GLOBAL SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION:

DEVELOPING A VIRTUAL INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

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ABSTRACT

Given the current global social, political, and health climate, advocating for peace and prosperity through international, education-focused, collaborative partnerships is ever more important. The challenges presented by COVID-19 demand innovations by educational institutions to address the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; in particular, SDG 4 (*Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all*). In this chapter, we describe the development and implementation of *Global Social Justice in Education (GSJE)*, a virtual, international, collaborative course for education students from six countries (China, Kenya, Nepal, Tanzania, United States, Zambia) to explore global social justice issues. *GSJE* was designed to raise awareness of the complexities of local cultures, cultivate empathy for different lived experiences, and investigate multiple world views related to social justice issues in education. Participants engage in virtual meetings with synchronous activities including online discussions and intercultural collaborative work, as well as asynchronous experiences such as reflections and conducting country-specific inquiry. Other goals of *GSJE* include grappling with personal and professional positions, fostering intercultural relationships with educators in other countries, and recognizing inequities in education in both local and global contexts. *GSJE* is a cross-national curriculum initiative that provides opportunities to investigate how to effectively address global social justice issues. Participants complete a meta reflection to highlight their intercultural learning experiences, increased understandings of global social justice issues, and connections between local contexts and global realities. The overarching *GSJE* goal is to promote global solidarity by cultivating an international learning community of practice.

Keywords: community of practice, equitable education, intercultural competency, social justice, virtual learning

GLOBAL SOCIAL JUSTICE IN EDUCATION: DEVELOPING A VIRTUAL INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Current global and national crises facing the United States, including the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement, and international tensions, have challenged the health and economic systems as well as democracy and issues related to sustainable development. These crises unmask and exacerbate structural inequalities, amplify divisions in society, and threaten the tenets of democracy. Nevertheless, crises can also present opportunities to envision and cultivate an alternative and sustainable world and offer a collective glimpse of possible futures amid these challenges and uncertainties. Opportunities to engage in collective action have emerged for achieving local and global sustainable development. With the responsibility to transmit values and culture by nurturing the next generation, educational institutions assume essential roles during these crises to provide opportunities to collectively re-envision learning experiences that reduce inequalities and contribute to a sustainable and socially just world. One such responsibility is a response to current COVID-19 constraints on mobility that have impacted many opportunities to engage internationally.

One such response is Purdue University’s redirection of funding typically used to support study abroad efforts toward innovations in Virtual Experiential Intercultural Learning (VEIL) programs with international partners, including virtual courses with regularly scheduled interactive learning opportunities for Purdue students to engage with international students abroad. *Global Social Justice in Education* (*GSJE*) is a VEIL initiative to address the United Nations (UN) 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (hereafter UN-SDGs). In particular, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (hereafter SDG 4) promotes "inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UN, 2015; pp. 21-22).

GSJE was a collaborative effort led by two Purdue faculty (Authors 4 & 5) and three international graduate students (Authors 1, 2, & 3) who are interested in social justice. Author 1 is from China, Author 2 is from Nepal, and Author 3 is from Zambia. Author 4 and Author 5 have multiple international teaching experiences and have led study abroad programs in Tanzania and Honduras, respectively. These experiences have contributed to developing their global perspectives of social (in)justice in education. Authors 1, 2, and 3 have teaching experiences in their home countries and currently teach education courses at Purdue University. This team of authors collaborated to design and implement *GSJE*, using existing connections to invite seven international education scholars (hereafter "international leaders") to engage with us in this endeavor. These international leaders from five partner countries (China, Kenya, Nepal, Tanzania, and Zambia) engaged in planning and recruiting participants at their institutions. In Spring 2021, 88 international participants and 16 U.S. participants are engaged in *GSJE*; the majority of them are pre-service teachers (PSTs).

In this chapter, we report the development of *GSJE*. First, we address the theoretical perspectives that guided the course development followed by the course design process. Then, we describe the course organization and provide examples from the course curriculum. Finally, we share our reflections on developing and implementing the course and discuss future directions.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Drawing on theories of intercultural competency, social justice in education, and communities of practice, as well as the UN 2030 Agenda, *GSJE* aims to cultivate an international learning community wherein participants (i.e., Purdue students, international students, and leaders) confront the complexities of their own cultures, nurture empathy for different lived experiences, and investigate multiple world views related to educational social justice issues in local and global contexts. In *GSJE*, we value participants' personal and cultural experiences and foster intercultural relationships with educators and peers in other countries. In the following sections, we describe the three theoretical perspectives, intercultural competency, social justice in education, and community of practice, which informed the development process and content of *GSJE*. After describing each perspective, we elaborate on UN 2030 Agenda, which guided our course.

Intercultural Competency

Scholars have proposed several conceptualizations of intercultural competency (e.g., Deardorff, 2006; Schnabel et al., 2015). We first discuss those conceptualizations and then discuss the potential of virtual, international collaboration to develop participants' intercultural competencies.

Conceptualizing intercultural competencies.

Deardorff (2006) proposed that intercultural competencies include one's ability to grapple with their cultural values, empathize with people of different cultures and values, and establish relationships with people from different cultures through effective and appropriate communication. Further, intercultural competencies encompass specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to understand cultural contexts (e.g., Deardorff, 2006; 2011). According to Deardorff (2006), cultural knowledge refers to holistic understandings of historical, political, and social contexts associated with a particular culture. Intercultural skills consist of a person's ability to listen to, observe, analyze, and relate to others' cultures. Similarly, attitudes comprise valuing others' cultures, withholding judgments, and tolerating ambiguity, as well as one's ability to empathize with the values of other cultures (Gertsen, 1990).

Schnabel et al. (2015) proposed facets of cultural competency (see Table 1) to measure "six malleable abilities that support handling novel or difficult cross-cultural situations" (p. 137).

Insert Table 1 about facets of cultural competency here

Through these facets of intercultural competency, Schnabel et al. (2015) described intercultural competency as a construct that can be learned. Experiences and proficiency with these facets assist a person in handling challenging intercultural situations (Wolff & Borzikowsky, 2018). Intercultural competence also includes the willingness to respond effectively to others with different backgrounds, ways of thinking, communicating, and behaving when attempting to solve local and global problems, including social justice issues (Lash et al., 2020). Griffith et al. (2010) synthesized the literature and identified five models of intercultural competencies: compositional (i.e., knowledge, skills, and attitudes of intercultural competency), co-orientational (i.e., process of successful intercultural communication), developmental, adaptational (i.e., ways to adapt compositional and co-orientational models into foreign countries), and causal (i.e., integrating the characteristics of compositional models and situate them in an interaction in a way that variables influence each other in order to predict ICC). They argued that these models provide a comprehensive framework for intercultural competencies in the context of global leadership.

From the above conceptualizations and models of intercultural competencies, we propose that intercultural competencies addressed in *GSJE* include people's abilities and inclination to (a) recognize their own identities, (b) express empathy for others' lived experiences, and (c) demonstrate knowledge and skills to understand others' cultures and values. These descriptions suggest that the importance of intercultural education "is closely linked to visions of equity, ethnic/cultural identity, the multicultural society and to opinions on the role of the school in these" (Leeman & Ledoux, 2005, p. 574). Intercultural competencies are critical for educators as they need to work with culturally, socially, and ethnically diverse student populations. However, limited efforts have been made to provide learning opportunities related to dilemmas and tensions associated with equity, ethnic/cultural identity, and multicultural societies (Agostinetto & Bugno, 2020). Therefore, a need exists for curricular designs that include intercultural activities and collaboration. In the following section, we discuss instructional activities suggested in the literature that guided our activities to facilitate participants' development of intercultural competencies.

Developing participants' intercultural competencies through curricular activities.

Educational institutions have been internationalizing their curricular activities to foster students' global and intercultural competencies (Soria & Troisi, 2014), including intercultural engagement and study abroad programs. However, recently, educational institutions have faced challenges in managing their study abroad programs due to the unforeseen situation created by the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, many educational institutions in the United States have canceled their study abroad programs. Thus, creating opportunities for students to engage in intercultural interactions using virtual platforms has never been more critical. Studies have demonstrated that providing students with opportunities to interact with and develop relationships with international peers fosters their intercultural competencies (e.g., Dimitrov et al., 2014; Soria & Troisi, 2014).

Researchers have cautioned that developing intercultural competencies is not a linear process and requires a critical examination of several factors, including communicative competencies (Krajewski, 2011). The existing intercultural communication in educational institutions, including teacher education discourses, often lacks a focus on intercultural sensitivity and communication (see Thapa, 2020). Traditional curricular activities and experiences are often limited to developing students' knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to cultural responsiveness, criticality, global social justice issues, and empathy for diverse learners (e.g., López-Rocha, 2020). For example, educational institutions often focus on mobilizing students and internationalizing the curriculum, which are inadequate to develop intercultural competencies (Gregersen-Hermans, 2017). Students usually are able to understand different aspects of intercultural education, but they cannot develop intercultural sensitivity from such opportunities. López-Rocha (2020) suggested that it is critical to provide students opportunities to "develop skills, gain knowledge, enhance their understanding of behaviors and perspectives, and be engaged global learners in a meaningful and cohesive manner" (p. 3). Consequently, PSTs need opportunities for meaningful international, intercultural collaborations to facilitate global learning and attend to social justice in their future classrooms (Lash et al., 2020).

Social Justice in Education

Educational institutions are adding statements about addressing social justice issues in their programs (see Hytten & Bettez, 2011). The goal of social justice in education is to provide students with opportunities to understand the complexities of social inequalities and prepare them to challenge these inequalities (Gorski, 2008). Social justice has been conceptualized in educational research in multiple ways, depending on researchers' goals and perspectives (e.g., Gewirtz, 1998; Zeichner, 2011). Some teacher education programs, for instance, utilize the concept of social justice to highlight how education is related to diversity, access to learning opportunities, and the fair distribution of social and economic resources (Zeichner, 2011). In the following section, we discuss social justice in the context of education, including intercultural education.

Social justice framework.

Author 4, 5, and colleagues (2020) investigated how PSTs enrolled in a study abroad program conceptualized social justice and found that they focused primarily on the unequal distribution of resources, perceiving unequal distribution as both the result of social injustice and social injustice itself. The authors searched for ways to facilitate the development of broader conceptions of social justice and found that Fraser (2000, 2005) and Cazden's (2012) concepts and framework are useful for social justice research. Nancy Fraser, a political economist, described three dimensions of social justice: redistribution (the economic dimension), recognition (the cultural dimension), and representation (the political dimension). In 2012, Courtney Cazden, an educational anthropologist and applied linguist, adopted Fraser's social justice dimensions and adapted them for an educational context to study the issues related to educational equity for Indigenous students in Australia. Cazden (2012) stated that redistribution in education includes ensuring access to an "intellectually rich curriculum for all students" (p. 182). Recognition requires the valuing and teaching of all cultures, languages, and knowledges in schools, and representation is concerned with how decisions are made and who makes those decisions at different levels of schooling (Cazden, 2012). This framing of social justice, beyond the distribution of resources, is useful concerning educational goals (i.e., SDG 4), as is ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all and suggests that access to education is only one part of this mission; it is also essential to consider what is taught and valued and who is making those decisions.

Social justice in intercultural education.

Even though social justice and intercultural education are conceptually distinct, they share theoretical groundings (Cho, 2017). Sleeter (2015) proposed four dimensions of social justice teaching, which were to (a) situate families and communities within an analysis of structural inequalities, (b) develop relationships of reciprocity with students, families, and communities, (c) teach to high academic expectations by building upon students' cultures, languages, experiences, and identities, and (d) create and teach an inclusive curriculum that integrates marginalized perspectives and explicitly addresses issues of inequity and power. The four dimensions are compatible with the goals of intercultural competencies addressed in *GSJE* as described above.

Researchers (e.g., Barrett et al., 2013) have envisioned intercultural education as a means to solve contemporary social justice problems related to socioeconomic and political inequalities and misunderstandings in diverse cultural backgrounds. Gorski (2008) examined intercultural education through the lens of social justice and argued that cultural awareness is not enough without a commitment to social justice. If equity and social justice are not in place, Gorski (2008) stated, "peace and conflict resolution merely reify the existing social order…intercultural education to become yet another vehicle for the maintenance of order by resolving conflict, meanwhile leaving injustices unresolved" (p. 522). In educational institutions, intercultural education has moved beyond discussions of specific cultures and histories to the discussion of social justice issues, including analysis of power and critical pedagogy (Schoorman & Bogotch, 2010). As such, researchers have proposed to develop PSTs' awareness of social justice through intercultural practices, which include cultural understanding and intercultural relationships (e.g., Author 4 et al., 2020).

Though the fundamental goal of intercultural education is to establish equity and social justice in education contexts, good intentions might run the risk of exacerbating existing injustices. In particular, Gorski (2008) argued:

> any framework for intercultural education that does not have as its central and overriding premise a commitment to the establishment and maintenance of an equitable and just world can be seen as a tool, however well-intentioned, of an educational colonization in which inequity and injustice are reproduced under the guise of interculturalism. (p. 517)

To avoid this danger that exacerbates injustice, we utilized the communities of practice framework to create an authentic intercultural environment which acknowledges different socio-cultural contexts, addresses critical questions regarding power, and informs justice-orientated perspectives and practices.

Communities of Practice

Building on social learning theory, Lave and Wenger (1991) described a community of practice as “a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice” (p. 98). According to the communities of practice perspective, the focus is on the relationships between learning and social situations and concerns with developing an individual’s identity in learning processes. For individuals, learning is a process of engaging in and contributing to the practices of the community; for the community, learning is a process of refining practices and fostering new members (Wenger, 1998). In the following section, we describe the meaning of learning in a community of practice.

A dialogical learning framework is then presented that allows diverse participants to cross boundaries in a community of practice.

Learning in a community of practice.

The nature of the learning community has multiple levels of participation. Rather than discouraging peripheral participation and viewing students as passive learners standing on the sidelines, legitimate peripheral participation is an essential dimension of the learning community (Wenger et al., 2002). From a communities of practice perspective, we propose the following conceptualization of identity as described by Wenger (1998).

- Identity as *negotiated experience*. We define who we are by the ways we experience ourselves through participation and how we and others reify ourselves.
- Identity as *community membership*. We define who we are by the familiar and the unfamiliar.
- Identity as *learning trajectory*. We define who we are by where we have been and where we are going.
- Identity as *nexus of multi-membership*. We define who we are by the ways we reconcile our various forms of membership into one identity.
- Identity as *a relation between the local and the global*. We define who we are by negotiating local ways of belonging to broader constellations and of manifesting broader styles and discourses. (p. 149)

When a learner's interests are stirred, they transform from a peripheral participant into a practitioner, whose changing knowledge, skill, and discourse contribute to developing their identity as a member of the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In a learning community, along with changing participation, members experience identity transformation as well. Learning thus implies becoming a different person concerning the possibilities that the community of practice enables.

In particular, Wenger et al. (2002) proposed seven principles for cultivating a community of practice: (a) design for evolution, (b) open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives, (c) invite different levels of participation, (d) develop both public and private community spaces, (e) focus on value, (f) combine familiarity and excitement, and (g) create a rhythm for the community (p. 51). Wenger and colleagues explained that these principles are not recipes but embody an understanding of a community of practice and “reveal the thinking behind a design” (p. 51). In the Course Design section, we elaborate how we utilized these seven principles to develop the course activities.

Dialogical learning–crossing cultural boundaries.

Creating possibilities for participation and collaboration across a diversity of sites, both within and across institutions, is a great challenge (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Challenges are derived from boundaries, which are “socio-cultural difference[*s*], leading to discontinuity in action or interaction” (p. 133). We envisioned *GSJE* as an intercultural learning community that provides learning opportunities to promote participants’ empathy for other cultures and that facilitates an understanding of multiple world views related to social justice issues in education. This intention required the course design to cross boundaries and create “a sameness and continuity in the sense that within discontinuity two or more sites are relevant to one another in a particular way” (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011, p. 133).

Akkerman and Bakker (2011) proposed that dialogical learning takes place at boundaries in which discontinuities result from socio-cultural differences that can come to function as resources for the development of intersecting identities and practices. In particular, they claimed that dialogical learning at boundaries does not seek to dissolve the boundaries or move to homogeneity, but rather "as a process of establishing continuity in a situation of socio-cultural difference" (p. 152), articulating four dialogical learning mechanisms (i.e., identification, coordination, reflection, and transformation) and describing each mechanism's characteristics processes. For *GSJE*, we drew on some characteristics processes to inform our course design, which we describe below.

Identification consists of othering and legitimating coexistence of two characteristics. Participants are exposed to an intercultural environment that helps them recognize socio-cultural differences and become aware of legitimating the coexistence of multiple views. Specifically, common social justice issues in education are present across cultures, nations and different local contexts. Participants identify self and others through participation in practices. Building on the "othering process," participants embrace different views and develop a global perspective and reconstruct their viewpoints. Coordination requires a communicative connection between diverse practices or perspectives through effective means and procedures (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Through routinized group practices between diverse participants, coordination enhances boundary permeability. Over time, participants take actions without deliberately choosing a particular language or behavior. Akkerman and Bakker (2011) built on Boland and Tenkasi's (1995) concepts of perspective making and perspective taking to describe reflection. Perspective making means one's understanding and knowledge of a particular issue explicit. Perspective-taking means "taking of the other into account, in light of a reflexive knowledge of one's own perspective" (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995, p. 362).

Building on the former three processes, transformation leads to "profound changes in practices, potentially even the creation of a new, in-between practice, sometimes called a boundary practice" (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011, p. 146). Hybridization is the process through which "ingredients from different contexts are combined into something new and unfamiliar" (p. 148). Crystallization means projecting experiences into "thingness" (Wenger, 1998, p. 58).

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

GSJE was primarily guided by UN 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015), which shares groundings with the three theoretical perspectives described earlier. The UN 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015) urges addressing the needs of underrepresented groups, a necessary step to ensure social justice. More specifically, the Agenda "recognizes the need to build peaceful, just and inclusive societies that provide equal access to justice" (p. 13). This vision suggests emphasizing the dimensions of social justice (e.g., inclusive society and access to justice). In addition, the agenda has envisioned ensuring social and cultural diversities as a way to achieve sustainable development, suggesting that the agenda also includes the aspects of intercultural sensitivity (a critical aspect of intercultural competency). As such, it acknowledges "the natural and cultural diversity of the world and recognizes that all cultures and civilizations can contribute to, and are crucial enablers of, sustainable development" (p. 13). Further, the UN 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015) includes a call to "foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility" (p. 13). Intercultural competency includes empathy, mutual respect, and sensitivity; the UN 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015) also envisions fostering intercultural competency. Even though the agenda does not explicitly discuss the concept of communities of practice, we utilized the concept to establish the norms related to intercultural sensitivity in our community of practice. In addition, we ensured cultural and national diversity in the process of course design and course implementation. In *GSJE*, international participants, U.S. participants, and leaders aimed to form a community of practice wherein every member in the community learns about each other's cultures and empathizes with each other's values.

GSJE responded to the call from the UN 2030 agenda by providing intercultural learning opportunities for students in education fields from six countries to learn from each another about their cultures and social justice issues in education in local and global contexts. In particular, we emphasized SDG 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all), which focuses on education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles to "ensure all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development" (p. 21). The SDG 4 for equitable and inclusive education provides a fundamental framing for our social justice course that is designed for international education students. In alignment with SDG 4, *GSJE*, through building an intercultural learning community, aimed to promote "appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (p. 21). Further, focusing on the idea relating to being aware that social justice is an indispensable requirement for sustainable development, we aimed to raise participants' awareness of social justice issues in education, such as what is taught, who makes decisions of what is taught, and how it is taught in local and global contexts.

COURSE DESIGN

GSJE was designed to address the UN 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015), particularly SDG 4 that focuses on social justice in education. Because of the nature of the course, intercultural competencies and social justice were our primary theoretical frameworks. We also framed the course based on the concept of communities of practice, which aligned with the authors' social learning perspectives that emerged during the course design. A dialogical learning framework was used within these broader perspectives to guide the course design and implementation, including curriculum planning, activity organization, and reflections (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). In Figure 1, we present the overarching structure of the course design.

Insert Figure 1 about the concept map of course design here

The course concept map evolved during the design process. In the course development stage, we positioned ourselves as course developers; while in the course implementation stage, we viewed ourselves as both instructors who facilitate learning and as learners. In this section, we present the course's learning objectives, followed by a discussion of curriculum development and building an intercultural learning community. Finally, we discuss how course requirements and activities were different for U.S. and international participants and a rationale for such a difference.

GSJE Learning Objectives

Grounded in the theoretical frameworks previously discussed, we created the following course learning objectives; through these course experiences, we envisioned that participants will:

- Recognize and navigate personal and professional positions and perspectives
- Foster intercultural relationships with educators in other countries
    - Cultivate an intercultural professional learning community
    - Gain knowledge of cultures represented in the community
- Develop intercultural communication skills
    - Recognize cultural communication norms
- Identify global (non-U.S.) sources of knowledge
    - Value South to North knowledge flow

- Understand multiple world views related to social justice issues in education

We viewed *GSJE* as a learning community within which diverse cultures were highlighted. To promote intercultural communication, we established dialogical learning to encourage participants to cross boundaries and build relationships with peers from other cultures. Particularly, we adapted Akkerman and Bakker's (2011) identification, coordination, reflection, and transformation dialogical learning mechanisms and created the learning objectives aligned with these mechanisms (See Table 2).

Insert Table 2 about *GSJE learning objectives within dialogical learning mechanisms* here

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The dialogical learning mechanisms were not necessarily in sequence but form an iterative learning process. For identification learning mechanism, we expected participants to embrace different views on social justice issues in education and reconstruct their own viewpoints. For coordination learning mechanism, we created collaborative learning opportunities wherein participants experienced a diverse learning environment (e.g., diverse cultures, diverse language accent). For reflection learning mechanism, we encouraged participants to write individual reflections narrating their experiences of engaging in intercultural community as well as analyzing their learning from such experiences. For example, we encouraged participants to reflect on how their knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to intercultural competencies evolved as they engaged the community of practice. For transformation learning mechanism, *GSJE* is a space wherein new cultures emerged, and new concepts and tools evolved. In *GSJE*, we expected that participants' engagement and identity transformation spiral toward the learning objectives. After we developed the learning objectives of *GSJE,* we designed the course curriculum, organized course content and activities, and created assessments. Throughout the course design and implementation process, we continuously reflected on how the activities, discussion questions, and reflection prompts addressed the learning objectives.

Building the Intercultural Learning Community

The design of *GSJE* followed Wenger et al.'s (2002) seven principles for cultivating a community of practice, which we described in an earlier section, to (a) design for evolution, (b) open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives, (c) invite different levels of participation, (d) develop both public and private community spaces, (e) focus on value, (f) combine familiarity and excitement, and (g) create a rhythm for the community (p. 51). Aligned with the seven principles, *GSJE* was designed as an intercultural learning community. The dynamic nature of *GSJE* ensured its continuing evolution. We envisioned *GSJE* as an initial endeavor to provide virtual learning opportunities for diverse participants to develop intercultural competencies linked to developing a social justice mindset. We started with a simple structure and built other components connected to those primary ideas (See Figure 1); we then invited potential participants into the community. As the course progressed, we built relationships among the community and introduced the course topics and focus on social justice. Participation and collaboration in the learning community ensured the evolution of *GSJE* (Wenger et al., 2002).

GSJE provides a platform for participants to bring insider views of their own cultural and personal knowledge and outsider views of others to the community. The international learning community ensured opening a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives. The diverse cultural lenses enabled participants to develop an understanding of the complexity of elements essential to members of another culture concerning its history, values, politics, beliefs, and practices. The intercultural learning community also allowed multiple levels of participation. For example, some participants who were uncomfortable to fully participate at the inception of the course and were engaged in peripheral participation can transform to active participation as they gained more practice in the community (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Zoom meetings were designed to provide a formal curriculum and public spaces for all participants. In the public spaces, participants "can tangibly experience being part of the community and see who else participates" (Wenger et al., 2002, p. 58). Besides the public spaces, *GSJE* also engaged participants in multiple private spaces, such as meetings among authors (i.e., U.S. course leaders), meetings for authors and international leaders, and the communication between international leaders and their students. Some private spaces were formal, and others were informal, such as phone calls, e-mails, and text conversations. For instance, the international participants often interacted with their leaders informally to ask questions, communicate about assignments, discuss readings, and provide feedback. The one-on-one connections in private spaces ensured the efficacy of the intercultural community.

The core values of *GSJE* (as outlined in SDG 4) were inherent throughout the course activities. Participants' lived experiences with larger trends in social (in)justice around the globe are a valuable resource as they reflected on ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all as embedded in the context of the UN 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015). The course curriculum was intended to help participants identify their own and other participants' values over time. In addition, as they engaged with international partners in conversations related to social justice in education, they had opportunities to ask one another complex questions about their cultures and educational systems and suspended judgement while listening to and learning from their international peers. Ultimately, these intercultural interactions helped develop collegial relationships and enhance participants' perspectives about social (in)justice.

Drawing on intercultural theories, the course activities started with participants sharing their familiar lived experiences with one another, providing them with opportunities to develop curiosity and knowledge about each other's cultural values. Participants' interest and comfort level with each other evolved throughout the course. In addition, bi-weekly course meetings, readings before the meetings, and reflections after the meetings were designed to create a rhythm for the intercultural learning community.

Developing the Course Curriculum

After outlining our course objectives, we began to think about topics, tasks, and activities to address these objectives. We used activities based on our own learning and teaching experiences in intercultural environments. In addition, we searched Hubicl (2018), an intercultural resource library, for course activities that were aligned with the objectives; in some cases, we adapted them to better align with our objectives. We carefully sequenced the activities in order to enhance participants' learning opportunities, highlighting "inclusive and equitable quality education" (UN, 2015, p. 21). The authors had multiple meetings to discuss potential activities, how they connect with course objectives, and the sequencing for maximized learning potential.

In Activity 1, we asked participants to bring an artifact that represented aspects of their cultural backgrounds. This icebreaker activity provided an opportunity for participants to share cultural and personal stories. In doing so, participants had the potential to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes of self and others' cultural values. This activity aligned with the learning objectives related to gaining knowledge of cultures represented in the community and developing intercultural communication skills. In Activity 2, we continued to foster participants' intercultural communication skills, asking them to share a meme or cartoon representing their local contexts and to explain the meaning from their perspective. Through this activity, participants engaged with historical, political, and social contexts associated with different cultures. We aimed to contribute to developing participants' intercultural competencies, including their ability to listen to, observe, analyze, and relate with others' social and cultural contexts. Building on the first two activities, in Activity 3, participants shared their multiple identities (e.g., gender, religion) with one another, exploring how cultures influenced identity development.

Activity 4 continued identity exploration, beginning Covering, a reading from Teaching Tolerance (Fall, 2020) to show how one's identities shape their experiences. Engaging in this activity, participants were confronted with questions of justice and strategies for action; participants' perspectives on personal and collective identities were challenged as they considered a fair and equal society for all. Activity 5 focused on developing participants' understandings of multiple world views related to social justice issues in education with the introduction of Cazden's (2012) social justice framework. Participants first viewed a video presentation of Cazden's social justice framework, then they used their own educational experiences to interpret the three dimensions of the social justice framework in education. This activity provided an additional lens for participants to develop critical perspectives on social justice issues.

In Activity 6, we used the metaphor of *fencing in or out* to indicate inclusive or exclusive practices; participants reflected on the cultural influences that foster or hinder opportunities related to education (e.g., access to rigorous curricula and high-quality teachers). In addition to navigating social justice in local cultural contexts, we envisioned that participants would develop intercultural communication skills and recognize cultural communication norms. In Activity 7, the final activity, we focused on a crucial component of social justice – equity. By sharing personal education experiences, participants reflected on the educational systems in local contexts and discuss aspects associated with access to education in the global context. In this activity, we addressed the learning objective of understanding multiple world views related to social justice issues in education. Two samples of these activities are discussed in the Course Organization and Curriculum section.

After each activity, the participants reflected on intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes they learned from interacting with each other while engaging in these activities and their relationships to social justice. We refined the activities guided by the following two questions: (1) In what ways does the activity enhance students' understanding of social justice and cultivate intercultural competencies? (2) How does this activity provide opportunities for students to critically examine social justice issues in the context of their own experiences? Topics addressed in the activities ranged from generic to specific; discussions ranged from broad to deep; reflections ranged from personal, to analytic, to critical. During the development of the *GSJE* intercultural learning community, participants developed relationships with peers from different cultures through interacting with each other and the intercultural curriculum.

Differences Between GSJE for U.S. and International Participants

Even though the overarching goal of the course was to provide all participants with opportunities to engage with issues related to social justice through intercultural activities, the course requirements for the U.S. participants, who earned one credit from Purdue University, were different from their international counterparts receiving a participation certificate. For the

U.S. participants, reflections on course activities were their course assignments while those reflections were voluntary for the international participants (See syllabus in Appendix). English was the shared language in the international learning community; for many international participants, English was their second, third, or even fourth language. As Native English speakers, the U.S. participants provided language support for their peers from other countries and, therefore, led discussions. In addition, we maintained a reasonable pace of speaking and encouraged participants to seek clarification during meetings. As the community develops, the knowledge, skills, and experiences of all participants were used as resources to mediate cultural boundaries (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). Through this mediation, participants co-constructed knowledge and developed intercultural competencies together. We aimed to provide no-risk, "inclusive and effective learning environments for all" as promoted by the UN 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015, p. 21). In particular, we focused on UN-SDG 4.c, which describes the need to "substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States" (p. 22).

COURSE ORGANIZATION AND CURRICULUM

We implement this course throughout 2021 across three semesters. During the course, we collectively engaged with international participants in reflections on social justice issues in education in our intercultural learning community and on the opportunities and challenges to address social justice issues. In this section, we describe the course organization and provide two examples of the activities from the course curriculum.

Course Organization

To ensure intercultural perspectives throughout course design and implementation, we held virtual meetings with the international leaders in which we discussed equitable access for all participants by encouraging leaders to share their ideas and concerns regarding the course organization. We invited the leaders to reflect on their own educational experiences related to social justice. In addition, we collected leaders' written feedback to improve the course design. All course recordings and documents (e.g., meeting notes, reflections, readings, syllabus) were shared with all participants via e-mail and online storage platforms (i.e., Baidu, Google).

Participants engaged in one-hour Zoom meetings twice each month, alternating between whole group and small group meetings. One instructor facilitated and used the breakout room feature to organize group work and discussions in these meetings. Other instructors and participants led and documented discussions in the breakout rooms. The small groups were heterogeneous based on their home countries and gender, including participants from six different countries so that they could develop intercultural communication skills and relationships with peers from different countries. For each small group, all the instructors facilitated the same activities. Participants worked collaboratively (e.g., partners, small groups, whole class) to engage in both synchronous activities (e.g., online discussions of shared readings, context-specific teacher education issues) and asynchronous activities (e.g., written reflections, country-specific research). At the end of each semester, participants individually submitted a summative reflection on their learning with attention to the following: (a) recognition of their own identities and cultures, (b) understanding of others' identities and cultures, and (c) conceptualization of issues related to social justice (e.g., inequality) to highlight their intercultural learning experiences.

Samples of Course Curriculum

The course curriculum includes the following key topics*:* understanding concepts of intercultural competencies, examining personal identities, introducing social justice, developing awareness of cultural implications in education, and discussing equity in education. As outlined in previous sections, we created a set of activities and selected readings to support participants' learning in these areas. The following section provides detailed descriptions of two sample activities, *Sharing school pictures: Access to further education* and *Covering: A case of unfavored identities* to illustrate the course curriculum.

Sharing school pictures: Access to further education.

Overview.

Author 1, who experienced "culture shock" when sharing her school picture with a colleague from another country, developed this activity. We asked participants to share a school picture that represented their own education system. Based on participants' personal education experiences, the topic of equity in education was introduced. The follow-up discussion focused on equity in education. In particular, we conducted in-depth discussions on one dimension of equity – access. The instructors facilitated discussions around the topic by highlighting different perspectives and identifying common (in)equity issues across the different education systems. Reflections allowed participants to contemplate others' ideas and generate their own perspectives.

Reading.

To introduce the topic, we selected Gutierrez's (2009) article, which discusses four dimensions of equity in education: access, achievement, identity, and power. Access and achievement formed a dominant axis for equity. They reflect the status quo in society, which influences students' learning opportunities and their learning outcomes. Identity and power comprised a critical axis to ensure that students recognize issues of power and domination and analyze the world critically. The article was from a practitioner journal, and the language was accessible to international participants for whom English was not their first language. The article used the metaphor of *playing the game and changing the game* to refer to learning mathematics and changing the system. In her later work, Gutierrez (2012) emphasized, “it is not enough to learn how to play the game [*mathematics*]; students must also be able to change it. But changing the game requires being able to play it well enough to be taken seriously” (p. 21). Among the four dimensions, access is more visible than identity and power and more critical than achievement; it reflects past injustices which affect students’ learning opportunity (Gutierrez, 2009).

Activity and Discussion.

In the *sharing school pictures* activity, the participants worked in small groups (three to five participants in each group) and shared a school/class photo that represents their education. They were encouraged to use storytelling to describe the school, the teachers, students, and access to higher education. The instructor asked questions to prompt storytelling, such as how would you describe the school and students in the photo? How did you see yourself at that time? How many of your peers went to college (post-secondary education)? Storytelling allowed participants to develop an understanding of other people’s experiences in a profound and meaningful way. The activity foregrounded access in education and has the potential to provoke in-depth discussions. Influenced by Gutierrez’s equity framework, the activity aimed to arouse participants’ awareness of equity issues in education in their local contexts. Building on participants’ experiences, we hoped to inspire critical perspectives around access, equity, and social justice issues.

After the *sharing school pictures* activity, participants shared their thoughts on what they had noticed from the group activity in the entire class. The questions below were provided to help participants format their thoughts.

- What do you notice from other people sharing?
- What factors contribute to a student's access to further education?
- How does access play a role in equity?
- How do you define equity in education?

Through facilitating discussion, the instructor ensured that access and equity were highlighted. Focusing on the specific issues provided an opportunity for participants to think deeper and consider the perspectives of their peers. Building on discussion and reading, participants were invited to articulate their insights on the relationships among access to education, socio-economic background, and academic achievement. That allowed participants to view equity more broadly, not just in education but in society.

At the end of the class, the instructor invited participants to revisit the school pictures they shared at the beginning of the class by responding to the question: Imagine you were a teacher/principal/policy maker in your school (district), what strategies/policies would you develop to promote equity in education? The question elicited participants' viewpoints on equity and social justice issues in their local contexts.

Connections with the frameworks.

The topic of access and equity emphasized the UN 2030 Agenda by foregrounding equitable education and "equal access to all levels of education" (UN, 2015, p. 21). Using intercultural and social justice lenses, participants were encouraged to identify global sources of knowledge, and promote critical analysis of access in education, and begin to develop an identity in social justice.

The *sharing school pictures* activity tended to create a situated learning environment where all participants could share their own experiences and could respond to others' experiences (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This activity allowed participants to develop intercultural competencies by experiencing different educational experiences from other cultures and even in the same culture (Deardorff, 2006). Thus, the personal and culturally relevant activities promoted participants' willingness to respond to others from different backgrounds and enhance empathy with others (Lash et al., 2020). In the discussions, participants were exposed to multiple views, which allowed them to be aware of legitimating coexistence of different perspectives (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). They consciously reflected on their own experiences in the local contexts and then constructed their own perspectives (Boland & Tenkasi, 1995). Building connections between participants' thoughts and research strengthens, participants' perspective taking prompted further discussion (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011). At the end of class, participants were invited to situate their learning in local education contexts and integrate new concepts and new tools to describe practices (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

Reflection.

The reflection assignment allowed students to integrate their practices and experiences in the class. The prompts and questions below were guided by the dialogical learning framework (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011).

- How did your understanding of intercultural education evolve as you progressed through the activities?
- What did you learn about yourself and others from this activity?

- How do you see yourself using what you learned in the future?

The reflection allowed participants to rethink and reconstruct knowledge on local contexts and provided a space for participants to cross cultural boundaries to reflect on global social justice issues in education. In addition, writing reflections was a way of transferring experiences into a more developed form (Akkerman & Bakker, 2011; Wenger, 1998).

Covering: A case of unfavored identities.

Overview.

The goal of this activity was to engage participants in the concept of tolerance. Encouraging tolerance is a way of supporting social justice and challenging bias. Engaging participants in discussions about diversity supported the recognition of the importance of tolerance in diverse societies. In this activity, participants were assigned to individually read Yoshino's (2006) article on *covering*. Yoshino (2006) defined *covering* as downplaying aspects of our identity that differentiate us from mainstream society. Participants answered the discussion questions based on the article. This activity focused on social identities that highlight the influences of interactions between self and others. Those social identities could include race, gender, age, religion, and other characteristics. The activity aimed to call for tolerance for and empathy with other people's identities.

Reading.

Participants first read Yoshino's (2006) article from *Teaching Tolerance* (Fall,2020). This article was selected due to its accessibility for non-native speakers of English and the exploration of connections between identities and diversity. The reading challenged participants to accept individual differences instead of conforming to avoid bullying or being singled out for their identity. Participants who have experienced and seen injustice were often likely to talk about injustice and try to do something when the opportunity presents itself. The reading promoted empathy and perspective-taking and helps participants think about individual and collective action to create equity for all by challenging prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination based on identities.

Activity and discussion.

At the beginning, participants were assigned to small groups to share their initial thoughts on *covering* in relation to the assigned article. The following prompts guided the discussion:

- How does Kenji Yoshino define *covering*?
- What are two examples of the demands of *covering* given in the text that are not protected by civil rights laws?
- Yoshino claims, "everyone covers." What does he mention about possible reasons for *covering*? Share an example of how the demands of *covering* affects you.

After the small group discussion, participants returned to the entire class discussion. One participant from each small group summarized what they discussed in their small groups. Building on the discussion, instructors encouraged the participants to reflect on their individual identities. Participants were also encouraged to share some identities that they are less comfortable with and discuss why those identities are disfavored. These discussions helped participants to investigate the concept of *covering,* ultimately enabling them to acknowledge why certain groups cover some of their identities. Indeed, these conversations led participation in an exploration of the following definition of *covering:* The act of hiding these disfavored identities for whatever reasons is called *covering*. Participants potentially identified that *covering* is only done to disfavored identities and that the disfavored identities were less likely to be made known to others for various reasons. The following questions guided the discussion:

- What are some of the reasons for c*overing*?
- How is *covering* a social justice issue?
- How does *covering* affect people's lives?

Moreover, the discussion assisted the participants to develop an understanding that *covering* is a hidden issue which many people have to live with every day and that it offers an opportunity for activism. At the end of the activity, we hoped that participants began to develop appreciation of diversity of cultures and empathize with others.

Connections with the frameworks.

Aligning with the UN-SDG 4, "ensure all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development" (p. 21), participants appreciated how *covering* is a social injustice because it hindered the universal call to action to end poverty and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity by leveling the ground for all regardless of their identities in order to achieve sustainable development. We identified this activity as a critical activity for our course because all human beings are victims of *covering.* As such, we all found ourselves outside the mainstream society in one or the other way; therefore, people should not be forced to cover their identities for them to access certain services or to fit in society.

This activity provided opportunities for participants to elaborate on Cazden's (2012) recognition and representation dimensions of social justice by identifying identities in diverse cultures and histories that mainstream society does not favor. When participants were encouraged to think and share about their own identities through a social justice lens, they may identify areas of need that they had not before considered, for instance, stereotyping, prejudice, or even discrimination. The *covering* activity provided participants with opportunities to examine their own and others' identities and reflect on how different life would have been if they lived in other parts of the globe bearing these same identities. As they engaged in planning for activism against stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination, each small group investigated the type and causes of *covering* prevalent in their community and how they intend to solve the problem. This activity promoted collaboration among students as they contribute their thoughts on the problem under discussion and together acquire intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006) as they work towards producing an action plan.

As the participants chose what problem they want to investigate, they reflected on why that problem is particularly important and what could be the possible cause of the problem, which leads to investigating how to promote equity at national and international levels and accepting that all individuals have some identities they would not want others to know and that they do not have to change to fit in the mainstream society. Instructors facilitated the discussion to help participants develop a workable plan of action to address areas of need.

In the whole class, participants shared their takeaway from their small group discussions on *covering* that increased participants' awareness of the group, community, and personal identity (Lave & Wenger, 1991). The participants also learned that sharing identities openly can diminish stereotypes and prejudice about people in their communities. Participants were encouraged to act and work together towards creating a more just world, thereby collaborating on fulfilling aspects of the UN 2030 Agenda (UN, 2015). Building on the discussion, leaders guided participants to consider the diversity of identities and challenge them to think critically. In the process, participants appreciated diversity and justice in different contexts and learned to tolerate and appreciate other peoples' identities.

Reflection.

In their individual reflection on what they had learned from the activity, participants wrote a 300-word reflection based on:

- What is your personal experience with *covering*?
- What type of *covering* exists in your educational institutions?
- What did you learn about yourself and others from this activity?
- How did your understanding of intercultural education evolve as you progressed through the activities?
- How do you see yourselves using what you learned in the future?

In this section, we described the overall course design and structure, including two sample activities in which we detail the curricular selection, associated readings, reflection questions, and connections to course frameworks and goals. Now, we turn to a discussion of the design and implementation experiences from the leaders' perspectives.

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

In this discussion, we describe our learning from the process of designing and implementing *GSJE*. More specifically, we discuss the following questions: (a) What knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to global social justice did we develop by engaging in this intercultural learning community? (b) How did we negotiate our identities in this international learning community? (c) What opportunities and challenges did we identify throughout the design and facilitation of the virtual learning community? These questions are reflective of the kinds of questions we asked our course participants to address. To discuss these questions, we use excerpts from our individual meeting reflections.

What Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Related to Global Social Justice did we Develop by Engaging in this Intercultural Learning Community?

As discussed earlier, *GSJE* is an attempt to address challenges presented by global crises, including COVID-19. We created a virtual space for an intercultural, international collaboration among education scholars from six countries. In the initial phase of course implementation, we developed knowledge, skills, and attitudes related to intercultural competency and social justice. We have begun to develop understandings of our colleagues' cultural values and concerns about social justice in their individual contexts. In addition, we are enhancing necessary communication skills to build rapport with a group of multilingual participants. Furthermore, we are developing empathy toward different cultural norms and values. For example, during one planning meeting, one of the leaders proposed an activity wherein each participant had to share a photo representing a memory from their school lives. The leader shared a photo that showed her elementary school, her friends from elementary school, and her teachers. She mentioned that she considered herself an "underprivileged" child with limited access to resources. In the same meeting, she mentioned that her colleague who attended an American elementary school 20 years earlier had a more sophisticated photo than her. Thus, she assumed that every participant in the meeting would have a photo from their school days. But another leader mentioned that she did not have a photo from her school days because they did not have access to a camera. From this conversation, we had an opportunity to learn about each other's socio-economic status (i.e., knowledge) and understand more about the society that we grew up in (i.e., attitudes).

Similarly, from our community meetings, we are developing knowledge about each other's cultural and social structures/norms. For example, after our conversation related to creating a common space to share our reflections and materials, one leader shared the following reflection:

> I am learning some “fencing in” and “fencing out” cultures. For example, we have to create different platforms to share material with our participants from different countries because some countries have access to some virtual platforms while others do not. I am curious about what our leaders think about having no access to popular virtual platforms. Would they feel isolated? Or would they feel proud because they have their own original platforms? Sometimes, I feel having a platform created in my own country would be really nice but again if it’s not accessible to other people it hinders international collaborations. In addition, I wonder about the strategies to establish the smooth way to communicate with the folks who do not have access to some virtual platforms.

Here, the leader mentioned that she learned that some countries do not allow commonly used virtual spaces in their countries. In her reflection, the leader also wondered how her colleague from that country would feel when they are not allowed to utilize those shared spaces. In addition, she tried to relate the situation to her own context from several aspects: privilege of utilizing a resource that is originally created in her own country and limitations of those resources to develop global collaborations. Since a person’s ability to relate with others’ social and political contexts is a part of intercultural skills, this indicates that in our community of practice, we are developing knowledge related to others’ cultures, skills to understand different cultures, and ability to empathize with one another (i.e., attitudes).

Similarly, another leader reflected:

> I moved around the breakout groups. I noted one particular “artifact presentation” that seemed like a great exemplar of the activity. A young participant from a South Asian country showed us a white jade bracelet she was wearing. She discussed how wearing it for 3 plus years would bring her health and a good life. She mentioned the beauty of the

> jade “being white like the skin of an Empress.” I was reminded of how “white” skin seems to be valued in South East Asia and how whitening creams are multi billion dollars cosmetic sales items. So, it was a kind of double learning: about the participant’s personal values, and also a statement of an Asian countries' culture.

In this reflection, the leader explained what she learned from an activity; she mentioned that during the activity, she had an opportunity to learn about a participant’s beliefs and her country's culture, suggesting that we are developing knowledge about each other’s cultures from these activities. For example, she learned a white bracelet is believed to bring joy and good health in a particular culture. In addition, the leader also reflected on the issue of race from that activity; she mentioned that the ways in which South East Asian countries value white skin is representative of racial inequity. This reflection indicated the leader not only gained knowledge about other cultures at a local level but also connected with a global social issue and her past experiences.

How did we Negotiate our Identities in this International Learning Community?

We have begun exploring our identities and our colleagues’ identities in these collaborative experiences. Our international, intercultural community of practice is also characterized by our multiple identities as we legitimatize our co-existence. For example, one leader mentioned that she resonated with the identities of her colleagues whose first language is not English; hearing different accents during intercultural communication gave her a sense of belongingness in the community. Before this intercultural collaboration, she always felt she was an “outsider” even though she had already spent four years in the United States. Another leader mentioned that she began empathizing with the challenges associated with social justice after joining this community. These reflections suggest that these collaborative experiences have the potential to identify and reveal aspects of multiple identities in our community of practice.

We acknowledge each other's identities through our intercultural activities as well. All five authors developed intercultural activities that represent their cultural values and norms. Additionally, we presented several issues associated with social justice through these activities. When we developed and discussed these activities, we had an opportunity to understand social justice issues in several local contexts. For example, after a meeting, one leader mentioned:

> After I engaged in these conversations related to social justice, I began to envision more of those issues in my country. Before these conversations, I had not given much thought on why there were less girls in Mathematics and Physics classes. I had never thought of why only a small portion of certain caste were in Engineering classes. I just thought "oh there are not many girls in these subjects because they do not like Math or Physics, or people of certain caste do not perform well in those subjects." But I never thought of why girls do not like math or do not perform well. Now, I have begun thinking about those issues, including gender and caste system in my country.

This excerpt indicates that our community of practice has provided opportunities to explore social justice in both local and global contexts. The leader mentioned two issues related to social justice: gender and the caste system. All leaders acknowledged that issues related to gender exist in their societies, indicating that gender inequality exists in Asian, American, and African countries. However, the issues related to the caste system exists predominantly in South Asian countries. Since our identities are associated with social norms or social stratification and those norms and stratification represent some form of social injustice, our community has provided us an opportunity to conceptualize how and why we want to cover some of our identities. For example, race is a part of American or African leaders' identities and caste is a part of our South Asian leaders' identities. As both race and caste have contributed to create inequalities, people often do not want to present caste or race as part of their identities. Themes related to social stratification, class, race and gender have become part of our overall conversation with contextual examples.

We are empathic to each other's cultures and identities. After our first two meetings, one leader mentioned the following in her reflection:

> I'm nervous about the potential cultural misunderstandings that could occur as we talk about potentially sensitive issues and will depend on our leaders to monitor these interactions. I'm optimistic and hopeful for this risky endeavor together – for all of us to step outside of our comfort zones, listen to and learn from one another, and think hard about the issues of social justice in education in each of our national and local contexts.

In this excerpt, the leader mentioned that she is sensitive to others' cultures and wants to ensure that she is not misinterpreting identities of people from different cultures. Meanwhile, she was hopeful about creating a safe community wherein each member would be respectful of each other and reflect on social justice issues not only at the local level but also at the global level. Similarly, another leader mentioned:

> I do not feel comfortable sharing my individual reflections with everyone because I am conscious of others' feelings and cultural values. Even though I do not intentionally mention others' cultures, I am mindful that my reflections might sound judgmental to the participants of other cultures. For example, some folks are not comfortable talking about political issues, but my reflections often include those issues and I feel my reflections include my country's political aspects in relation with other countries, which might hurt them.

In this reflection, the leader demonstrated that she respects her colleagues' personal and cultural identities. As such some leaders do not want to discuss political issues and she does not want to be judgmental about those issues.

What Opportunities and Challenges did we Identify Throughout the Design and Facilitation of the Virtual Learning Community?

In previous sections, we have outlined a range of opportunities inherent in the *GSJE* international collaborative learning community, including fostering intercultural competencies and communication skills, developing empathy and understandings of social justice from a global perspective, and creating relationships across boundaries, cultures, and languages. Here, we discuss challenges encountered during course design and implementation. Key challenges were associated with available time and resources as well as inclusion in terms of providing all participants with equal opportunities to take leadership in the activities. Since our participants live in different parts of the world (hence different time zones), we had challenges finding an appropriate time for our meetings and accommodating cultural celebrations. We have to be mindful of holidays in different countries, which is challenging in terms of adjusting our calendar.

Next, all participants do not have access to the same technological resources. For example, some of our international leaders and participants do not have access to Google. Therefore, we faced the challenge of finding a common virtual space to share our resources (e.g., readings, reflections). Besides time and resources, we have also faced challenges associated with language. English is the shared language for the community; all participants have to communicate in English. However, for many international participants, English is their second, third, or even fourth language; they have to adapt to the learning practice and cross language boundaries. While we have tried to address this issue by adjusting the pace and by providing all participants with recordings of meeting sessions, our international leaders have mentioned that their students are sometimes hesitant to engage in the conversations. For example, one leader wrote:

> In my group, some students were hesitant to talk. They mentioned that they were hesitant to talk because they do not speak English. I hope it will get better with time, but I observed some moments when the participants did not seem to understand what other person was saying. Particularly, in my group, a participant from an African country mentioned something and only half participants in the group laughed and the other half seemed to have wondered whether they should laugh or not. Some smiled a little bit after while just not to be rude, I think.

Similarly, another leader stated the following:

> The other participants seemed timid so they could not come forth to share their artifacts. I attributed that to being the first time of participating and looking forward to them being fully engaged the next time. One participant said that it was her first time to talk to "foreigners" which I thought she meant strangers.

In these excerpts, the leaders discussed some of the challenges associated with language. Even though it is a complex issue, we are trying to create safe and inclusive environments by respectfully inviting the participants to engage in the conversation and encouraging them to talk. In addition, to address this challenge, we have formed small groups by including students from six countries so that our students whose first language is not English do not feel they are underrepresented or from minority groups.

Since we are at the beginning phase of our course implementation, we anticipate more practical challenges will arise as we engage in this intercultural collaborative endeavor. However, there is no reward without risk – the opportunities presented by engaging with educators from around the world far outweigh any challenges and complexities that present themselves along the way. We have developed *GSJE* as a safe community to learn from challenges and collectively confront those challenges. In our upcoming research, we will report further on what we learn from these opportunities and challenges, how we address the challenges, and how our international, intercultural collaboration was fostered and nurtured throughout the process. *GSJE* is a concrete, albeit humble, instantiation of the goals of the UN 2030 Agenda to “foster intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and an ethic of global citizenship and shared responsibility” (p. 13). The *GSJE* community of educators from six countries is committed to enhancing their understandings of social justice issues in education locally and globally with the goal of action toward a more peaceful, just, and inclusive world.

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Appendix

EDCI 49000-59000

Global Social Justice in Education – One Credit

Wednesdays, 8-9 AM (EST) - Zoom

Spring 2021

Welcome

欢迎你们 (Mandarin, China)

Karibu Sana (Swahili, Kenya & Tanzania)

स्वागतम् (Nepali)

Mwaiseni (Bemba Language, Zambia)

Lead Instructors: Instructor 1 (USA)

Instructor 2 (Canada)

Teaching Assistants: Teaching Assistant 1(Zambia/US)

Teaching Assistant 2 (Nepal/US)

Teaching Assistant 3(China/US)

Leadership Team:

International Leader 1 (Tanzania)

International Leader 2 (Kenya)

International Leader 3 (Nepal)

International Leader 4 (Zambia)

International Leader 5 (Kenya)

International Leader 6 (China)

International Leader 7 (China)

Google Folder (please create a folder in the "Participants" folder to store your documents)

Baidu Folder

Course Meetings

- US Contingent Meeting – 1/20
- Whole Group Meetings – 1/27, 2/24, 3/24, 4/21
- Small Group Meetings – 2/10, 3/10, 4/7 (different Zoom rooms to be announced)

Individual meetings by appointment.

All assignments will be submitted on Brightspace.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The overarching course goal of *Global Social Justice in Education* is to facilitate participants' development of synergistic understandings between intercultural competencies (knowledge, skills, and attitudes) and social justice. Participants will develop new perspectives about their own cultural beliefs and values (i.e., cultural self-awareness) by considering social justice issues with their international peers. The diverse cultural lenses of the participants will enable the development of an understanding of the complexity of elements important to members of another culture in relation to its history, values, politics, beliefs, and practices (i.e., cultural worldview frameworks). In addition, as participants engage with international partners in conversations related to social justice, they will have opportunities to ask one another complex questions about their cultures and educational systems (i.e., develop curiosity) and suspend judgement while listening to and learning from their international peers (i.e., practice openness).

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Recognize and navigate personal and professional positions and perspectives
- Foster intercultural relationships with educators in other countries

  - Cultivate intercultural professional learning community
  - Gain knowledge of cultures represented in the community
- Develop intercultural communication skills
  - Recognize cultural communication norms
- Identify global (non-U.S.) sources of knowledge
  - Value South to North knowledge flow
- Understand multiple world views related to social justice issues in education

COURSE FRAMEWORK (all references/readings are in the Google Drive)

United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations, 2015)

The UN 2030 Agenda aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. It is inspired by a humanistic vision of education and development based on human rights and dignity; social justice; inclusion; protection; cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity; and shared responsibility and accountability. The agenda reaffirms that education is a public good, a fundamental human right and a basis for guaranteeing the realization of other rights. Education is essential for peace, tolerance, human fulfilment and sustainable development, as well as key to achieving full employment and poverty eradication.

Community of Practice (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1991)

Building on situated learning theory, a community of practice perspective views learning as participating in practices, emphasizing the relationship between learning and the social situations in which it occurs, and the development of an individual’s identity during learning processes. For participants, learning is a process of engaging in and contributing to the practices of the community. In a community of practice, a learner transforms from a peripheral participant into a practitioner, whose changing knowledge, skills, and discourse contribute to developing their identity as a member of the community. Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by the community of practice.

Intercultural Competencies (e.g., Deardorff, 2006; 2011; Lash et al., 2020)

Intercultural competencies include specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to understand cultural contexts. Cultural knowledge includes holistic understandings of historical, political, and social contexts associated with a particular culture. Intercultural skills consist of a person’s ability to listen to, observe, analyze, and relate with others’ cultures. Similarly, attitudes comprise valuing others’ cultures, withholding judgment, and tolerating ambiguity. Intercultural competence also includes the willingness to respond effectively to others having different backgrounds, ways of thinking, communicating, and behaving when attempting to solve local and global problems, including issues of social justice.

Social Justice (e.g., Cazden, 2012; Fraser, 2000; 2005)

Fraser described three dimensions of social justice: redistribution (the economic dimension), recognition (the cultural dimension), and representation (the political dimension). Cazden adopted Fraser’s social justice dimensions and adapted them for an educational context. According to Cazden redistribution in education includes ensuring access to an “intellectually rich curriculum for all students” (p. 182); recognition requires the valuing and teaching of all cultures, languages, and knowledges in schools; and representation is concerned with, at levels of schooling, how decisions are made and who participates in making them. This framing of social justice beyond the distribution of resources is useful in relation to the educational goal (i.e., Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Participation

In a course of this nature, full participation is essential as we will develop an international, intercultural community of practice in which we all learn from one another. Each perspective will be unique and contribute to an overall understanding of educational issues of social justice around the world. Full participation includes completion of activities and readings to enable thoughtful contributions to discussions.

Individual and Collective Meta-Reflections

Each course participant will write a 300-word reflection following each course meeting addressing given prompts. For the final 500-word "collective meta-reflection," each participant will review their own set of reflections and write a 300-word meta-reflection that takes into consideration the compilation of all previous reflections. Then, each participant will read two other meta-reflections and write an additional 200 words drawing connections among the three meta-reflections. All assignments are due by Tuesday at midnight; participants should contact instructors if an extension for an assignment is needed.

Grading Criteria

If a participant completes all course assignments according to the requirements (i.e., thoughtful, meets word counts, demonstrates knowledge of the readings, collaborates as expected), they will earn an "A" – if any assignment does not meet the expected standard, the participant will have an opportunity to revise and resubmit within one week.

Point Distribution

Assignment	**Points**
Participation	10
Reflections (7@10 points)	70
Collective Meta-Reflection	20
TOTAL	100

Tentative Timeline

Week	**Date**	**Topic**	**What's Due?**
1	Jan 20	Course Introduction (US only)	-----
2	Jan 27	Course Introduction (Whole Group)	UN 2030 Agenda (Pages 1-15 and Goal 4)
3	Feb 3	No Class Meeting	Reflection 1
4	Feb 10	*Understanding Multiple Cultures Through Memes* (Small Group)	Activity & Reading 2 (Deardorff, 2006, pp. 253-261)
5	Feb 17	No Class Meeting	Reflection 2
6	Feb 24	*Who Am I?* (Whole Group)	Activity & Reading 3 (Tatum, 2000)
7	Mar 3	No Class Meeting	Reflection 3
8	Mar 10	*Cultural Diversity & Me* (Small Group)	Activity & Reading 4 (Yoshino, 2006)
9	Mar 17	No Class Meeting	Reflection 4
10	March 24	*Dimensions of Social Justice* (Whole Group)	Activity & Reading 5 (Keddie, 2012)
11	March 31	No Class Meeting	Reflection 5
12	April 7	*Fencing In/Out* (Small Group)	Activity & Reading 6 (Billikopf, 2009)
13	April 14	No Class Meeting	Reflection 6
14	April 21	*Equity in Education* (Whole Group)	Activity & Reading 7 (Gutierrez, 2009)
15	April 28	No Class Meeting	Reflection 7
16	May	No Class Meeting	Collective Meta-Reflection

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DISCUSSION AND FUTURE DIRECTION

What Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes Related to Global Social Justice did we Develop by Engaging in this Intercultural Learning Community?

How did we Negotiate our Identities in this International Learning Community?

What Opportunities and Challenges did we Identify Throughout the Design and Facilitation of the Virtual Learning Community?

REFERENCES

APPENDIX

TABLES

Table 1

Facets of Cultural Competency

Facets	Descriptions
Sensitivity in communication	Putting oneself in another’s place and intently listening to verbal and non-verbal communication of others.
Information seeking	Pursuing knowledge about other countries and cultures.
Socializing	Establish a relationship with people of other cultures.
Goal setting	Establishing clear goals and implementing them consistently.
Mediation of interests	Mediating between parties to achieve the greatest benefit from different approaches.
Cultural identity reflection	Intensively and constantly reflecting upon one’s own cultural character.

Note. This table presents six facets of intercultural competency described by Schnabel et al. (2015)

Table 2

GSJE Learning Objectives within Dialogical Learning Mechanisms

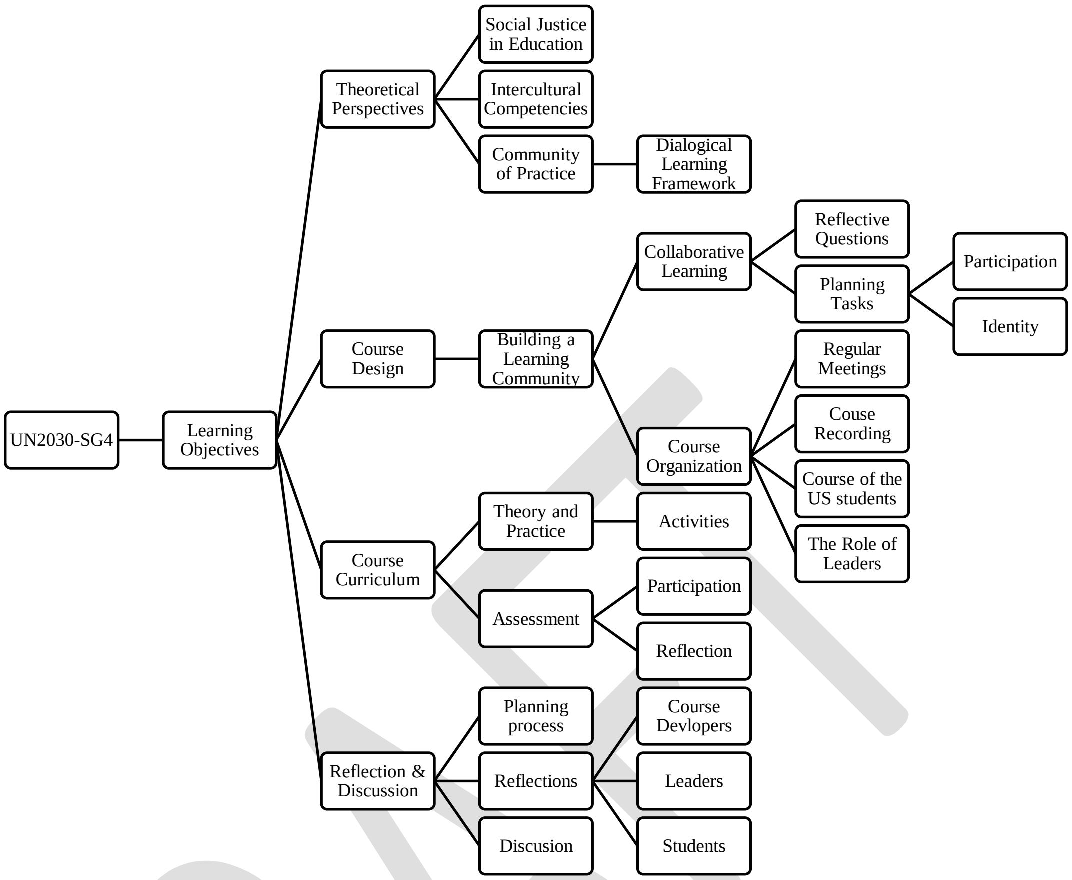
Dialogical learning mechanisms	Learning objectives of *GSJE*
Identification • Othering • Legitimating coexistence	• Identify global (non-U.S.) sources of knowledge o Value South to North knowledge flow • Understand multiple world views related to social justice issues in education
Coordination • Communicative connection • Increasing boundary permeability • Routinization	• Foster intercultural relationships with educators in other countries o Cultivate intercultural professional learning community o Gain knowledge of cultures represented in the community
Reflection • Perspective making • Perspective taking	• Recognize and navigate personal and professional positions and perspectives
Transformation • Hybridization • Crystallization	• Develop intercultural communication skills • Recognize cultural communication norms

Note. The first column of the table was adapted from Akkerman and Baker (2011)

FIGURE

Figure 1

Concept Map of GSJE Course Design


Social Justice in Education
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Collaborative Learning
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Course Devlopers
Reflection & Discussion
Reflections
Leaders
Discusion
Students