

ANNA SLATINSKÁ<sup>1</sup>

**NEW APPROACHES TO DEVELOPING  
THE GLOBAL SKILLS AND INTERCULTURAL  
COMPETENCE OF FUTURE TEACHERS  
(VIRTUAL EXCHANGE AND BLENDED INTENSIVE PROGRAMS  
AS POSSIBILITIES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH  
AND HIGHER-EDUCATION INTERNATIONALIZATION)<sup>2</sup>**

Abstract

In a dynamic world, pedagogically oriented universities which are educating future teachers for different types of schools (elementary, middle, high schools) must also adapt and be flexible to the fast-changing environment: cultural, social, religious, political, economic, etc. A new scientific discussion is therefore needed in order to reevaluate the methodologies and ways of collecting data in tertiary education in line with the internationalization of teacher training university education. In the current context of global unrest and uncertainty, it seems inevitable to leverage the potential of current generation of young people – the future teachers in our case and prepare experiential opportunities for them in order to support their global skills (critical thinking, creativity, communication and collaboration, self-regulation and wellbeing, digital literacies, etc.) and intercultural awareness together with soft skills. The aim of the contribution is to reflect on two virtual exchange programs (VEPs) and one blended intensive program (BIP) which were released at Matej Bel University and subsequent methodology that academics in charge used in order to collect and evaluate data from their projects. Multidisciplinary research is a challenging

---

<sup>1</sup> PhD; Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, Slovakia; ORCID: 0000-0003-0084-6906; [anna.slatinska@umb.sk](mailto:anna.slatinska@umb.sk).

<sup>2</sup> This article is part of Anna Slatinská's KEGA Project no. 016UMB-4/202: Global Skills Implementation in Foreign Language Teaching at Secondary Schools as a Precondition to Pupils' Key Competencies' Development and Professional Identity Enhancement of Future Teachers in the 21st Century. The project was approved in 2021 by the Cultural and Educational Grant Agency of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic.

endeavor in pedagogically oriented disciplines, however, it can bring sustainability to initial teacher training. Virtual exchange programs (VEPs) require the teacher/researcher to apply new or modified approaches and gain knowledge which spans multiple research areas.

Keywords: globalization, intercultural skills, teaching

## INTRODUCTION

Globalization has brought various benefits to education in terms of exchanging ideas, people, and resources on local, regional, national, international, and global levels. The Faculty of Arts at Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica, has undergone a process of internationalization involving the integration of international, intercultural, and global dimensions into curricula and research methodologies.

Global changes require a response from higher education institutions regarding the training of professionals, specifically, future teachers. This article reviews projects organized by Department of English and American Studies, which studied the integration of active methodologies and effective strategies which foster students' global skills. These projects included virtual exchange and blended intensive programs (VEPs and BIPs).

In this study, we aim to prove that, through internationalization, the academic quality of our institution is improved, and that students are given more opportunities to collaborate with students from abroad, participate in research activities, and that curriculum-design and instruction are enhanced. Through internationalization, universities are given a chance to work on international projects and refine their research methodologies in cooperation with international partners and through international engagement (Olipas et al. 2022).

Data collection methodologies in educational sciences have changed significantly since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. This has been aided by new web applications and expanded virtual education and research opportunities, to which we have had to adapt. Contemporary educators and researchers are also able to use online space and virtual projects for data collection. Various new options are available for collecting data for research in an efficient manner.

Internationalization also offers space for fostering the global skills and intercultural competence of future teachers. Global skills can be clustered into:

- Communication and Collaboration
- Creativity and Critical Thinking
- Intercultural Competence and Citizenship
- Emotional Self-regulation and Wellbeing
- Digital Literacies (Mercer 2023, OUP).

As it is evident, intercultural competence as the ability to effectively communicate with people from diverse cultural backgrounds, has an important role beyond the educational context. In this article, we focus on two virtual exchange programs (VEPs) and one blended intensive program (BIP), which, we suggest, can foster global skills and intercultural competence of future teachers and also provide a space for data collection.

While exploring new ways of collecting data at selected faculties (The Faculty of Arts and The Faculty of Natural Sciences) at Matej Bel University (MBU) in Banská Bystrica, we were specifically interested in whether the two selected VEPs and one BIP led to fostering the global skills and intercultural competence of future teachers.

At Matej Bel University, in the academic year 2022/2023, both the VEP program as well as the BIP were implemented. The former (VEPs) titled *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Books for (Newcomer) English Learners in the U.S. and Slovak Contexts (winter term 2022/2023)* and *Developing Communicative Competence and Speaking Skills of Slovak Students in the Context of Different Types of Wellbeing Support (summer term 2022/2023)*, were released in collaboration with Eastern Michigan University. Both focused on developing future teachers' pedagogical skills as well as their global skills. They were aimed at developing the communicative competence of middle school and high school learners. The BIP program was released by the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Palacký University in Olomouc (Czech Republic) and University of Rzesow (Poland) in the same academic year (2022/2023). The program was titled *Joint Improvement of Teaching and Learning in Technical and Science Education: The Exchange of Educational Experience among Teachers and Students*. This program also aimed to develop the global skills of both teachers and students.

## IMPORTANCE OF ACTIVE METHODOLOGIES IN TEACHER TRAINING

Higher education should reflect and demonstrate awareness in its social mission. It should also demonstrate its pedagogical effectiveness in

transforming education towards active methodologies and in using effective strategies to foster sustainable teaching programs. It should help developing responsible global citizens of this world who think beyond local (Martínez Valdivia et al. 2023).

This is in line with Matej Bel University's (MBU) Long-term PLAN (2021–2026) which determines that MBU itself should be committed to responding to new challenges and current social needs. This corresponds with the third mission of Matej Bel University which is integrated in the MBU's long-term vision (Dlhodobý zámer UMB 2021–2026). The third mission is carried out mostly by the Faculty of Pedagogy and their service learning projects. Their initiatives have inspired the author of this article to take part in more third mission-oriented Service-Learning projects with other foreign higher education institutions (HEIs) such as Eastern Michigan University in Michigan and Boise State University in Idaho, USA. The main aim of MBU within Long-term PLAN 2021–2026 is to become an open, inclusive and sustainable institution, committed to transparency and the education of socially responsible individuals.

This article demonstrates the usefulness of virtual exchange (long-term) and blended intensive (short-term) programs in the training and professional development of future teachers.

Our main objective was that, via VEPs organized by EMICH and MBU within selected teaching program at the Faculty of Arts (MBU) in Banská Bystrica, students would acquire the skills necessary for their future profession at middle and high schools. That was also the aim of our two VEPs – to foster the global skills of future teachers and to educate them towards becoming socially responsible global citizens. The programs aimed to support a critical spirit among future teacher graduates (Martínez Valdivia et al. 2023).

The following text considers the achievement of sustainability criteria and asserts that these criteria can be achieved through active methodologies and projects (such as VEPs or BIPs). We believe that teaching programs can be made more sustainable and socially responsible when active methodologies and effective strategies are integrated in teacher training programs.

We consider the idea that VEP has the potential to improve professional competences and skills of future teachers. Our second VEP was aimed at developing communicative competence of middle school and high school learners via engaging them in selected wellbeing topics.

Furthermore, universities should be committed to introducing active teaching methodologies and programs such as VEPs and BIPs. These programs can be defined under a competency-based approach, placing the student at the centre of the teaching model, allowing for the creation of collaborative environments. This provides students with the skills to solve real-life problems.

The specific interest of this paper is to analyse VEPs and partially also BIP in the context of the initial teacher-training process. The teacher-training process can contribute significantly to developing future teachers' global skills.

It is also important to examine innovative teaching-learning experiences based on the use of active methodologies, two VEPs and one BIP, in the training of future teachers.

The key objectives of this study are:

- To examine the potential of VEPs and BIPs (active methodologies) as collaborative and active learning tools in the initial teacher training process to enhance their global competences.
- Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of VEPs and BIPs in the academic year 2022/2023.
- Study the contribution of VEPs and BIPs in the initial teacher training education process, to the development of professional and personal identity of candidate teachers.

As methodological strategies we have identified the following ones used during our two VEPs and partially also during BIP:

- Project-based learning
- E-learning
- Interdisciplinary projects
- Service-learning
- Readings, discussion forums
- Cooperative learning
- Gamification

We believe that active methodologies have potential to transform student behaviour and equip students with transversal skills invaluable in their professional and personal life. They enable students to become active agents of change and social transformation through their own individual and professional development which require not only hard skills but also soft ones.

Active methodologies have the potential to:

- Train responsible and supportive citizens.
- Support social participation in the promotion of development via e.g. producing culturally responsive teaching materials as was the case of our first VEP organized in winter term 2022/2023.
- Foster global skills of students such as critical thinking, intercultural communication, creativity, soft skills, digital skills, etc.

## TEACHER TRAINING AT FACULTY OF ARTS, MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY

Teaching and learning practices in higher education and ELT Methodology at Department of English and American Studies, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica have undergone a number of changes in recent years, with implications for the nature of students' learning and their developing critical thinking skills. Consequently, candidate teachers are better equipped with transversal competences (soft skills, ethical and social competences, global skills, etc.).

We opine that teacher training processes at MBU could implement more socially active methodologies which would be a springboard for sustainable curriculum. This implementation should include, according to Biasutti (2015), content and methodologies devised from "cooperative learning" and professional development perspectives. VEP is part of cooperative learning.

Through integration of socially active methodologies, HEIs also reflect challenges in the 21st century. Contemporary teacher education should, therefore, integrate as many active learning experiences as possible. In our VEPs, the students were active participants, at the centre of the process rather than being passive subjects within education (Zamora-Polo & Sánchez-Martín 2019). VEP integrated active methodological strategies which are also participatory and had social impact. VEP was a challenge for both groups of students on both sides (postgraduates: 2nd year and 1st year MA students), fostering their critical, social, personal and professional development.

## SPECIFICS OF VIRTUAL EXCHANGE PROGRAMS. COOPERATION BETWEEN MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY (MBU) AND EASTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY (EMICH)

*Virtual exchange is a well-known pedagogical approach in foreign-language (FL) education. It involves engaging classes in online intercultural collaboration projects with international partners as an integrated part of their educational programs (O'Dowd 2020, 477).* Our project involved prospective teachers of the English language and literature, as well as other subjects, and prospective teachers in the TESOL (Teaching English to Students of Other Languages) course established in the USA. The students' task in the first semester was to participate in the creation of culturally responsive books for English Learners in the U.S. and for English Learners in Slovakia. These materials were used during their teaching practice, not only by them, but also by in-service teachers. The books were created in response to candidate and in-service teachers' demand for textbooks that would reflect the micro-culture of the contemporary classroom, and that would help develop learner's whole personality and strengthen them in values such as respect and tolerance while learning English.

The second VEP which was carried out in summer term 2022/2023 was focused on the development of middle or high school pupils' communicative competence, engaging them in the topic of wellbeing (emotional, physical, social, occupational, intellectual, etc.). The candidate teachers from both countries (Slovakia and Michigan, USA) had regular classes with Slovak middle school and high school pupils for the period of approx. 7 weeks.

The aims of the VEP were:

- Support internationalization at Matej Bel University and Eastern Michigan University in the context of curriculum, research methodologies, and teaching design.
- Foster international cooperation in terms of research methodology among two institutions.
- Identify strengths, weaknesses and challenges in terms of the VEP cooperation.
- Improve existing practices in terms of pedagogical methodology and share best practices from both countries.
- Support candidate teachers, in-service teachers and university teachers in creating a linguistically and culturally conducive environment for teaching and learning.

- Strengthen the global skills of future teachers.
- Increase their active participation in service learning projects.
- Elevate their social responsibility and critical spirit.
- Reflect microculture of the classroom.
- Inform university policy makers about the benefits of VEPs and BIPs for the whole university.

At the end of the VEP, we can conclude that all objectives were met. Students had the opportunity to improve their pedagogical and global competences, and pupils had the opportunity to improve their communication skills. The project was also successful for the programme instructors who also improved their global competences.

Moreover, the abovementioned VEP was also part of a service-learning initiative of both institutions (MBU and EMICH), which opened new ways of collecting data within service-learning methodology.

### BLENDING INTENSIVE PROGRAM. MATEJ BEL UNIVERSITY, (SLOVAKIA), PALACKÝ UNIVERSITY IN OLOMOUC (CZECH REPUBLIC), UNIVERSITY OF RZESZOW (POLAND)

So far, no BIP programmes have been implemented at UMB, with the exception of programmes at the Department of Engineering and Technology and the Department of Social Studies and Ethnology at the Faculty of Arts. We believe that, in the context of educational sciences, more similar programmes could be implemented in pedagogical sciences at MBU, as they have the potential to bring new knowledge and data to the researcher. The aforementioned programme was a combination of face-to-face and virtual meetings of the project members. Research data was obtained throughout the duration of the programme, as well as in the pre- and final stages, and, indeed, during workshops organized by project members.

The aims of the BIP were:

- To trigger a discussion about improvement of teaching and learning in technical and science education.
- To exchange experience with new opportunities to collect data in technical and science education.
- To give voice to a cohort of academics (university teachers/researchers) and students (candidate teachers).



- To support internationalization of the universities in Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland.
- To inform participants about education and future research: Robotics and 3D printing.
- To foster global skills of students and teachers.
- To support more cooperative learning at MBU.

As was in the previous case, the aims of BIP were also met in due time and the participants expressed their overall satisfaction with the BIP, which was supported by Erasmus+.

## METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION BASED DURING VEP AND BIP

In order to collect data for the research, based on our virtual exchange program, we used several methods for data collection. These included a questionnaire, online self-reflection, essays, and online focus-groups discussion on the selected topic. The data was collected using a variety of methods in order to obtain the most relevant findings and to draw conclusions or recommendations for practice. Lesson plans which students prepared during the summer term, in the context of the SINC framework, were an invaluable part of the research. The SINC framework accentuates four dimensions which should be used when teaching, namely, *Scaffolding*, *Interacting*, *Noticing (language)* and *Connecting* (Tomaš et al. 2021).

Students from both universities collaborated on lesson plans in groups of 4. For each lesson plan, students received feedback from the course instructors in advance so that they could incorporate the comments and required changes prior to teaching. Both VEP programs organized by EMICH and MBU were aimed at creating linguistically and culturally sensitive teaching and a conducive learning environment.

## METHODOLOGY

In order to obtain data about the VEP and BIP we conducted both interviews with teachers who undertook VEP and BIP as well as focus-group discussions with candidate teachers who participated actively in the mentioned programs.

We asked selected teachers who conducted the VEP and BIP about how they perceived VEP in terms of benefits and limitations. Their answers were predominantly positive. They stated that VEP and BIP provided them with considerable data for the research, but that the negative side was the lack of time and the difficulties in organizing virtual meetings of students from two countries (Slovakia and the USA), especially in terms of time lag and scheduling conflicts on both sides. Second challenge was connected with recruiting a sufficient number of students for BIP, which was managed well but required a more advanced recruiting process.

The students who participated in the VEP (33) and BIP (15) appreciated innovative approaches, engaging and stimulating activities and experiential learning. During discussions and in their post-reflections they expressed their interest in joining similar programs in the next academic year 2023/2024.

## INVENTORY OF TEACHER COMPETENCES FOR CULTURALLY RELEVANT RESEARCH IN TEACHER TRAINING STUDY PROGRAMS

Undoubtedly, one of the prerequisites for a successful researcher in the 21st century is intercultural communicative competence and intercultural awareness (which go hand in hand), on the basis of which we are able to function effectively in different intercultural situations and contexts. Conducting research within virtual exchange programs or blended intensive programs requires, among other things, specific attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity and discovery), knowledge and comprehension (cultural self-awareness, deeper understanding and knowledge of culture, culture specific information, sociolinguistic awareness), skills (to listen, to observe, to interpret, to analyze, evaluate and relate), and behaviour (internal, external). While internal behaviour includes questions to consider such as *Am I able to adapt to different communication styles, to new cultural environments? Am I flexible in selecting and using appropriate communication styles?*, the external includes questions such as *How do I behave towards other cultures? Do I know how to ask people from other cultures about their beliefs, values and behaviours?*, etc. (Zelenková & Hanesová 2021, 90–94).

Among other things, teacher-researchers also need to continuously improve their skills in the field of global competences. These include critical

thinking, intercultural competence, creativity, cooperation, digital skills and various other soft skills necessary for collecting data in intercultural contexts, which require an expert who is not only knowledgeable about the subject matter but also an interculturally aware individual.

## REQUIREMENTS CONDUCIVE TO INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT AT PEDAGOGICAL FACULTIES/IN TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

In order to be successful in international research and active methodologies, we have identified several criteria which should be fulfilled at the Matej Bel University in the future:

- Creating more space for academics to participate in international and global projects which provide excellent source for data to be explored.
- Integrating Global Competence development into higher-education curricula of candidate teachers at the Faculty of Arts, taking into account innovative and activating approaches to teaching foreign language and cultures.
- Producing an e-handbook for academics about the new possibilities of conducting research during virtual exchange programs.
- Supporting lifelong learning of academics in terms of their own global competences' development.
- Cultivating global thinkers and interculturally aware and interculturally sensitive individuals in academia.
- Establishing more course aimed at global competence development for candidate teachers and academics.
- Incorporating principles of global citizenship education in teaching programmes.
- Moving away from bilingual-bicultural approaches.

## CONCLUSION

Both projects, namely VEP and BIP, were successful and the students improved pedagogical competences important for their future profession. In the same way, the primary and secondary school students who

participated in the VEP in the summer semester improved their communication skills. Thanks to VEP and BIP, collaborative learning as a practical approach in 21st century was also supported. Students learnt new knowledge, exercised not only their hard skills, but also soft skills and academics/teachers were able to collect data for research in an virtual way. The outputs from both programs will be integrated into Department of English and American Studies' curriculum from the next academic year 2023/2024.

Pedagogical faculties, just like other businesses, must strive to survive in today's dynamically changing environment and must adapt to new ways to collect data. They must learn to be as flexible as possible when conducting research. In doing so, it is crucial to implement more VEPs and BIPs into our curricula as they represent a valuable source of data for teachers/researchers.

Based on our exploration of one VEP and one BIP program organized at MBU in Banská Bystrica (Slovakia) in cooperation with EU and non-EU partners, it seems likely that further research into global competences in teaching programmes will be conducted. Such programmes provide substantial data for academics and have the potential to foster pedagogical skills of candidate teachers. They also have potential to trigger more service-learning oriented initiatives which might be incorporated into teaching study-programs' curricula in the future.

Our short-term survey showed that both groups, students and teachers benefited from the two programs (VEP and BIP) and new ways of collecting data for research were established in line with stronger international partnerships and project engagements. Both programs also proved effective in helping students navigate in their lives and future profession. Furthermore, the programmes triggered students' global-citizen competences (being a global thinker) (Boix Mansilla 2016).

It was also proved that instructors, teachers, and researchers should be equipped with essential skills needed for this type of collaboration and research. Such skills include approaching cooperation within international teams with a positive attitude, flexibility, openness, curiosity, understanding of one's own culture and that of others, empathy, and an advanced degree of emotional and cultural intelligence.

Participation in VEP and BIP provided students with a chance to interact across cultures and situations, which is a crucial skill for global-ready citizens (Boix Mansilla 2016), fostering their global competence and providing researchers with new, valuable data for researching global competencies of candidate teachers.

Active methodologies also contain interactive learning, which was also part of VEP. Interaction was, on the one hand, enhanced among EMICH and MBU students via regular virtual meetings, and on the other hand, between candidate teachers and their middle school and high school learners via virtual EL conversations.

The model of VEP enabled students from both countries design their own lesson plans and to become actively and socially engaged in the process of lesson preparation, transforming knowledge into practice in international groups. At the end of our VEPs, students had a chance to provide feedback as part of active methodology and so enhance their self-assessment and self-reflection skills.

Based on the previous, it appears that VEPs with service-learning aspect constitute an active and participatory methodology which can serve academics/researchers as a ground for obtaining valuable data. We propose more active methodologies to be used among university students, specifically, candidate teachers at the Faculty of Arts (MBU) in Banská Bystrica, triggering more VEPs and BIPs in the future.

VEP as an experiential teaching-learning strategy enabled development of competences in action only partially, therefore, future VEPs between EMICH and MBU will be carried out with the aim to foster “take action” aspect of global competences.

VEP, initiated primarily by EMICH instructor, enabled MBU opening of this educational institution to the foreign environment (springboard for internationalization) and a new teaching-learning model was established in which society and students cooperate, and reciprocally nurture each other to generate a formative exchange and critical thinking. However, students could take more active role in the future during VEPs which could foster their critical thinking through being engaged in community, reflecting to local, national and global context.

Methodologies based on cooperative learning (such as our VEPs) carried out a specific task in our courses: implementation of global competences, fostering responsibility of individual within group, development of collaboration, social and communication skills, teamwork and flexibility.

This methodology implemented via VEPs together with E-learning methodology favours involvement and participation of students in the teacher-learning process. Finally, “the design thinking” methodology (especially in connection with lesson planning) has a potential to foster candidate teachers’ logical thinking as well as creative and innovative capacity

(Martínez Valdivia et al. 2023). These teaching experiences have been developed during VEPs of university students within two courses in two different countries, SR and USA.

To conclude, active methodologies and innovative activities leads to improvement in the quality of education. When students participate and engage themselves actively in community, the quality of education is improved too (Martínez Valdivia et al. 2023). Their learning is deeper and more lasting, also through pre and post reflection managed as part of VEP and BIP. VEPs have also potential to motivate students in the academic subjects they study. Both VEPs enabled the acquisition of significant learning from the area of ELT Methodology, Service-Learning, Psychology, Pedagogy, etc. Active methodologies support significantly not only academic, but also professional, ethical, civic and personal competences.

The learning which candidate teachers acquired during their first VEPs happened via their active participation whether this was via creating culturally responsive materials for learning English or lesson planning and teaching groups of middle school and high school students. In this way their level of awareness in social responsibility increased and they realized that learning can also happen in this way.

Last but not least, active methodologies should occupy important place in students' education toward sustainability and global competence should be integrated more into teaching. There should be a connection between theory and practice, which VEP offers. Furthermore, VEPs' experiences encourage student participation in community processes and enables future teachers to be aware of and sensitive to different issues which might occur in the classroom. Incorporation of VEPs contributes both, students and teachers.

The active methodology approach makes it possible for the student to work on certain real problems (in our case it was about elevating the emotional, physical, occupational wellbeing of learners, and producing linguistically and culturally responsive books for EL learners) as an active citizen and potential change agent (Martínez Valdivia et al. 2023).

In summary, this article demonstratds the usefulness of VEPs in the training and professional development of the future student of English language and literature in combination with other humanities-oriented or natural sciences-oriented subjects who are preparing for teaching job.

One possible limitation of this article lies in its sole focus on the Department of English and American Studies' two virtual exchange programs

and one BIP released by the Department of Technologies, which were organized during 2022/2023 academic year. Extensive research in other faculties and departments within MBU could be undertaken in the future. It would also be effective to explore how and to what extent the secondary schools in Banská Bystrica or other HEIs in Slovakia apply active methodologies in their teaching. Based on this, more studies could be elaborated on developing longitudinal and/or comparative studies about active methodologies in different educational areas.

Finally, the teachers play a vital role for their students in terms of motivation. Teachers who support collaborative learning in the classroom through various virtual exchange programs and projects allow their students to thrive not only academically but also interpersonally and cultivating the global competencies and the pedagogical skills essential for their life and teaching profession in the 21st century.

#### Recommendations

- Limitations of the VEP and BIP could be reviewed on a larger scale in the future.
- More examples of VEP and BIP could be taken into consideration and studied carefully.
- Prepare students more for the difference and alternative worldviews which they might encounter during virtual exchange programs.
- Build a more sustainable model of online intercultural exchange in the future.
- Implement more VEPs and BIPs at MBU in the future
- Flexibility of both teachers and students is required.
- More socially responsible tasks and methods should be used in the education of candidate teachers in the future.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ala-Korteesmaa, S., & Muñoz, C. 2023. Challenges in Virtual Team Communication in the Context of Virtual Exchange Experience, *European Journal of Open, Distance and E-Learning*, 25(1), 49–61, <https://doi.org/10.2478/eurodl-2023-0004>.
- Boix Mansilla, V. 2016. How to Be a Global Thinker, *Educational Leadership*, 74(4), 10–16.
- Chong, C. S. 2021. *Successful International Communication*, Shoreham-by-Sea: Pavilion Publishing and Media.
- Dronjic, V. 2019. How (Not) to Teach English Vocabulary, *The CATESOL Journal*, 31(1), 29–54.

- Gay, G. 2018. *Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice*, New York: Teachers College Press.
- Homolová, E. 2016. *Teaching English*, Banská Bystrica: Belianum.
- Martínez Valdivia, E., del Carmen Pegalajar Palomino, M., & Burgos-Garcia, A. 2023. Active Methodologies and Curricular Sustainability in Teacher Training, *International Journal of Sustainability in Higher Education*, 24(6), 1364–1380, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSHE-05-2022-0168>.
- Mercer, S. 2023. *Global Skills: Creating Empowered 21st Century Learners*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mercer, S., & Hockly, N. 2019, November 4. Global Skills: Creating Empowered 21st Century Learners, *Teaching English with Oxford*. Retrieved from <https://oupeltglobalblog.com/2019/11/04/empowered-21stcentury-learners/>.
- Muzata, K. K. 2015, June 3. Zambia: The Battle for Language of Instruction in Zambezi District East Bank, *The African Executive*. Retrieved from [http://www.ocnus.net/artman2/publish/Africa\\_8/Zambia-%20The%20Battle%20for%20Language%20of%20Instruction%20in%20Zambezi%20District%20East%20Bank.shtml](http://www.ocnus.net/artman2/publish/Africa_8/Zambia-%20The%20Battle%20for%20Language%20of%20Instruction%20in%20Zambezi%20District%20East%20Bank.shtml).
- O'Dowd, R. 2020. A Transnational Model of Virtual Exchange for Global Citizenship Education, *Language Teaching*, 53(4), 477–490, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444819000077>.
- Olipas, C. N., Luciano, R. G., Leona, R. F., Cochanco, A. S., & Bantug, E. T. 2022. Students' Perceptions and Expectations in the Virtual Faculty Exchange Program: The Case of Higher Learning Institutions in the Philippines and Indonesia, *International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology*, 7(1), 74–77.
- Syahrin, S., Akmal, N., Spromberg, S., & DePriest, J. 2023. Promoting Intercultural Competence in Preservice Teacher Education through Virtual Exchange, *Studies in Media and Communication*, 11(1), 1–11, <https://doi.org/10.11114/smc.v11i1.5791>.
- Tomaš, Z., Vojtkulakova, M., Lehotska, N., & Schottin, M. 2021. Examining the Value of Online Intercultural Exchange (OIE) in Cultivating Agency-focused, (Inter)Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Pedagogy: A Story of One Collaborative International Project for English Learners, *The Language Arts Journal of Michigan*, 36(1), Article 8, <https://doi.org/10.9707/2168-149X.2267>.
- Univerzita Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici. 2023. *Dlhodobý zámer Univerzity Mateja Bela v Banskej Bystrici na roky 2021–2026*. Retrieved from <https://www.umb.sk/app/cmsFile.php?disposition=i&ID=6525>.
- Zamora-Polo, F., & Sánchez-Martín, J. 2019. Teaching for a Better World: Sustainability and Sustainable Development Goals in the Construction of a Change-Maker University, *Sustainability*, 11(15), 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su11154224>.
- Zelenková, E., & Hanesová, D. 2021. *Internationalization of Higher Education: Teacher's Handbook*, Brno: Tribun EU.