

## **Global Education in the Modern-day Classroom**

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The world around us is constantly changing every day. As technology and communication capabilities increase at a rapid pace, the world as we know it is more interconnected as ever. Education plays a key role in understanding this interconnectedness as well as understanding different issues such as poverty, international conflict, and even education.

Enter in the concept of globalization. Globalization is defined as the global integration of international trade, investment, information technology, and cultures. As previously stated, globalization has grown due to advances in communication technology: cell phones, social media, global news. With this increased interaction comes the growth and spread of international ideas, culture, and global education.

There are many definitions that encompass 'Global Education'. Global education can be defined as a set of ideas taught to enhance one's perception of the world as well as a creative approach of bringing about change in our society. It is a "Learning process based on the universal values of tolerance, solidarity, equality, justice, inclusion, and co-operation" (Glen GE, 2009). Global education therefore is how we identify with the world around us culturally, socially, politically, and economically. While basic math and literacy skills have been sufficient enough for potential success in the job market, an empathic understanding of different cultures and how they view certain issues are becoming imperative.

This literature review will focus on three different themes that tie to global education. First, we will examine what global education is, what it encompasses, and why it is needed for modern day students to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Then, we will shift to looking at different themes that tie back to global education: global citizenship and global perspective. We will also

further explore how these concepts come together and how they can shape students if incorporated into the classroom.

### **Global Education**

Global education is not a distinct course but rather a transformative learning method. It's the skill of being able to see the different perspectives of others around the world. This includes but is not limited to: "(a) a view of the world as one system, (b) commitment to the idea of basic human rights, (c) recognition of the importance of intercultural understanding and tolerance for differences, (d) belief in the efficacy of individual action, (e) commitment to child-centered or progressive pedagogy" (Reimer & McLean, 2009). A global perspective helps us reflect on our own points of view while providing us the opportunity to understand the views of those around us.

Global education began as a reform movement to "Reform education and society in the 1960s and 1970s, through the work of educationalists, NGOs and also intergovernmental organizations" (Standish, 2014, p. 166). This movement advocates that new global realities including multicultural communities, the global market, and post-national politics demand a new approach to schooling. The shift from national to global education is often presented as a necessary step because, "The forces of globalization affect the lives of everybody on the planet" (Butt, 2011, p.423). Global education expands the meaning of what education is in the United States.

With global education, what we see is an attempt to "Break with a curriculum that is grounded in subject knowledge and national culture" (Standish, 2014, p. 167). Curriculum in the United States unfortunately does not reflect the diversity of today's modern student. Students of today are rooted in different multi-cultural backgrounds, yet, they are stuck learning a very Eurocentric view of history. By incorporating global education into the classroom, students will have the chance to see the world through a different pair of eyes.

Global education opens the door for students to realize that they are global citizens, that they are a part of something that extends beyond their national borders. Artificial boundaries begin to break down between nations as educators encourage students to develop a global perspective of the society that is around them. Through global education, students are able to see how the world is connected through many different avenues such as technology, educational issues, issues of poverty, and environmental issues and through these avenues, they are able to become globally competent.

Through global education, students develop the skills to “Investigate the world, weigh different perspectives, communicate ideas, take action, and apply disciplinary and interdisciplinary expertise” (Mansilla & Jackson, 2011). These skills enable them to ask and connect the local issues that affect their community to the global issues affecting those world-wide. This connection will hopefully lead them to becoming problem-solvers of global issues rather than bystanders. The idea is that by becoming a recognizer and problem-solver of global issues, students will be able to develop their identity as a global citizen.

### **Global Citizenship/Global Perspective**

The concept of citizenship has evolved over time. Looking historically at the early Roman-Greco times, only white men who owned property were eligible to become citizens. During the past century, the definition of citizenship has evolved and developed overtime. Citizen can be defined as “One’s formal legal and political status and sense of belonging. It also entails the right and responsibility to make rights claims regarding those issues that impact one’s well-being” (Sant, Davies, Pashby, & Shultz, 2018, p. 5). Citizenship is ultimately the way we identify with our place of residence and our duties as a resident in this nation. The idea of national citizenship has always been present in society, but what about global citizenship?

A rapidly growing globalized world has called into question, the idea of citizenship and its global dimensions. How does it fit in to the grand scheme of ideas that are presented to us every day?

The idea of global citizenship is very complex and because of this complexity, there is a great deal of discussion about what it is and what exactly it encompasses. How does one become a global citizen and what does it specifically mean to be a global citizen? Oxfam defines global citizenship as “someone who is aware of and understands the wider world – and their place in it” (Oxfam, 2018). UNESCO defines it as, “A sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity” (UNESCO, 2014). As global citizens, students take an active role in their community to investigate, understand, and tackle the issues of not just their local community but the global community as well. Global citizenship has many characteristics, it can be someone who: “Is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen, respects and values diversity, has an understanding of how the world works, participates in the community at a range of levels from local to the global, and is willing to act to make the world a more equitable and sustainable place” (Oxfam, 2018). What we see is that local, national, and global issues all become tied together and students begin to see these issues as issues that ultimately affect not just specific people, but all of us.

With the interconnected nature of the world around us, the ‘global’ aspect of global education and global citizenship is just not ‘out there’, it is part of our everyday lives. Every individual, whether they realize it or not, is linked to others on every continent. This link can be socially and culturally through social media or through travel, through economics, environmentally through sharing one planet, or through international political ties and systems.

As students begin to form their global citizenship, they will be more inclined and open to understanding different perspectives held by others around the world.

According to GlobalEducation.edu, there are five different ‘perspectives’ that students develop as they form their identities as global citizens. The first is interdependence and globalization, an understanding of the complex social, political, and economical links that ties us together. The second is identity and culture diversity, an understanding of self and one’s culture as well as being open to the cultures of others. After we have, social justice/human rights, peace

building/conflict resolution, and sustainable futures. With this approach, students can take account for the whole of human society and are given the opportunity to explore issues and act. It ultimately moves students from bystanders to problem-solvers.

The misconception with global citizenship is that we are abandoning our identities to our home nation, that is not true. These traditional national identities that we hold initially give meaning to our lives and help shape us. However, because the world is changing, and globalization continues to grow at a rapid pace, we now have an added layer of responsibility as civilians. If students are to adapt to this world, they must be able to develop their identity as global citizens and understand that the problems that exist beyond their borders, not only affect those that live in the society, but them as well.

### **Incorporating Global Ed. Into the Classroom**

As previously discussed, education for global education/citizenship/perspective deals with issues of global interconnectedness, cultures, sustainability, respect, and understanding conflict. Educating children to be compassionate global thinkers and citizens is key when it comes to 21<sup>st</sup> century teaching. Global education if incorporated into the classroom can hold many benefits for students.

Through global education, “students can develop a sense of identity and make connections that they otherwise would have not” (Oxfam, 2018). The whole goal of global education is opening students’ minds to different ideas and cultures. Students sometimes tend to live in a bubble and sometimes are not aware of what is outside of it. Making connections allows students to connect to humanity on levels that they did not believe were possible. Imagine the collaboration that could take place as barriers are broken down and connections are made?

We all interpret the world differently through our own cultural lens and experiences. GE allows students to experience these different perspectives. Viewing these different perspectives gives students the opportunity to “Recognize the past, present and future and how it affects people, cultures and the environment as well as explore history of people, places and ideas and

recognize the interdependence of past events in different societies and cultures” (Global Perspectives, 2011). Through this process, we see students become investigators of national and global issues.

Finally, GE allows students to “Investigate, reason, participate, and communicate using a range of traditional and contemporary texts” (Global Perspectives, 2011). Incorporating GE into the classroom allows students to act on issues that are plaguing society. Action can be based within either the local community or global community. The action piece can have varying levels. The action piece can start with reading more on a topic and talking to others to get their view, and then move on to discussing ideas with others, educating others or advocating change. Action can also be through donations or fundraising. By participating in their community, students are given a sense of purpose, a piece that ultimately helps shape their identity.

### **Resources for Global Education**

With the many benefits that come with incorporating Global Education into the classroom, how can we as educators teach this concept? What steps should we take to ensure that we are fostering student understanding of the interrelationships of the world? As previously stated, the aim of global education is to develop students into global citizens through the teachings of different global perspectives by looking at a multitude of complex issues such as bias in the national media, diversity, intercultural connection, etc. Although complex, there are a variety of ways to tackle these issues: through story-telling, role-play, technology.

Story-telling has been used for centuries to teach others about culture, diversity, and values. Listening to stories cannot only ignite excitement within the child but “it can also foster curiosity within them, provide information, and transform thinking”. (Global Perspectives, 2011). Stories help turn abstract ideas into thoughts and understanding. Reading stories with global themes that are set in different countries provides teachers with an ample opportunity to integrate global perspectives across the curriculum. Through stories, students are provided the opportunity to make connections and links between their own experiences and those of others,

while gaining insight on different ways to view the world around us. Use stories and/or digital storytelling to develop a global perspective in the following curricula area:

**English:** Examining environmental changes through readings and how they impact our resources.

This activity helps to form a link between current energy and natural resources use and highlights the impact that both have on our environment.

Students will read “*Why Should I Save Energy?*” and reflect on the reading through three different levels: surface level questions, analysis questioning, and beyond the text questions.

Surface level questions (fact-based): who in the family wasted energy and how? What did the family decide to do to save energy?

Analysis questions: What would you think if you had no power at home? At school? Why does energy interest you?

Beyond the text: How does saving energy locally effect everyone worldwide? Why is it important for all of us to think about saving energy?

(Gloaleducation.edu.au, 2012)

Cartoons are also a great way to challenge students to think about the world around them. Cartoons allow students to view ideas or thoughts that are packed with meaning. Through satire and drawings, cartoons capture new ideas and connect them to individuals through different symbolization and thoughts expressed. Cartoons can be used to: include students with different ranges of literacy levels, lead to thought-provoking discussions by challenging students to think abstractly and develop visual literacy. There are many different avenues teachers can take when using cartoons to promote education. The “Tell a Story” activity divides students into groups and provides the different groups with different cartoon picture cut-ups to re-order, with the last piece missing. Students are then tasked to think of an ending to the cartoon frame they were given. Some questions that teachers can pose to students as they are working is: what is shown in

the cartoon? What is it about? Who or what is in it? To take the task even further, students can rewrite the captions or bubbles to express a new thought or idea of the issue (Global Perspectives, 2012).

The use of technology is also a great way to foster student understanding of global education in the classroom. One website that teachers can look to is “us.iEarn.org”. Through the internet and different technology platforms, iEarn-USA engages youth worldwide in collaborative project-based learning across the curriculum and provides them with the opportunity to tackle and act on different global issues. iEarn offers teachers and students different meaningful ways to connect and learn with global peers: online collaboration through iEarn projects, professional development courses, and global networking, as well as participation in programs that promote the idea of a global citizen identity. Through their online virtual exchange, students are given the opportunity to participate in forums and share with other peers around the globe different media and projects they have enacted in their local area. This connection allows them to then make meaningful connections and contributions to the welfare of others and the planet by allowing them to explore real world issues and work collaboratively with global peers to find solutions. The hope is that this participation will then help guide them in forming their global identities, becoming active citizens in both their local and global communities.

### **Conclusion**

Education makes or breaks a society, “One of the most powerful tools available to influence academic achievement is helping students feel they have a stake in their learning” (Toshalis & Nakulla, 2012, p.1). This is what makes global education such an imperative learning tool. Students must develop the sense and idea that what they are doing in the classroom will be worthwhile and conducive to what they will be participating in, when they walk out into their communities.



Global education/citizenship/perspective see beyond the world's political borders and it starts at a young age. By encouraging students early on to share and explore their values while respecting the values of those around them, we are essentially creating a foundation for a global citizen that transcends beyond the classroom. We open our students to the ideas of taking on certain challenges that lie ahead of them, empowering them to take charge and action of the world surrounding them.

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