Guidelines for Global and International Studies Education: Challenges, Cultures, and Connections

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Since the end of the Cold War, new forces—cultural, political, economic, and environmental—have swept the world. Americans are re-examining the role of their country in the face of these modern global complexities. Some question the ability of many of our basic institutions, from the government to the military to educational institutions, to cope with these new realities. No institution needs to respond more than our educational system.

Due to high public interest, the United States has an "open moment" to affect crucial change in our nation's schools. With federal support, academic standards have been established in many disciplines, including the social studies areas of history, geography, civics, and economics. Simultaneously, many states are incorporating national education standards into their own curriculum frameworks. These efforts to develop academic standards are laudable, and do contain international components. However, many important issues related to global understanding are either missing or dealt with inadequately.

Our students must be prepared to function in an increasingly interdependent and conflict-prone world. Moreover, schools bear the major responsibility for ensuring that the American electorate is well informed and willing to act responsibly on matters of international significance. Ignoring the global dimensions of education would be a grave mistake.

Educators concerned with the global dimensions of the social studies curriculum need to address many questions. Among them:
- What should our students be expected to know and understand about the world?
- What skills and attitudes do they need to confront problems that are global in scope?
- How well are the global dimensions of learning being addressed by the new academic standards?
- How best can the insights of scholars and practitioners of international relations be incorporated into these standards?
- How can schools increase the global dimensions of education when confronted with many other needs and problems?

In 1968, the U.S. Office of Education funded the development of a list of objectives for international education by the Foreign Policy Association. Since then, individuals and groups—united under the rubric of world cultures and international studies—have been working to increase the global dimensions of education. Out of their efforts have come many excellent ideas, materials, and programs.

To help those responsible for curriculum development, we have developed guidelines that attempt to summarize what concerned scholars and educators recommend as the international dimension of education for students in kindergarten through grade 12. These guidelines are not "standards" as the term is currently being used; however, we believe they can help to validate local curriculum decisions and ensure that the international dimension receives attention.

We have limited our focus to three broad themes:

I. Global Challenges, Issues, and Problems
II. Global Cultures and World Areas
III. Global Connections: the United States and the World

Within each theme, we provide: (1) a rationale for study; (2) knowledge objectives as a basis for understanding; (3) a list of skills relevant to evaluating issues; and (4) participation objectives to help students address challenges.

The Guidelines

I. Global Challenges, Issues, and Problems

A Rationale for Study

To identify major global challenges, we examined 75 documents on global and international studies education. These documents spanned the last five decades, and included several reports or surveys written by citizens of other countries. Unfortunately, few authors prioritized their recommendations, meaning that our compilation of global issues reflects only the frequency with which a topic received mention. In some cases, it was necessary to interpret an author's exact meaning. Some rearrangement of topics was also necessary to hold the categories to a reasonable number. However, the ten resulting categories include virtually every issue named by those whose work provides the basis for this compilation.

At the core of all contemporary international and global studies are two concepts: change and interdependence. Engineers quip, "If we can make it work, it's probably already out of date!" A similar rule seems to apply to the major, and largely unresolved, global problems that dominate both scholarly journals and the popular media today. Just as someone claims to "have a handle" on any problem, a new manifestation of it occurs. Proposed solutions are suddenly perceived as inadequate or—as is often the case—found to contribute to a greater problem that was formerly unknown or unacknowledged.

The metaphor of a spider's web applies remarkably well to today's global problems and challenges. Touch that web anywhere, however lightly, and it vibrates everywhere. Similarly, if one "-touches" any global problem, one instantly realizes its interdependence with another. As University of Chicago psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi stated, "It is imperative to begin thinking about a truly integrative, global education that takes seriously the actual interconnections of causes and effects."

Further, it is not overstating the case to say that change and interdependence are so central to all of the social and physical sciences that they deserve continuous attention throughout any program to educate globally literate students. Virtually without exception, those whose thinking we examined named unprecedented change in all aspects of life as something schools should address. The concept of interdependence—often subsumed under "systems perspective" or "systems thinking"—also received nearly unanimous mention.

We identified ten categories of global challenges, issues, and problems as the basis for improved teaching and learning about the international dimension in K-12 schools. These categories are neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive; in fact, there is significant overlap among some of them. The categories are:

1. Conflict and Its Control: Violence/Terrorism/War: Low-intensity to International

This broad heading includes several sub-clusters. The first is sub-national conflicts, including revolutions, civil strife, assassinations, and rebel or guerrilla activities (often self-identified as "freedom fighters") within a country. Genocide and ethnic
cleansing as well as tribalism and secessionist movements may be included in this group.

A second cluster centers on the proliferation of weapons—conventional, chemical, biological, and nuclear—and the arms race, which encompasses sales, sanctions, controls, and trafficking. A third cluster concerns terrorism—state-sponsored terrorism, sanctuaries, social revolutionaries, national separatists, religious fundamentalists, and cross-border conflicts based on irredentism or revanchism.

A fourth cluster involves matters of national security, including the use of force by nations either unilaterally or in combination with other nations. However, we note that arms control, conflict resolution on an international scale, and the formal peacekeeping activities of the United Nations received far less emphasis than conflict itself in the sources consulted.

Schools need to address this crucial area. Given the frequency and intensity of conflict-related issues dominating today’s world events, to neglect the study of the methods available to prevent or mediate conflict is a serious omission.

2. Economic Systems: International Trade/Aid/Investment
This category also includes a number of subclusters. The more recent the source consulted, the greater is the emphasis placed on economic problems and issues. The first cluster includes understanding comparative economic systems, e.g., state socialism and the centrally planned economies typified by the former Soviet system and differing from our own. Also mentioned are the transitional and mixed economies typical of many developing nations today. Finally, virtually every source indicates that a working knowledge of our own free-market, or free-enterprise, model is a prerequisite for understanding economic systems different from our own.

The second cluster relates to international trade, encompassing patterns, balance of trade and payments, free trade and zones, trade negotiations—protectionism, quotas, sanctions, and embargoes—as well as tariff and nontariff barriers. Currency exchange rates, fluctuations also received mention.

A third cluster focuses on foreign aid, such as purposes, forms, amounts, and conditions as well as the role of donors and multilateral aid programs. Some of the sources placed major emphasis on the need for better understanding of foreign aid. Recent public opinion polls indicate widespread public ignorance regarding all aspects of foreign aid and extraordinary misconceptions concerning the percentage of the national budget devoted to our foreign aid programs. Direct foreign investment, including stress on the role of multinational corporations (MNCs), transnational enterprises (TNEs), and regional trading blocs (EU, NAFTA, GATT, etc.) were also cited as important topics.

Finally, a cluster of economic concerns focused on the specific needs of the developing world, such as debt crisis and relief, preferential trade policies, and protecting infant industries. An understanding of the increasing economic disparities (the rich-poor gap) within and among many world nations also received mention.

3. Global Belief Systems: Ideologies/Religions/Philosophies
Publications from the Cold War period stressed the need for the study of comparative ideologies, that is, Soviet-style communism and its various off-shoots, particularly Chinese communism. Many of the sources consulted emphasize the need for students to study major world religions as a means of better understanding other cultures as well as improving students’ understanding of followers of those religions residing in this country. Several sources recommend the study of other nations’ or cultures’ philosophies. However, in most cases it is unclear exactly what this means. It appears that these references are primarily directed at either political philosophies or ideologies, for example, socialism, communism, and fascism, or thought systems identified with a particular religion, for example, Confucianism, Hinduism, or Daoism. This apparently is seen as a means to better understand and to develop empathy for other cultures.

4. Human Rights and Social Justice/Human Needs and Quality of Life
The category of human rights and social justice includes a broad array of human concerns and topics related to the quality of life worldwide. The more recent the source consulted, the greater the emphasis placed on global human rights. The first cluster focuses on problems associated with human rights and social justice including gender and equity issues, the rights of children (child labor, street children, various abuses), equal access to justice, and rights’ violations and abuses based on ethnic, racial, sexual, or political identities.

A second cluster—probably the one that has generated the most intense media attention and public concern—focuses on problems concerning food and hunger (chronic malnutrition, famine). Included here are global food security, unequal access to food, food aid, the green revolution, and diseases related to inadequate diet. A third cluster focuses on broad concerns of health, education, and welfare, for example, infectious diseases (particularly HIV and AIDS), inadequate sanitation, drug use (trade, prevention, prosecution), inadequate shelter or housing, illiteracy, low standards of living, and the lack of a social safety net.

5. Planet Management: Resources/Energy/Environment
Virtually every source consulted places major emphasis upon resource depletion—including energy—and environmental degradation or pollution as crucial areas for student study. The resource cluster includes renewable and nonrenewable resources, resource dependence, stockpiling critical resources, recycling, and the role of commodity power in international commerce. The more recent sources emphasize water—its management, reuse, pollution, scarcity, and cost. A few sources cited space as an often overlooked resource.

Topics relating to energy sources—particularly petroleum and nuclear energy—appear on almost every list for study. Production and consumption patterns, proven reserves, costs, the security or dependability of sources, and future oil shocks (OPEC) make up one group of concerns. A second group focuses on alternative energy sources (solar power or hydropower), the problems and potentials of nuclear energy, and the need for conservation.

Studying the condition and care of the environment includes topics such as air, land, water, and seabed pollution; global warming and cooling; ozone depletion; toxic and nuclear wastes (disposal and international trade in); and acid rain. A second set of issues focuses on degradation of the land through erosion, deforestation, drought, or desertification, and reductions in generic, biotic, and species varieties. Some sources also mention carrying capacity and environmental instability as concepts students should understand.

Perhaps no other topic mentioned reflects as high a degree of concern—in a few cases bordering on alarmism—as does the condition of the environment and its care. Schools planning studies of environmentally related topics would be wise to take extra precautions to assure that students are presented with the most balanced and scholarly data currently available.

6. Political Systems: International Structures/Institutions/Actors/Procedures
Many of the sources examined stressed the need for the study of political systems and ideologies (as with economic systems above) that differ from our own. Under the institutions cluster, the United Nations and its agencies dominate most lists, but the increasing role of regional organizations (NATO, SEATO, OAS, OAU, etc.) also are recommended for study. A second cluster of
concerns focuses on the role of alliances, treaties, and negotiations (regarding arms, refugees, trade, and human rights violations). More recent sources mentioned political disintegration, irredentism, secessionism, devolution of nations, separatism, and the opposing trends of regional integration and increased democratization and autonomy. Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and their increasing role and presence in international affairs, are also recommended for study. Finally, a cluster focuses on international law and the role of the World Court. Formal study of U.S. foreign policy is also recommended by some authors.

7. Population: Demographic Growth/Patterns/ Movements/Trends
No single problem or concern is listed more frequently than population, particularly its control. Some authors feel that unless present growth rates are checked, particularly in parts of Africa, Asia, and Latin America, solutions to most other global problems will continue to elude us. Basic information on population growth (birthrates, death rates, fertility rates, replacement rates, migration, immigration, and emigration), and its changes, patterns, and trends make up one cluster.

Another cluster focuses on issues that can be controversial, such as family planning and contraception practices, including state-sanctioned abortion or sterilization. It would appear wise that public schools dealing with these topics exercise extreme caution. A third cluster includes a variety of population-related issues, for example, guest workers, illegal aliens, aging, drift to the cities, political asylum, dependency ratios (percentage of a population under 15 or over 65 years old), and the rapidly increasing numbers of refugees and displaced persons worldwide.

8. Race and Ethnicity: Human Commonality and Diversity
Most of the sources consulted feel this topic should be studied by all students, but few provide details. In most cases, "reducing prejudice," "avoiding stereotypes," or "eliminating discrimination" are listed as the goal for such studies. Others stressed "celebrating diversity" or "enhancing students' self-image/concept" as the primary goal. Some scholars and others who included this topic on their lists stress specifics such as race and immigration quotas or preferences, exclusion laws based on race, problems of indigenous ethnic groups, ethnic/cultural roots, color consciousness, and, in more recent sources, ethnic or racially based genocide as well as the ongoing debate concerning Eurocentrism vs. multi-culturalism. In any case, serious consideration of this topic would appear mandatory given our pluralistic society and world.

9. Technocratic Revolution: Science/Technology/Communications
With the exception of communications—often coupled with transportation—this category of issues receives little attention in the earlier sources examined. However, virtually all of the more recent sources emphasize the role that science, technology, and communications play in the lives of all humans. Several individuals note correctly that the study of science and technology provides an ideal vehicle for social studies, math, and science teachers to develop cross-disciplinary lessons and units. Having students discuss both the pluses and minuses of the impact of science and technology on people's lives worldwide is suggested. The communication cluster includes innovations, networking, freedom of use, the information revolution (access to, balanced flow, and censorship) and increasing speed coupled with decreasing costs.

10. Sustainable Development: Political/Economic/Social
Included under this heading is what might be called the "neo" cluster: neocolonialism, neomercantilism and neoinperialism, all manifestations of broader dependency theory issues that include increasing foreign debt and economic imperialism. A second cluster of concerns centers on drift to the cities and explosive urban growth (megalopolis), often accompanied by increasing social and economic problems and growing city-countryside disparities that cause political instability, often leading to violence. A third cluster includes the role of commodity power and the attempts to form cartels among those developing nations that possess raw materials needed by the more industrialized nations. Also included is the non-aligned movement that, at times, influences voting at the United Nations. A final cluster centers on the internal regional disparities existing in many developing nations, the mistreatment of indigenous peoples in some, and autonomy movements in others.

Skills Objectives
1. Students will learn the techniques of studying about global issues, problems, and challenges. The study of any global problem or issue requires time and depth. Having students learn how to learn about global problems and issues may be as important as learning about any single issue.

2. Students will develop informational literacy about global issues and challenges. In our overcrowded data environment, our chief concern should be to help students, in Charles McClelland's words, "develop criteria for discriminating, evaluating, selecting, and responding to useful and relevant data in the communication flow of reports about
conditions and developments in the international environment." In other words, we must help them to become effective at processing data.

3. Students will develop the ability to suspend judgment when confronted with new data or opinions that do not coincide with their present understandings or feelings. When information or beliefs about global issues conflict with students' present perceptions, students must be able to demonstrate thoughtfulness and patience if genuine understanding is to result. Global problems and issues are complex and constantly changing, often reflecting strongly held divergent views. Students must learn to respect such views while maintaining their own right to respectfully disagree.

Participation Objectives

1. Students will approach global issues, problems, and challenges neither with undue optimism nor unwarranted pessimism. The study of any global issue or challenge can become stressful, particularly for younger students. Depending on the topic, such study can leave them fearful or guilt-ridden. Neither fear nor guilt are good motivators, and neither will lead to civic action. Thus, classroom teachers must select issues that are within both the research capabilities and the maturity level of their students. Leaving students frustrated by the enormity of a global problem or feeling guilty because of their inability to "solve" it serves no purpose.

2. Students will develop a sense of efficacy and civic responsibility by identifying specific ways that they can make some contribution to the resolution of a global issue or challenge. School systems have the obligation to foster effective civic action. Despite the complexity of global issues and challenges, students can contribute toward resolving or ameliorating their effects.

II. Global Cultures and World Areas
A Rationale for Study

Interconnected with the theme of global issues, problems, and challenges is the theme of cultures and world areas. Since the 1950s, area or culture studies have been a part of many pre-collegiate curriculums, and in many states, culture studies have been mandated. Yet despite almost 40 years of culture studies and programs, curriculums featuring holidays and food festivals, which contribute little to intercultural understanding, still seem to be the extent of the offerings in many schools.

Education about culture in the 1990s has presented myriad challenges to public school teachers and administrators across the United States. These challenges, for the most part, have arisen from minority groups who cry out for either inclusion or exclusion from what is taught. Many minority groups want their history and culture integrated into the main curriculum, while others desire a separate course exclusively for students of that particular minority. Although these conflicts consume the energies of schools and school systems, larger questions must be addressed by schools and systems that want to teach about the variety of cultures that make up our national and world population: What is culture? What forms does it take? What is important for students to learn about culture and specific cultures? Placing the concept of culture into a larger context may help to define what students should know about local and global cultures.

Most parents expect schools to teach about American civic culture, principally knowledge of democratic values: our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence. Democratic values are a common ground for all Americans. Beyond this, defining American culture, as with any, is difficult because our own culture is so deeply embedded in us that it is difficult for us to see. In addition, the United States is a diverse nation, reflecting the values of different groups. Each day we see many conflicts in schools and communities based on these differences.

Culture should be an important area of study in our schools. Each of us has roots in one or more cultures, and each day we experience a wide variety of behaviors that reflect the values and beliefs of other cultures. However, most students' knowledge of other cultures is superficial or limited to exotic coverage or monolithic examinations. Yet cross-cultural learning is essential for understanding both our own culture and that of others. By studying other cultures, we learn what it is to be human. When studying other cultures, we should look for similarities to our own culture as well as for the differences that make a culture unique. The study of culture is necessary in order to know that other people may view things in ways that are profoundly different from the ways we view them.

Knowledge Objectives

1. Students will know and understand at least one other culture in addition to their own. Students should study at least one culture in-depth and from many different points of view.

2. Students will have a general knowledge about the major geographical and cultural areas of the world and the issues and challenges that unite and divide them. Students should study the major geographical and cultural regions of the world as well as some of the major issues and challenges that both unite and divide these world cultural regions.

3. Students will know and understand that members of different cultures view the world in different ways. Differences exist within a culture as well as among cultures. Within cultures, diversity may be affected by factors such as race, class, or religion. Cross-cultural educators state that studying other cultures will help students to understand the values and actions of other people as well as their own.

4. Students will know and understand that cultures change. All cultures have histories, present perspectives, and future orientations. Students should know that cultures are always undergoing change and will continue to change, especially in the 21st century. Many cultures in the world are being changed by technology, migration, and urbanization.

5. Students will know and understand that there are universals connecting all cultures. Universals are the ideas that unite us as humans. Material and nonmaterial cultural elements are things and ideas such as food, housing, the arts, play, language, and nonverbal communication, social organization, and the like. Ernest Boyer, an educator of renown, listed the universals of culture we all share: the life cycle, symbols of expression, aesthetics, recalling the past and looking at the future, membership in groups and institutions, living on and being committed to planet Earth, producing and consuming, and searching for a larger purpose.

6. Students will know and understand that humans may identify with more than one culture and thus have multiple loyalties. Every human has values and beliefs. Differences should be respected. Family life, education, and friends and fellow workers shape our worldview and give each of us different sets of values and beliefs.

7. Students will know and understand that culture and communication are closely connected. Languages form bonds that make each culture unique. To fully learn about another culture requires learning its communication system through a study of verbal and nonverbal language.

8. Students will know and understand that cultures cross national boundaries. The modern world, through immigration, migration, communication, technology, and transportation, has broken down traditional cultural boundaries. Many cultures are no longer defined by common geographic areas. For example, there are refugees forced out of their homelands and cultural groups such as the Kurds that have no national homeland.

9. Students will know and understand that cultures are affected by geography and history. Studying the location of cultures and their past history is important to learning about another culture.
Skills Objectives

1. Students will analyze and evaluate major events and trends in a culture. When studying a culture, students should look for events and trends that indicate changes in that culture and be able to analyze how these changes may have an impact on students’ lives.

2. Students will examine cultures in the world and recognize some interconnections with their life in the United States. Students should look for events and ideas in other cultures that have an impact on the United States and on its citizens.

3. Students will compare and contrast diverse cultural points of view and try to understand them. Respect for others is at the heart of cross-cultural understanding. Students should learn to listen to various cultural perspectives in order to understand others. However, understanding does not mean agreeing with another point of view.

4. Students will examine the common and diverse traits of other cultures. An open discussion of differences and similarities in other cultures leads to understanding the values and motives of others and is the first step toward the skill of working with others who have different points of view.

5. Students will be able to state a concern, position, or a value from another culture without distorting it, in a way that would satisfy a member of that culture. Understanding other points of view and being able to explain them clearly is a valuable communication skill for all citizens. Understanding other points of view does not necessarily mean that students agree with these opinions. Students should also develop the ability to critique views they disagree with.

Participation Objectives

1. Students will appreciate the study of other cultures. When we study other cultures, similarities and differences emerge clearly in our minds. We are able to put our own cultural values into perspective and thus understand ourselves better.

2. Students will appropriately tolerate cultural diversity. Students should learn to listen to and tolerate the values and opinions of others.

3. Students will seek to communicate with people from other cultures. Students should be given an opportunity to explore their own interests or have their interests stimulated about other peoples and cultures. Students have multiple opportunities to learn about other cultures in both their communities and the larger world. The modern world makes cross-cultural understanding a necessity because of common connections across cultures all over the world.

4. Students will demonstrate an appreciation of universal human rights. Basic human rights should be honored. Students should understand that there are times when the values of individual cultures will conflict with universal human rights. Students should discuss these conflicts and be prepared to defend human rights.

5. Students will meet and learn from people from other cultures. In the modern world, students have multiple opportunities to meet people of diverse cultures. Schools should provide opportunities for students to learn from one another as well as from international visitors and exchange students.

III. Global Connections: the United States and the World

A Rationale for Study

Students need broad-based knowledge of global issues and area and culture studies, but they also need to understand their own connections with these issues and cultures. Educating students about their connections is a major purpose of international and global studies education. Americans are tied to global issues and different cultures in multiple ways, and students must understand the United States’ contemporary and historical connections with global issues and regions. This includes studying traditional topics such as U.S. foreign policy and U.S. participation in international organizations, as well as understanding long-term U.S. political and strategic interests.

Citizens have a responsibility through speaking, voting, lobbying, and other forms of participation to affect international issues and U.S. foreign policies. To an extent, citizenship in a global age is part of the usual citizenship programs, and U.S. foreign policy should be part of the American history standards. Likewise, citizens need to be aware of the channels that influence their opinions on global and international issues, such as the press, media, governmental institutions, and private organizations.

A major problem confronting educators interested in teaching students about global and international topics has been one of relevance. Many Americans believe that global issues are not connected to their daily lives. Others are deeply concerned with the effects of global economic competition. Global problems may appear to be far away to affect them but, for better and worse, we are increasingly linked to global issues and with peoples and cultures throughout the world. This web of interconnections, which has both positive and negative implications, can be found in local communities, religious groups, social and community organizations, and economic linkages.

Knowledge Objectives

1. Students will identify and describe how they are connected with the world historically, politically, economically, technologically, socially, linguistically, and ecologically. Every American is connected directly with the world in a variety of ways, for example, the mail, the Internet; ham radios; the telephone; travel; international organizations or religious groups; economic links, such as purchasing products connected with other countries; and the press and mass media. More than 70 "Your Community and the World" studies have been developed that examine the current global linkages of cities, regions, and states.

2. Students will know and understand that global interconnections are not necessarily benign; they have both positive and negative consequences in the United States and elsewhere. Global interconnections enhance our lives, and they also may create serious problems. For instance, importing foreign automobiles may add to the diversity and quality of our lives and provide jobs for Americans engaged in their importation and sale, but for workers in U.S. steel mills or automobile factories, these global imports have been devastating. Students need to understand the trade-offs among short-term and long-term consequences of interconnections.

3. Students will know and understand the United States’s role in international policies and international relations, particularly since World War II. The United States is the sole remaining global superpower. What we do or do not do affects the lives of people around the world. Students need to understand the strengths and limitations of our influence on other nations. Understanding today’s foreign policies requires some knowledge and understanding of past foreign policies and issues.

Skills Objectives

1. Students will recognize, analyze, and evaluate major events and trends in American and world history and examine how these events and trends connect to their local communities and the United States today. Our lives today are defined by actions others have taken in the past. Understanding past trends and movements is important in understanding today’s world. Usually, United States and world history are taught as discrete courses, but the walls between these subjects are artificial. United States history should be taught in a global perspective and world history should include connections with the United States. Both United States and world history should make connections between past trends and the individual today.

2. Students will recognize, analyze, and evaluate interconnections of local and regional issues with global challenges and issues. Global issues

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do not arise from some far-away place to affect our local communities. Rather, local communities across the world create global challenges and issues. Students should be able to recognize, analyze, and evaluate how local communities contribute to or help resolve global issues.

3. Students will recognize, analyze, and evaluate the interconnections between their lives and global issues. Students should be able to make the link between their daily actions and how those actions—or inaction— influence global phenomena.

4. Students will generate alternative projections for the future and weigh potential future scenarios. The future depends upon actions individuals take. Often, the effects of these actions will be delayed for years. Students need to know and understand that their own actions—or lack of action—can make a difference to the future.

Participation Objectives

1. Students will value participation in the democratic process. Through participation, citizens affect government policies. For example, citizens participate by speaking, voting, lobbying, and contributing to campaigns or causes. Each of these forms of participation affects international issues. While in school, students need to practice these activities where appropriate.

2. Students will tolerate ambiguity. Most global issues will not be resolved soon. Having some tolerance for the ambiguities of this complex world is helpful. This does not mean that students should be tolerant of all behavior or situations; nor does it mean that right and wrong solutions cannot be hidden by ambiguity.

3. Students will read newspapers, magazines, and books; listen to radio and television programs that relate to intercultural and international topics; and actively respond to news articles, books, and programs. Local communities change, as will the United States’s role in the world. Students will need to continue to learn about international and intercultural topics. Because citizens learn the majority of their information about the world from the press and mass media, students need to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of these sources of information. Students should be encouraged to actively respond to these “one-way” communication systems by discussing programs with peers, family, and others, and by writing letters to the editorial staffs of newspapers and media stations.

Some Final Thoughts

Global education should provide students with the information and intellectual tools coupled with the willingness to use them—that enable them to function as competent American citizens in a complex and rapidly changing international environment. The study of global education is not an excuse to neglect the rules of sound scholarship. At times, emotions, personal opinions, and unproven assertions may dominate the discussion of volatile global issues. This is wrong. Students must learn that their feelings and opinions may be understandable, but do not substitute for reasoned judgments based on reputable authorities. However, these difficulties should never provide justification for avoiding the study of topics that may generate emotion and, at times, divisive controversy. Here is where the teacher has the opportunity to model a reasoned, even-handed approach to potentially volatile topics.

Students also must learn that the published materials on global education vary greatly in their accuracy and reliability. As the late Jean Mayer, a world authority on nutrition and related matters, cautioned one of the authors in working on President Carter’s Commission on World Hunger: “Probably one-third of the published materials on food and hunger are accurate, reflect the best current scholarship and should be believed. Another third are either badly dated or only partially correct and always should be used with caution. The other third are badly biased, inaccurate, and grossly misrepresent the problem. Avoid them at all costs!” Educators would do well to keep Mayer’s advice in mind when dealing with most global problems.

We must equip students with the knowledge, intellectual skills, and attitudes they need to cope effectively with the global realities they must face as adults. Unfortunately, in many schools, global topics are studied seldom, if at all. Time is spent instead “giving students the background” needed to engage these issues “later on.” Unfortunately, “later on” never arrives. Thus, students are forced to form opinions and, ultimately, make decisions about important global concerns in an intellectual vacuum. These concerns are too important to allow our citizens to continue to remain intellectually unprepared.

Individuals working to establish standards that reflect what all students should “know and be able to do” would do well to pay attention to the kinds of student outcomes suggested by those experienced in the international dimensions of education. Further, they should make certain that whatever students “know and are able to do” includes in-depth study of the real problems and challenges facing the human race. John Dewey stated that “School is not preparation for life; it is life.”

What better way to make school “life” for the next generation.

Notes

1. Robert Hanvey, in An Attainable Global Perspective (New York: The American Forum for Global Education, 1976), describes four levels of cross-cultural awareness: (1) awareness of superficial or visible cultural traits: stereotypes; (2) awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one’s own: you are frustrated and confused; (3) awareness of significant and subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one’s own: you think about it and start to ask questions and understand; and (4) awareness of how another culture feels from the standpoint of the insider: cultural immersion.

2. Robert Kohls’s descriptors of culture are an entry point for students to learn about the world and other cultures. Under the headings “Some Cultures” and “Most Cultures,” he lists points of view or values in relation to the various ways people view the world. For example, in the United States, we generally feel that we have personal control over our environment; however, in much of the world people feel that fate determines what they are to do. Conflict can arise when different cultures with different points of view meet to solve common problems. An awareness of such differences is key to cross-cultural understanding. For a listing of what some cultures believe in and what most cultures believe in, see Kohls and Knight, Developing Intercultural Awareness (publisher), 42.

3. Craig Stori, in The Art of Crisscrossing Cultures (Yarmouth, Maine: Intercultural Press, 1990), expresses the cross-cultural process as follows: “We expect others to be like us, but they aren’t. Then a cultural incident occurs causing a reaction, such as anger or fear, and we withdraw. We become aware of our reaction, we reflect on its cause, and our reaction subsides. We observe the situation which results in developing culturally appropriate expectations.”

4. There are four major traits to be developed and 18 others that support them. They are suggested by J. Daniel Hess in The Whole World Guide to Culture Learning (publisher), 12ff. The four major traits are: (1) a high regard for culture, (2) an eagerness to learn, (3) a desire to make connections, and (4) a readiness to give as well as to receive.

5. Many communities and states have developed “Your Community (or State) and the World” programs. For a list of these programs, contact Dr. Chadwick Alger at the Marshon Center, The Ohio State University, 1501 Neil Avenue, Columbus, OH 43201-2602. Or, contact your state department of education.

Bibliography

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