

## A New Challenge for Digital Age Tourism: Across the Border Learning and Education (Project ABLE)

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### Abstract

The Across-the-border learning and education (ABLE) is a new concept to support diverse learners by describing and innovating a commonly accepted ideology of inclusive and equitable education. Unfortunately, emerging business education policies, failed school integration and a deficiency in attention to needs of diverse learners in schooling in society continues to leave more high potential learners on the outside rather than the inside of new global opportunities and online communities for learning in new learning environments in digital settings and traditional classrooms. Such a state or condition renders a new opportunity for educational tourism. Access to learning opportunities and content for the gifted, talented with special learning needs now command our attention in all disciplines. This need presents an urgent call for new ways to include all learners in new global educational systems who come from selected homes, schools, and communities worldwide and especially people who communicate in the least commonly taught languages (LCTL). In this editorial, I call attention to this problem and propose potential solutions to advance thinking and action for support to address this issue in. The call is to educational leaders, policy makers and world citizens to use global education, tourism and virtual learning as ways to create and innovate new solutions for including all people in the digital age of lifelong learning.

**Keywords:** LCTL; ABLE; WCCI

### Introduction

How do we advance learning and teaching in the digital age of global learning, which brings with it a new type of diversity? As a world professor and founder of Project ABLE, I enjoy connecting with world learners and faculty that comes with teaching online and in traditional settings. Even more challenging and exciting is finding new ways for teaching gifted diverse language learners. The question becomes, how do we create and innovate new means to promote greater equity and educational opportunity in schooling to help teachers and students overcome differences due to language and cultural barriers? Many developing collaborations in the international education world continue to disappoint when it comes to eliminating barriers to high-quality education in global learning environments for many talented learners who speak the uncommonly used world languages, many of whom are especially gifted/talented in their own languages, cultures and worlds. However, one United Nations NGO, the *World Council on Curriculum and Instruction (WCCI)* is making progress in changing global curriculum and instruction to support a culture of world peace [1-6].

### World Council for Curriculum & Instruction Technology (WCCI)

WCCI is a transnational educational organization committed to advancing the achievement of a just and peaceful world community. It is a non-governmental organization of the United Nations. It promotes person-to-person contacts and professional relationships. WCCI is an NGO of the United Nations in consultative status with UNESCO and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). WCCI has organized triennial world conferences since 1974. The first conference was in England, then Turkey, Philippines, Canada, Japan, Netherlands, Egypt, India, Thailand, and the latest one was in Spain in 2001.

WCCI:

- Encourages and facilitates collaboration in curriculum projects

- Engages dialogue in global educational and social issues
- Facilitates the exchange of ideas
- Identifies concerns and solutions to global problems
- Creates partnerships and collaborations to ensure learning from one another cross culturally and transnationally [7].

### Conditions that support gifted/talented learners in inclusive education

The conditions for learning in global schools interlock with issues surrounding teacher [1] training and development, limited access to education, and social class that slow down or in some cases, prohibit the advancement of learning disabled and gifted/talented students receiving potentially challenging educational experiences made possible through new educational technologies, research and educational tourism. Inadequate access to new digital tools, appropriate content and training challenges the global education promise of a free and appropriate education (FAPE) for all people [2]. Visit here to learn more about projects that aim to transform challenges into opportunities [8]

### Technology, instruction, and empowered learning environments to meet the 21st century learning outlook

Preparing future teachers to teach in global learning environments in this digital age will require [2]:

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- Inclusive and virtual learning communities for the gifted/talented.
- New instructional methodologies through reconstruction of teacher education programs and models.
- Teachers must develop new competencies that includes knowledge and understanding of least commonly taught world languages (LCTL)

Active social mediation of individual learning (e.g., tutorials or collaborative team learning) will require a social-economic entity to support community as a major component of learning systems (e.g. the learning of whole organizations) [8].

### Digital literacy as a technology

The center of effective across-the border learning and education (ABLE) in schools includes technical support, willing people, and appropriate preparation. In light of the distinction between the cognitive, acquisition-oriented or situated, participatory-oriented views of learning, to prepare teachers to orchestrate adequate education for all learners, teacher education must include educational and communication technologies. Individual and social learning relate to one another in online mediated environments because e-learning and computer assisted learning changes the dynamics of the learning and teaching process. Depending on how technologies are used in learning environments, such tools can create or limit social mediation between the teacher and the student [3].

Teachers and teacher educators must learn to prepare diverse language learning students in formal courses, but also include nontraditional ways, e.g. via telecommunications; they must also prepare gifted/talented students who speak different languages to become part of informal learning communities with other professionals who share their interests and concerns. Educational tourism can provide such opportunities for socialization of learning as a community rather than a place outside of the learning environment.

Expanding global learning concepts must encourage all students to be fearless in the use of technology, not afraid to take risks and become lifetime learners. Teachers must work with curriculum and instructional designers to learn more about Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Offering students with multiple ways to express and demonstrate what they have learned is key to closing the language and cultural gaps to grow and sustain global education and tourism. Providing multiple entry points to engage student interests and motivate learning is a way to achieve these goals by creating and innovating a *sense of community*.

### Living the information revolution

In conclusion, educators sometimes understand *across the-borders* learning and education as “communities of learning” or learning communities. The distinction in these ideas is bounded in the structure and nature of the learning environment. As a contributing author to the book, *Toward Digital Equity, the chapter, Building Inclusive Learning Communities* provides more understanding on this subject.

Twenty-three nationally known educators discuss educational technology and diversity, provide historical and philosophical insights into digital divide issues, and offer practical suggestions for teachers, administrators, and policy makers. This book is designed to help educators understand complex technology issues and to equip them to meet whatever challenges keep their students from having full access to a quality education through technology. It discusses how

schools acquire hardware, software, and connectivity, and why some schools experience such success in these endeavors and others are heartbreakingly behind. Perhaps most importantly, it examines the most current research in the effectiveness of technology and pedagogy in diverse settings to make suggestions on how teachers can create powerful learning environments for all students [1].

### Recommendations

Educators, policy makers and world citizens can use these strategies to create and innovate across-the-border learning environments.

1. Coordinated Studies Model (Team Teaching – language teacher partner with content teacher)
2. Developing appropriate curriculum for students who speak least commonly taught languages.
3. Create a comprehensive curriculum for high ability learners, beginning in grade Kindergarten through 8, in science, language arts, and social studies.
4. Develop a program for the gifted language learner in to support global learning ideas
5. Collaborate with schools in USA and other countries to developing program models for students and teachers who understand and communicate in least commonly taught languages

The field of gifted education has been, for many years, a laboratory for the development of creative educational enrichment activities – let’s work to expand this practice across borders. Support projects for critical thinking, problem finding, and problem solving to identify funding for more inclusive education or global education. The term “inclusion” may refer to schools, classrooms, or even curricula.

### Basic principles: restructuring teacher education for 21<sup>st</sup> century learning

All new teachers should experience innovative technology-supported learning environments and an introduction to world languages in their teacher education program. Teachers and faculty in universities and schools should include mentor teachers, faculty, language coaches and gifted/talented students working together on projects to discover the many uses of technology to enhance learning across borders and educational tourism to expand curriculum. Teacher education must adopt innovative faculty training and development programs that bridge the gaps between general and language education theory, practice, and content to extend rich field-based experiences in different cultures for all students.

### Conclusion

Standards for teachers are criteria for determining whether teachers have the capacity to assist their diverse language students in attaining high content and performance standards. Many diverse language-learning students are from families that have recently immigrated to the new countries and migrated into our learning environments. Social, cultural, and political issues can further complicate access to qualified teachers, appropriate content and support for digital learning in inclusive learning environments.

The definition of digital inclusion incorporates the relationships between education and communication technology, democratic education, and high quality teaching and learning. Technology,

instruction, and empowerment in English, science and mathematics curricula to prepare future teachers to teach gifted/talented students in a digital age, to provide “sound basic education” will require inclusive and virtual learning communities along with new instructional methodologies through reconstruction of teacher education programs and classroom models.

Educators sometimes call these “communities of learning” or learning communities. All students should experience innovative technology-supported learning environments in their teacher education program and should include mentor teachers, faculty, and gifted/talented students working together to discover the many uses of technology. You are encouraged to visit and study information on the Websites to learn more about how.

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