

CHAPTER 7

THE CLASSROOM AS A GLOBAL COMMUNITY: NATIONALITY AND REGION

OVERVIEW

It is the business of schools to prepare students for life in the larger societies that they are certain to encounter. In a democratic society, this means preparing students not only to know about democracy, but to be able to put it into practice. In a globally interdependent world, this means preparing students for a future where they will increasingly come into contact with people different from themselves. This chapter discusses the importance of constructing classrooms with a global and international focus in order to increase students' cultural understanding and help them become more effective citizens, not only in a national democracy but in a changing and increasingly interconnected world.

OBJECTIVES

1. Students will understand the concept of globalization and become familiar with some of its characteristics.
2. Students will begin to understand the purpose of education in a global community.
3. Students will explore a variety of international perspectives, including models and definitions set forth by the National Council for the Social Studies.
4. Students will learn the characteristics of a global classroom and become familiar with the knowledge and skills required for its creation.
5. Students will explore a variety of means for teaching a global curriculum, and begin to understand the need for preparing their own students for a world in which an international perspective will be a common one.

KEY TERMS

Cross-cultural awareness

Perspective consciousness

Globalization

State of the planet awareness

LECTURE NOTES

I. Education in a Global Society

A. Schools prepare students for life in the larger, democratic—and now, global, society.

1. Students must not only have content knowledge about democracies, but they must also know how to participate in democratic practices.
2. In a globally interdependent world, this means preparing students for a future in which they will come into increasing contact with people different from themselves.
3. Educators are beginning to seek out concepts, skills, and strategies that will help students function effectively in a globally interdependent world.

B. What Is Globalization?

1. Globalization is an increase in the scope and magnitude of human contact with its subsequent escalation of interaction and interdependency; it is the defining concept of the beginning of the 21st century.
2. Global citizens must be able to communicate and collaborate with those whose attitudes, values, knowledge, and ways of doing things differ significantly from their own.

C. Characteristics of Globalization

1. Integration: example, the Internet
2. Dynamism
3. Three kinds of balance
 - a. the traditional balance of power: now in the hand of one nation, the United States (though China and India are of increasing importance)
 - b. a balance between nation-states and global markets, made up of millions of investors around the world
 - c. a balance between individuals and nation-states: Individuals can now exert more influence than before because they are, to a large extent, linked by technology.

II. Teaching with a Global Purpose

A. Education for a Global Perspective

1. *Global perspective* is defined as the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to live effectively in a world possessing limited natural resources and characterized by ethnic diversity, cultural pluralism, and increasing interdependence.

2. Education for a global perspective, as articulated by the National Council for the Social Studies, emphasizes:

- a. Human experience as an increasingly global phenomenon in which people are constantly being influenced by transnational, cross-cultural, and multicultural interaction.
- b. The goods we buy, the work we do, the cross-cultural links we have in our own communities and outside them, and increased worldwide communication capabilities all contribute to an imperative that responsible citizens understand global and international issues.
- c. A wide variety of actors participate on the world stage, including states, multinational corporations, and voluntary nongovernmental organizations, as well as individuals.
- d. Humankind is highly interdependent with the state of the global environment.
- e. Citizen participation at both local and international levels is critical.

3. Education for a global perspective helps individuals better comprehend their own condition in the community and the world and make more accurate and effective judgments. It emphasizes the study of nations, cultures, and civilizations and focuses on understanding the interconnectedness, change, and responsibilities involved in a truly global environment.

B. Cognitive Demands for a Global Mindset

1. Understanding the development of global mindset requires an understanding of the critical periods of individual development.

2. Piaget's Stage Theory of Development provides an understanding of the developmental opportunities of young learners. The theory includes 4 stages of cognitive development:

- a. Sensorimotor (birth-2 years of age)
- b. Preoperational (2-7 years of age)
- c. Concrete Operations (8-12 years of age)
- d. Formal Operations (starting around age 12)

3. Children begin to internalize mental representations of the world around them during the Preoperational stage. At the same time, children exhibit egocentrism that inhibits their ability for cooperative play or concern for others.

4. As children progress from the preoperational stage to concrete operations they begin the process of decentering, especially if provided guidance and practice, and accommodation of alternative points of view. The Concrete Operations stage represents a critical period in the development of an international or intercultural perspective in children.

III. Technology and the Global Mindset

A. While studies show that most teachers are on the ethnocentric side of the intercultural sensitivity continuum, recent studies have shown that their students show evidence of being more sophisticated in terms of intercultural development.

B. This shift may be a result of the increased integration and ubiquitous nature of digital technologies in schools around the world. This makes it increasingly easy to bring children into more frequent and regular interaction with one another, oftentimes in very meaningful ways.

IV. Curriculum Transformation: The International Perspective

Most discussion of what is called global or international education refers to Robert Hanvey's 1978 paper, "An Attainable Global Perspective." In this work, Hanvey identifies five elements of a global perspective which educators can transform into teachable skills and perspectives that cut across academic disciplines and grade levels.

A. Perspective Consciousness

1. Perspective consciousness is an awareness that a person has a view of the world that is not universally shared.
2. Differentiation is made between opinion (the surface layer of one's innermost thoughts) and perspective (hidden, unexamined assumptions and judgments people make about life).
3. Children can develop perspective consciousness through social studies curricula that help examine one's culture from another point of view. Children might discuss how people in the Amazon River area of South America might

view having to deal with blizzards, live with pollution, and how one must go to school in a dark, windowless classroom.

B. State of the Planet Awareness

1. State of the planet awareness refers to knowledge of prevailing world conditions and trends including such things as population growth, migration, economic conditions, and the physical environment.
2. The media brings the globe into people's living rooms on a daily basis. While this makes state of the planet awareness a possibility as never before, it also makes the spread of misinformation easier and faster than ever before.
3. Planet awareness is a priority. Children must be taught to reflect on world conditions that are worsening despite efforts by organizations such as the United Nations.
5. Indicators of deterioration include doubling of world population, unemployment, poverty, television that increases class tensions by focusing on lives of the rich, refugee crises, shrinking world grain production per capita, environmental deterioration, and money spent on weapons.

C. Cross-Cultural Awareness

1. Cross-cultural awareness is an awareness of social and cultural diversity around the world beginning with one's own culture and how it might be viewed from others' perspectives.
2. This is a difficult dimension to attain because people do not have the time or expertise needed to understand those truly different from themselves.
3. Four levels of cross-cultural awareness:
 - a. awareness of superficial or extremely visible cultural traits such as skin color
 - b. awareness of significant but more subtle cultural traits that contrast markedly with one's own and are often interpreted as unbelievable or against common sense
 - c. awareness of significant cultural traits that are believable because they are understandable and come as a result of more intellectual analysis,
 - d. awareness of how another culture feels from the perspective of an insider, which is attained from cultural immersion. Information is believable because the person is familiar at the subjective or affective

level. This is the most difficult level to achieve, but may be tackled in schools through the use of the cultural-general framework previously mentioned. This has been shown to have a significant impact on cognition, affect, and behavior in cross-cultural settings because it is a cognitive tool that engages the emotions.

D. Knowledge of Global Dynamics or World Systems

1. This requires a modest understanding of how world ecosystems operate and how things are interrelated.
2. Students are asked to consider how one decision will impact another decision and so on. For example, how will the closing of a tennis shoe factory in Iowa affect people in Indonesia and Germany?
3. This is a systems design that posits that any new element introduced into a system has unanticipated effects. Therefore, intervening in any system might result in surprise consequences. For example, how will thinning the deer population affect the food chain?

E. Awareness of Human Choice

1. The final, critical step in achieving a global perspective results as people increase their knowledge of the global systems and how changes and decisions made will affect it.
2. This is the development of a global consciousness.

V. What, Specifically, Should Students Study?

A. The American Forum for Global Education identifies three major areas on which a global education curriculum should focus: global issues, problems, and challenges; culture and world areas; and the United States and the world. 10 specific topics of study are recommended:

1. Conflict and its control
2. Economic systems and international trade
3. Global belief systems
4. Human rights and social justice
5. Management of the planet's resources
6. Political systems

7. Population
8. Human commonality and diversity
9. The technocratic revolution
10. Sustainable development

B.Characteristics of a Global Classroom

1. In a global classroom, global education is not an additive approach; it is integrated throughout the curriculum.
2. These classrooms strive to help students develop cognitive skills and attitudes such as empathy, interconnectedness, perspective-taking, cross-cultural understanding, action orientation, and prejudice reduction.
3. Such activities as having overseas pen pals, sharing information which reflects cultural backgrounds, and infusing literacy activities with a global perspective are examples of teaching with a global perspective.

B. Pedagogies: Old and New

1. The global classroom certainly has room for traditional pedagogical practices, but also includes alternatives such as collaborative learning and cooperative grouping; importantly, in a global classroom the perspective is broader.
2. Technology may be used in creative ways, such as connecting to networks to communicate with students in other countries, exchanging stories or group projects via fax or e-mail, or using video conferencing for language instruction.
3. A globally oriented pedagogy can also be implemented without the use of technology by employing many maps and globes, letter-writing campaigns, encyclopedias, national and international newspapers, and United Nations materials.

C. Roles: Old and New

1. Local members of the international community are a rich resource for global classrooms. Members of various cultural groups may be invited in to give differing perspectives, historical accounts, personal narratives, storytelling, etc. which helps to break down some of the personal barriers between people.

2. Students are introduced to different perspectives, cultures, and languages firsthand. As adults from other parts of the world serve as teachers, it helps broaden students' (and teachers') notions of teaching and learning.

D. Place of Content Knowledge: Old and New

1. Globally oriented classrooms integrate subject matter from a variety of disciplines and may be developed jointly by educators from around the world.
2. The Pacific Circle Consortium develops educational materials to integrate the perspectives of the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and Pacific Island nations.
3. One of the projects of the Pacific Circle Consortium is The Ocean Project, which uses the ocean as a curriculum vehicle for study from a variety of perspectives.

E. Assessment: Old and New

1. Assessment varies from traditional to alternative in global classrooms because there are a wide variety of interdisciplinary activities.
2. Technology may also be used to aid in assessment including computer-generated tests, production of videos, etc.

VI. Teaching the Global Perspective

A. A global perspective should be infused into the entire curriculum on a large scale.

B. Until that goal becomes reality, teachers can integrate an international perspective in other ways:

1. International focus courses—such as anthropology, regional history, geography, global or world studies, foreign language, art and music, world religions, ethnic group studies, and international business (which may be most appropriate at the secondary level);
2. Internationalizing instructional methods and materials—involves emphasizing intercultural interaction in the classroom using special experiences of immigrant and international students, as well as employing the culturally appropriate instructional and assessment strategies and materials discussed in this book. Partnership programs can also be developed with schools in other countries, such as the case study that introduces this chapter in the text;
3. Internationalizing the disciplines—infusing key elements of a global perspective across the entire curriculum such as observing and understanding

global warming in science, reading a related book or short story in literature, writing letters to a congressman, discussing how global warming affects other geographic areas such as Australia or Antarctica in geography, and formulating projections for diminishing pollution in math. Other ways to infuse the curriculum include:

- a. Foreign language—studying languages of colonized and immigrant peoples;
- b. Math—studying the metric system, women and development of math, or the ancient Egyptians’ discoveries in math which are a legacy for the African Americans;
- c. History—looking at various perspectives on events such as the Vietnam War from the perspective of Americans, Chinese, Russians, and both Northern and Southern Vietnamese.

C. Programs that Link Schools

1. Associated Schools Project of UNESCO
2. Bridges to Understanding
3. ePals
4. GLOBE (Global Learning and Observations to Benefit the Environment)
5. LinkTV
6. Peace Corps World Wise Schools
7. International Children’s Digital Library
8. iEARN
9. Global SchoolNet
10. Global Classrooms

VII. Ethical Issues

A. A variety of issues in developing a global classroom include fair allocation of technological resources, the need to consider families and communities when discussing global concerns, and balancing advocacy with inquiry.

B. Assessing students on the degree to which they are able to perform an inquiry is more appropriate for schools than assessing a particular espousal of a particular point of view.

C. Global education requires time because it involves behavior change. For example, studies on students working with children with disabilities showed that a 5-week exposure actually had negative impact and was only more positive with follow-up exposure.

D. When people encounter situations that induce or require them to behave in new ways for an extended period of time, long-term attitude and behavior change is possible, but school organizational structures must be modified to encourage and require intergroup interaction over time so that tolerance increases.