

Global Education

Global Education Around the World

Our schools can benefit from learning about other countries' efforts to infuse global education into their curriculums.

Global education has become a widely recognized movement in the United States, and the globalization of our schools is well under way. Giving added momentum to this movement, the ASCD 1991 Yearbook clearly sets forth the rationale for global education: our increasing worldwide interdependence as demonstrated by the expansion of technological, political, cultural, economic, and ecological networks connecting different peoples, cultures, civilizations, and regions.¹ As John Goodlad observed in another recent publication:

Today's children will have to face complex issues such as arms control, environmental protection, food production and energy use, [and] even in the light of the best scenarios of the future, the contents of this sentence are no longer subject to debate. Just the other day, it seems, they were.

It has been a little more than 20 years since the term *global education* was coined.³ Despite this relatively brief history,⁴ however, a remarkable consensus has emerged in the United States, not only about the need for this approach to education, but also about its content. Today, many would agree with our definition of global education:

We want to find out what is actually happening in the schools in the name of global education, from the primary grades through senior secondary schools.

Global education involves learning about those problems and issues which cut across national boundaries and about the interconnectedness of systems—cultural, ecological, economic, political, and technological.

Global education also involves learning to understand and appreciate our neighbors with different cultural backgrounds from ours; to see the world through the

eyes and minds of others; and to realize that all peoples of the world need and want much the same things.⁵

Curiously, some American educators think global education is a national movement originating within the United States, partly because they lack knowledge about what is going on in other educational systems of the world. This view may also stem from the fact that some advocates of global education justify it as one way to maintain the United States' competitive position in the world economy. "We will be able to maintain our leadership position," their argument goes, "if we educate our children and youth to the political and economic realities of the world."

But the goals we associate with global education are an important part of the curriculums of many other nations for a variety of reasons. Some countries desire, as the U.S. does, to maintain their positions of international strength. In others, global education is necessitated by geographical or historical realities, such as colonialism, which require constant interaction. Whatever the reasons, global education is a worldwide movement, and it is important for American educators to become informed about other countries' efforts.

Programs in Other Countries

Many fine programs are included in the worldwide global education movement. In the following paragraphs, we describe four examples of global education efforts in other countries.

New South Wales, Australia. In 1985, schools in New South Wales began teaching a multidisciplinary course in Society and Culture in grades 11 and 12. The goal is to help students develop social literacy—to “acquire a set of concepts, skills, interests, attitudes, and values that can be used effectively in observing, understanding, relating to, and contributing to the social world.” The course opens with a unit entitled “Coming of Age in Today’s World.” Teachers and students then choose three of seven in-depth studies, including Adolescence; Intercultural Communication; Political Processes; Religion and Belief; Rules, Rights, and Laws; Social Inequality, Prejudice, and Discrimination; and Work, Leisure, and Sport. Each student also conducts a project on a topic of personal interest. The course ends with the unit “Looking Ahead to Tomorrow’s World.”⁶

Canada. In recent years, global education has become a priority in Can-

ada, thanks to funding from the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and leadership from the federal government. Especially noteworthy is the Alberta Global Education Project, a professional development program operated by the Alberta Teacher’s Association with financial assistance from CIDA and the Alberta Department of Education. Begun in 1987, this project helps teachers learn, and then teach about, the critical issues facing humanity—issues like the environment, peace and security, Third World development, human rights, and social justice.

The project improves teaching practice through workshops and courses designed for and by teachers. Central to the project is the principle that global education is a particular perspective to be infused into the existing curriculum, not a new subject to be added to an already heavy curriculum. One of the project’s highest priorities is to help teachers identify places to infuse the global perspective and then to provide them with the materials and techniques they need to do so.⁷

Sweden. In 1988, the Swedish National Board of Education produced the paper, *Action Program for Inter-*

nationalization of Education. Acknowledging that the national curriculum has already “made ample—and early—provision for international aspects regarding both knowledge and attitudes,” the report cited a variety of recent global environmental and political crises, including global warming and nuclear proliferation, in a call for expanding the global curriculum. It recommended more and better peace studies, environmental studies, and foreign language courses, as well as increased attention to multicultural issues. These goals can be reached, the report suggested, through the integration of curricular areas and by infusing global content into existing courses.⁸

International Network on Global Education (INGE). In 1985, representatives of a number of European programs, meeting in West Berlin, formed the International Network on Global Education (INGE) as a medium for ongoing discussions about the educational challenges of an interdependent world.

Today, through conferences, information exchange, and joint projects, INGE promotes international understanding and cooperation for the teaching of global issues. The network has been expanded to include programs in Western and Eastern Europe and North America. The American Forum for Global Education serves as the North American secretariat for INGE, one of four worldwide.⁹

Food for Thought

One of the best examples of global interdependence can be found in agriculture and the world food trade—specifically, the elaborate cause-and-effect market relationships between farmers and consumers in industrialized countries and their counterparts in developing countries.

High school students can begin to explore the issues involved in international agricultural trade by using a study booklet titled *Exploring the Linkages: Trade Policies, Third World Development, and U.S. Agriculture*, available from the Trade and Development Program, an educational venture sponsored by 10 agricultural and religious organizations. The booklet presents trade statistics, reviews problems inherent in patterns of international trade, and lists the major arguments for and against competing trade models. Particular attention is paid to the positive and negative effects that trade can have on economic development in the Third World and on rural farmers everywhere. Participants are encouraged to analyze, discuss, draw their own conclusions, and find ways to influence public policy.

Supplementary materials to *Exploring the Linkages* include enlightening profiles of seven Third World countries; commodity briefs on coffee, cocoa, and wheat; and issue briefs on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), Third World debt, and U.S. farm debt.

The student package, which includes the 30-page study booklet and supplementary materials, is available for \$5.00. A study kit for teachers, which also includes a Program Guide with suggested activities, is available for \$7.00. Contact: Trade and Development Program, 802 Rhode Island Ave., NE, Washington, DC 20018, or call 202-269-0200.

An International Survey

In order to help educators in the U.S. learn from global education efforts in other countries, we intend to survey educators in a number of nations over the next 18 months to find out what they are doing to globalize the curriculums of their schools. We will be looking at five general areas.

First, we want to know if there is any kind of international consensus on what global education is. To accomplish this, we will find out whether respondents agree with the definition of global education cited at the beginning of this article or whether they prefer an alternative.

Second, we want to find out what is actually happening in the schools in the name of global education, from

the primary grades through senior secondary schools. We will ask whether any curriculum initiatives are being planned for the near future, what they are, and why they are being undertaken.

A third area of interest is teacher education. Our question is, "What is being done specifically to prepare teachers to better understand and teach global issues?"

Fourth, we will ask respondents to identify problems with and barriers to the development of global understanding in their schools. In order to ask these questions, we will identify some of the subject areas that have been central to global education in the U.S., including interdisciplinary approaches.

Global Dialogue

We will prepare and distribute a questionnaire to three groups of educators: the representatives of ministries of education from nearly every country of the world who attended the recent UNESCO conference on *Education for All*, representatives from INGE and other networks, and individual global educators with whom we have come in contact over the years.

Our intent is to gather these data and report them first in summary form in an *Educational Leadership* article sometime in 1992. In addition, we hope to produce an in-depth report on global education practices worldwide. We fully recognize that we will miss some very fine programs because we are limited to our own contacts. We also recognize that a survey of this kind is fraught with problems of definition and cross-cultural understanding. However, we strongly believe that such a study will be an important contribution to an international dialogue about global education.

Global education is about recognizing our increased worldwide interdependence and developing the ability to perspective-take. It requires that we acknowledge and learn about the efforts of people throughout the world who bring a global perspective to school curriculums. It is only through this effort to learn from others that we will be able to truly understand the

full significance of this vitally important approach to education. □

¹L. Anderson, (1991), "A Rationale for Global Education," in *Global Education: From Thought to Action*, edited by K. A. Tye, (Alexandria, Va.: ASCD), p. 14.

²J. Goodlad, (1990), "Introduction," in *Global Educational School-Based Strategies*, edited by K. A. Tye, (Orange, Calif.: Interdependence Press), p.1.

³J.M. Becker, (1969), "Examination of Objectives, Needs and Priorities in the United States Elementary and Secondary Schools," report to the U.S. Office of Education on Project 6-2408, (Bethesda, Md.: ERIC Document Reproduction Service).

⁴W. M. Kniep, (1985), *A Critical Review of the Short History of Global Education: Preparing for New Opportunities*, (New York: The American Forum for Global Education).

⁵B. B. Tye and K. A. Tye, (in press), *Global Education: A Study of School Change*, (Albany, N.Y.: SUNY Press).

⁶C. Deer and H. Thompson, (1988), *Society and Culture Implementation Study*, (Sydney: Macquarie), p.1.

⁷E. Choldin, (May/June 1989), "Alberta Global Education Project: An Experiment in Professional Development," *The ATA Magazine*.

⁸Swedish National Board of Education, (1989), *Action Programme for the Internationalisation of Education*, (Stockholm: Information Section, Swedish National Board of Education).

⁹International Network on Global Education, (December 1988), *Report Fourth International Conference*, (Devon, U.K.: International Network on Global Education).

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An Invitation to Readers

If you, the reader, know about any particular global education programs or have any thoughts about how we should conduct this proposed study, your comments will be welcome. Please write to Kenneth A. Tye, Chapman College, Orange, CA 92666, or call 714-997-6791.

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Published by HarperCollins Publishers,

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