As a scholar, I am a comparative education researcher who focuses on the global impact of education policy. My work in cross-border higher education explicitly examines the similarities and differences between various systems. Yet much of my teaching is directed toward students with a decidedly more local orientation. In my courses are aspiring principals and superintendents for the Capital District, administrators and recent graduates of local colleges and universities, and New York State legislative and political aides. They are students who are interested in the U.S. system, gaining the skills to be leaders of schools and colleges as well as to exert influence over the policies that guide them.

So why should I bring my research expertise in Asian, African, European, or South American systems into the classroom? How does that help someone who wants to know how to be successful at Albany High or Hudson Valley Community College?

Let me give a few reasons.

First, in my field of education, every student is an expert in his or her home system of education. They have literally lived it and have an intimate understanding of how it works. But that is, in social science terms, an N of one. A single case based on a student’s experience is a limited pool of evidence from which to draw conclusions about educational efficacy. The cross-border perspective gives students the opportunity to examine alternative examples and consider how these different environments inform the U.S. case. This helps students gain the knowledge and skills necessary to understand and negotiate the globalized world in which they will pursue their professional and personal lives.

Second, mixed in with my local students are an amazingly diverse set of international students, as well as students from other regions and states, who are also interested in how education policy and organizations impact society. Each student, whether from Guilderland, Georgia, or Ghana, should have the opportunity both to explore their own system and compare it to those of their peers. I need to draw on that expertise as a learning resource for students. Examples from other contexts, emerging from different histories and cultures, inform class discussion and challenge assumptions about the inevitability of current organizations and policies.

Finally, the university is increasingly focused on drawing a geographically diverse population to campus. These students come to us expecting to have an international experience. But that means that we treat the United States as a case that exists within the global environ-

I recognize I am speaking from my own disciplinary orientation. But all disciplines have similar global analogies. Any faculty member can take this approach and benefit from thinking globally and teaching locally.

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