future classrooms as teachers.

Having recognised the differing student intercultural positions which we termed "here, there and share", it is evident that student teachers were individuals within the collective discussions. For some students, the project participation was focused on sharing their cultural reality or point of view, whereas for others there was a greater interest in learning about new cultural contexts and perspectives. Some students compared, some reflected and some indicated interest in accommodating new ideas. This outcome alone might valuably meet the objectives of an intercultural project. However, careful attention needs to be given to ensure that consideration of "there" does not default to overly generalised cultural assumptions and labelling, and thus to negative comparisons. "There" must be re-framed as opportunity to re-visit "here", and not as a view of "the other" or "otherness". The possibility must exist for student teachers to be able to connect to their professional identity and practice as future teachers. The discourse of "share" is most useful in supporting this objective. Further studies of teacher students engaging in intercultural online discussions may also reveal whether the positions of "here", "there", and "share" remain predominantly static, or if they tend to move from more closed perspectives to more open ones as the discussions evolve.

Higher education providers can utilise online intercultural learning experiences to address higher education goals of internationalisation. Interculturality is a fundamental and critical element of preservice teacher education and the students' future professional practice as teachers. In addition to ensuring that opportunities are provided, it is also critical to think about *how* students engage. Do the online experi-

ences include opportunities for new learning, student contribution, application to profession, and a critical component of course design? To what extent do we provide opportunity, and to what extent do we facilitate more critical engagement? Drawing students' attention to differing discourses and intercultural positions, such as those identified in this analysis, may help them to recognise and ponder diverse intercultural positions, and consider application of intercultural perspectives to their professional career with greater critical reflection.

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