

# Trends in Global Education

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Trends in global education are evident in recent conferences and publications. A recent conference on "Goals 2000" (Des Moines, May 5-6, 1995), convened by the Iowa Global Education Association emphasized a global perspective in education. At the conference, perspectives were exchanged with national and international experts regarding national standards and teacher certification from Iowa's Sister States in China, Japan, Russia, Taiwan, Malaysia, and Mexico. Their perspective was identified as a global perspective that "we" need to guide "us" in our thinking. From this point of view, one trend in global education is towards international education.

A second trend in global education is fostered by the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Elliott School of International Affairs of The George Washington University, and the American Forum for Global Education. Under their leadership, global/international education guidelines concerned with elementary and secondary education, higher education, and international literacy are being developed. For them, global education calls upon knowledge and skills from many disciplines, in order to view the world from a variety of perspectives.

In their thinking, the major focus of global education is upon:

1. global issues and concerns,
2. culture and area studies, and
3. America's role in the world (Czarra, 1995).

Presumably, such education will develop student understanding of "our" interdependent world, enable students to acquire essential knowledge of people all over the world, and accept responsibilities as a member of a global as well as local community.

A third trend is mandated by the Iowa Code's requirements for multicultural and global education. In the Code, multicultural approaches are defined as "processes which foster knowledge of, respect and appreciation for, the historical and contemporary

contributions of diverse cultural groups to society." Special emphasis is to be placed on Asian Americans, Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, American Indians, and the handicapped. Moreover, Iowa education is to provide equal opportunity for all participants regardless of race, color, age, national origin, religion, or handicap (12.56[8]).

Further, global education in Iowa is to incorporate "global perspectives into all areas and levels of the educational program so that students have the opportunity to acquire a realistic perspective on world issues, problems, and prospects for an awareness of the relationship between an individual's self-interest and the concerns of people elsewhere in the world (4.5[11])." Iowa's initiative in multicultural and global education, however, remains largely unrealized in many schools.

One reason for the lack of implementation of the mandate is the lack of an overarching framework for developing units and lessons in the classroom. A possible framework is provided by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD). According to this framework, the realities of a globally interrelated and culturally diverse world of the 21st century require an education for all students that will enable them to see themselves as:

HUMAN BEINGS  
whose home is  
PLANET EARTH  
who are citizens of  
A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY  
living in an increasingly  
INTERRELATED WORLD  
and who  
LEARN, CARE, THINK, CHOOSE, and ACT  
to celebrate life on this planet  
and  
to meet the global challenges confronting humankind.

When we emphasize these messages in the lessons we design, notes the ASCD, we help students to recognize the commonalities in all human beings, to become effective caretakers of our planet, to honor human diversity, and to work together for the benefit of all (Anderson, 1994).

Leadership in global education is also provided by Social Studies educators, and the disciplines. The National Commission on Social Studies (1989), for example, has recommended development of a global and multicultural perspectives as two of five major goals for the Social Studies. Its concern for global education was reflected in the subsequent Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (1995). Global Connections (Theme 9) is identified by these standards as one of ten recommended themes in the social studies curriculum.

The realities of global interdependence, notes the Curriculum Standards, require understanding the increasingly important and diverse global connections among world societies and the frequent tension between national interests and global priorities. Accordingly, students need to address such international issues as health care, the environment, human rights, economic competition and interdependence, age-old ethnic enmities, and political and military alliances.

Similar concerns are expressed, albeit in different ways, in the recently published Standards for History, Geography, and Civics. The National Standards for History are two types: historical thinking skills and historical understanding. In grade K-4, an expanding environment approach is followed and organized by topics. Topic 4 of 7 and 8 focuses upon the history of many cultures around the world. A different approach is taken in grades 5-12. Organized by eras, these standards are divided into U.S. history and world history. Presumably, any student who learns history according to these standards, acquires a global education. This presumption is open to challenge given the Western bias of many history materials.

The National Standards for Geography outline a "spatial" view of the "our world." Any student who learns geography to these standards "should" know and understand how to organize information about places and regions, physical systems, human systems, environment and society and how to use geography. Like the National History Standards, the National Geography Standards share a presumption of a global approach despite little attention to the principles of equity, citizenship, and genuine global attitudes.

In contrast to the National History and Geography Standards, the National Standards for Civics and Government pose seven questions which, if answered, indicate student understanding of the content. Of the seven questions, question IV pertains to global

education. Question IV is: "What is the relationship of the United States to Other Nations and to World Affairs?" According to this standard, students should be able to explain how the world is divided into nations and reflect upon how nations interact with each other. From this perspective, global education is essentially national and international education.

Some student needs are also addressed in related professional publications. Illustrative of these sources in the middle grades social studies disciplines is Global Geography (1990). Developed by the Massachusetts Geographic Alliance, Global Geography provides five classroom activities for each of the five geographic themes of location, place, relationships within places, movement, and regions. The outline of each lesson contains: an objective, time required, materials, and procedures for completion in grades 3-9.

Additional support is provided by science educators. The Education in Global Change Project (1994), for example, offers several units which can be used to introduce important scientific principles to secondary and college students. The units include:

- The Changing Atmosphere
- Clues from the Past: Glimpses of our Future
- The Global Carbon Cycle
- Population and Land Use
- Oceans
- Remote Sensing: Window on Global Change.

Each of these units has been written as a series of student activities which include laboratory experiments, data interpretation and decision-making exercises. Indexes showing where different types of activities and key scientific concepts occur are included. Use of each unit could be

- \* as a whole unit, occupying up to 10-12 lessons, and
- \* as a collection or as single activity concepts to illustrate a specific scientific principle or an environmental issue.

Clearly, global education is a shared concern of social studies, social science and science disciplines. Prodded by the mandates of the Iowa Code, these trends in global education in Iowa continue to be nourished within the Social Studies and across the curriculum. The teacher can maintain genuine global connections with current sources of information. These sources include:

Update. Each issue of this newsletter focuses upon one topic from a global perspective. Commentary is provided with articles describing the topic in Latin America, Africa, East Asia, and Russia.

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In Iowa, recent publications include:

Catalog of Global Education Classroom Activities. (1995).

Second Edition, Muscatine, IA: Iowa Global Education Association.

Davenport, Noa Zanolli. Making Global Connections. (1994).

Des Moines, IA. Des Moines Register (Lesson Plans for Grades 6-8).

## References

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- Curriculum Standards for Social Studies. (1995). Washington, D.C.: National Council for the Social Studies.
- Czarra, Fred. (1995). "Guidelines for Global and International Education...." Social Studies Professional. March/April, page 5+.
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