

**LETTER FROM Francois VICTOR TOCHON  
TO THE READERS of GLOKALde (<http://www.glokalde.com>)**

## **UDEEAWANA IS IN GOOD PLACE TO MEET THAT GOAL OF GLOBAL COMMUNICATION FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS**

**Dear Readers of GLOKALde,**

**I have a cat and a dog at home. The dog was young when adopted by the cat, and they could develop a common culture and language. They learned how to communicate together, and they learned their different cultural rules through frequent contacts. Their shared understanding is at the basis of their peaceful behavior toward each other.**

**Peace is a need and an obligation at a time the potential of devastation of our planet and our humanity have reached their climax. The nature of peace studies involves distance contacts and it is transdisciplinary.**

**Transdisciplinary studies emerge from various disciplines and they concern life, our connection to the world, and to the planet at large. Peace is now a matter of survival. Distance education may provide a strong support to global communication and peace.**

**To work on peace in the academia, we need to go beyond the disciplinary mind. This not only requires crossing across disciplines and building interdisciplinary understanding, but creating solutions at a transdisciplinary level.**

**As expressed in Tochon (2014), the *discipline* is the subject-matter of instruction or branch of instruction or learning, while the *interdiscipline* involves two or more academic disciplines, analyzing, synthesizing and harmonizing links between disciplines. The *transdiscipline* goes beyond and over disciplinary frontiers, it moves holistically towards integration through world- or life-related action. It integrates the natural, social and health sciences in a humanities context, and transcends disciplinary viewpoints. The transdisciplinary dimension indicates that knowledge society should reinforce the social bond through interpersonal wisdom.**

**Nowadays international academic exchanges may partially play that role. Academic globalization results from the greater international involvement of our higher education institutions through the economic, political, and societal goals that characterize 21<sup>st</sup> goals (Altbach, 2004).**

**UDEEEWANA is in good place to meet that goal of global communication. We indeed need to switch from the rule of power to the subtle realm of shared understanding on the basis on common imaginaries and interests. It may allow us as a humanity with its differences to move from a negative definition of peace (merely the absence of war) to a more positive definition in which mutual respect and shared understanding permits fruitful exchanges.**

**Fruitful exchanges lead to reduce the distance through technology, with a better access to the cultures and languages of others. Foreign languages are becoming world languages; they are now part of our human family in our earthly home. Trimnell (2005) points at several research-based social, economic, professional and personal reasons why people should learn world languages.**

**Increasing global understanding is one major reason, which crosses the goals of UDEEEWANA: language learners step inside the mind and context of the other culture. Intercultural sensitivity builds up trust and understanding, can bridge the gap between peoples, and promote peace and international trade. Economic partnerships, diplomacy and non-English speaking contacts require strong comprehension of the cultural values and belief systems of the partners abroad. Distance Education, among other goals, may enrich learners with contacts abroad, not only with other cultures but with other languages as well. Research indicates the attitudinal benefits of bilingualism: language learners develop a more positive attitude toward the target language and/or the speakers of that language; bilingual people have to know which language to speak with whom, and when. They therefore appear to be more sensitive to the needs of listeners than monolingual people (Lipton, 2004).**

**Proficiency in other languages characterizes global citizenship. Distance Education may contribute greatly in this area. For example, Anadolu University, one of the pre-eminent innovative universities in Turkey, is exemplary in its award-winning Turkish Language program, which is a completely online program, intended to help those who would like to learn Turkish internationally. This program offers multimedia learning materials on video as well as various communication and support services for those remote learners.**

**Video is thus a very important aspect of distance learning and sharing. In 2001, I wrote that video will become the New Literacy: an analysis of the evolving roles and effects of video traces the use of video as tool for social change, aesthetic object, and teaching tool. This has come true with the evolution of broadband streaming and larger storage capabilities.**

**In the current trends, Distance Education leads us to favor conceptualism and constructivism, creating situations in which learners take ownership of the instruments we propose. Conceptualism is based on the production and sharing of new ideas.**

**The message and its immediacy are very important. Les Levine, a conceptualist interviewed by Davidson Gigliotti (1999), stressed how different such views were from those who favor predetermined sequences of action:**

***It's much easier to produce an idea in the medium where you can see the product very quickly, than to have to produce an idea in a medium which requires a lot of manual dexterity.... The instantaneousness of the medium and its capability to use time in a certain kind of way was some kind of issue... Because there is something about video, if an idea is expressed in video, it often appears to analyze in a more "live" space. It seemed to me that one of the things that video could do for me was to produce a kind of work that analyzed that "live" and living, as opposed to something that was in so-called historical or theatrical space.***

**Video study groups can help learners and teachers in their professional development, just by providing the tools for shared reflection on their own action (Tochon, 1999).**

**Conceptualists' posited video was a means for changing and transforming groups of humans. It supported both utopian goals (efforts to attain an ideal life on earth) and spiritual quest.**

**Today educational institutions that are well grounded in the 21st Century goals join open networks of distance education (ODL). Educational associations that are up-to-date lead the trend with the philosophy that self-determined and self-sufficient open education needs the support of the grass-root organizations, professionals, educators, students and the general public.**

**Thus three new windows are opening us to a world that can communicate: distance education, self-determined life-long learning, and a better understanding of other languages and cultures. They help reconceptualize higher education in terms of deeper learning. Deep learning requires a deeper university. UDEEEWANA is one venue for deeper higher education, active in realizing global, supranational goal in internationalization and mobility.**

**Thank you for being active in this open network!**

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## ABOUT AUTHOR

Pro. Dr. Francois VICTOR TOCHON



**Dr. Francois VICTOR TOCHON** is a Professor in the Departments of Curriculum & Instruction and French & Italian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison where he is heading graduate studies in World Language Education. He has a Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics (Université Laval) and a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology (Ottawa University), and received the equivalent of Honorary Doctorates from two universities in Argentina and Peru. In 2015 Tochon received an official appointment as Honorary Professor from Henan University of Technology in China from its University President. In China, this is a highest recognition, far beyond the honorary doctorate. Professor Tochon is a specialist in applied semiotics. He was the co-editor and then Chief Editor of the *International Journal of Applied Semiotics*.

Briefly on the Board of the Semiotic Society of America, he worked on intercultural semiotics and was the president of the special interest group of Semiotics in Education of the American Educational Research University, looking for deeper ways of organizing language teaching and learning.

In 2007-2008, he was awarded grants from Spencer and Tubitak- National Science and Technology Foundation of Turkey- to study ways to internationalize Education through e-portfolios, world languages and intercultural semiotics. In 2009-2012, Professor Tochon received an award from the U.S. Department of Education to create research and evaluate personal learning environments for a "deep approach" to languages and cultures, with a focus on Turkish. It allowed his research team to format an innovative interface between language policies and classroom curricula and practices.

Professor Tochon developed the concept of Deep Approach to languages and cultures, Deep Education, and Deep University. With 20 partner universities around the planet he created Deep University Press, and Deep University, a start up supported by the Lions Club International Foundation, is creating deep connective mass online courses (cMOOCs). See here:

<http://www.deepuniversity.net/graduatecourses.html>

With twenty-five books and more than hundred fifty articles and book chapters to his credit, Professor Tochon has also been Visiting Professor in several universities including Rio Cuarto (Argentina), Griffith and South Queensland (Australia), Brussels, Leuven, Mons (Belgium), BFSU, BLCU, Capital Normal, Nanjing, Nanjing Aeronautic, Shanghai Normal, South China Normal, SISU, Zhejiang, Zhejiang Normal (China), Akershus (Norway), Lyon, Paris V Sorbonne, Nanterre, Reims, Rennes, West Indies (France), Granada (Spain), Freiburg (Switzerland), MUST, NCKU, NKU, Tajen (Taiwan), Boğaziçi, METU-C, Suleyman Demirel, Suleyman Şa and Yildiz (Turkey), Arizona and Princeton (USA), etc. He is currently published in 11 languages. Introductions to his work in different languages are presented here: <http://www.deepuniversity.net/introductions.html>

Professor Tochon's article *The Key to Global Understanding: World Languages Education. Why Schools Need to Adapt* published in the *Review of Educational Research* (79/2) received the 2010 Award of Best Review of Research from the American Educational Research Association (AERA). Among his books are: *Tropics of Teaching: Productivity, Warfare, and Priesthood* (University of Toronto Press), *Apprendre en groupe* (France University Press); *Eduquer avant l'école* (Montreal University Press); *Recherche-intervention* (Quebec University Press); *Signs and Symbols in Education: Educational Semiotics* (Deep University Press); *The Foreign Self: Truth Telling as Educational Inquiry* (Atwood). His 2014 book *Help Them Learn a Language Deeply* was a best seller in the U.S. and now is a best seller in China.

Professor Tochon received the 2012 Award of International Excellence from the University of Granada, Spain, and is a Professor of their Campus of Excellence. Professor Tochon is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Deep University and President of the International Network for Language Education Policy Studies (INLEPS): <http://www.languageeducationpolicy.org>

**Professor Tochon has been awarded the 2013-2014 medal of the Council Chairperson of the Lions Club International in Taiwan, and the 2013-2014 medal of the Chairperson of the Lions Club International Foundation seated in Chicago. He is among the 1% most visited profiles of LinkedIn, and 2% most downloaded authors from Academia. He is now International Ambassador for isIPAL, has received the 2015 Excellence in Diversity Award from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, School of Education, and the 2015 International Scholar Award of Shanghai Normal University.**

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