Global Education Literature Review– *Becoming the Change We Want to See*

Literature Review

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The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities

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Introduction

The quest to discover the true meaning of global education or what the global classroom might look like remains elusive. To be sure the sheer enormity of literature only adds to the debate and to the illusion that the answer is somewhere out there. Rather than wasting time searching for a universal definition we might attempt to review the common links, thereby utilizing what we believe to be true as the foundation for further inquiry. LaPayese (2003) suggests that our indecisiveness lends to the notion that, "rhetorical support for global education is evident, but actual implementation is weak" (p. 495). Even as educators, we fail to agree on the 'what' and the 'how' of integrating global education into our classrooms—the result being paralysis—we do nothing for fear of being wrong. In Alberta, a new social studies curriculum is being implemented across the grades with specific learning outcomes related to Global Connections (GC). Clearly, an opportunity has surfaced where youth can reap the benefits of global content, global process, and global values.

Global Education Focuses

The issues of focus for global education appear to have remained relatively constant over time. The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is focusing on the year 2015 as the target date to address the Millennium Development Goals (MDG): health, poverty reduction, education, child mortality, gender equality, environmental sustainability, HIV/AIDS, and global partnerships. CIDA's mandate is to support sustainable development in impoverished countries thereby directly contributing to a more secure, equitable, and prosperous world. Our students discover how Canada aids in the betterment of our world Connected to these goals are the GC learning outcomes for the new Alberta Social Studies Curriculum.

> *Critically examining multiple perspectives and connections among local, national, and global issues develops students' understanding of citizenship and identity and the interdependent or conflicting nature of individuals, communities, societies and nations. Exploring this interdependence broadens students' global consciousness and empathy with world conditions. Students will also acquire a better comprehension of tensions pertaining to economic relationships, sustainability, and universal human rights.*
>
> (Alberta Education, Program of Studies, 2005, p. 7)

The Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet) focuses on United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) themes and sub themes including world concerns, human rights, democracy and tolerance; intercultural learning; and environmental concerns. The language appears clear yet there continues to be a struggle when implementing these ideas into the classroom. LeRoux (2001) states that, "the lack of consensus on a worldwide acceptable definition of global education has been criticized and applauded" (p. 73). She goes on to warn her readers that, "global education is not an additional subject to be dumped on an already loaded curriculum. [It] should focus on the practical and logical interrelatedness of things learned—therefore, prevail and be taught in every classroom and in every subject" (p. 74). Clearly, current research is strongly suggesting that this subject matter should not be taught in isolation: "Global citizenship education must avoid the trap of becoming another dominant discourse" (LaPayese, 2003, p. 500). Creating a global course would only serve as a means of further removing the real world from the classroom. This is reinforced by LaPayese (2003): "Global education must avoid the traditional confines of curriculum development" (p. 499). Apparently, there is no magic bullet when it comes to integrating a global perspective into the

classroom yet, “the structure of schools encourages fragmentation, mystification, simplification, and omission of knowledge for efficiency and control (LaPayese, 2003, p. 500). Not to be in control of the learning—being without the clarity of beginning, middle, and end—may create questions concerning prescribed outcomes.

Impact of Global Education

Bales (2004) contends that there is divergent understanding when it comes to global education. The “knowledge gap frame” suggests that it is impossible to learn all there is to know; therefore, the focus should remain on areas where we have control—such as test scores. Conversely, the “school solutions framework” moves away from the myopic to the larger picture. The emphasis becomes critical thinking, inquiry, respect and action—global education becomes transformative as opposed to merely additive.

An example of this is the CIDA resource for educators: The Global Classroom Initiative. Canadian youth are encouraged to see themselves as one part of a complex and interconnected entity—our world. Through the development of school-based global education resources and activities, young people are given opportunities to become responsible global citizens through research, dialogue, process, and action. These youth are not only actively involved to helping other less-fortunate countries, but they also become more aware of Canada’s role in international aid—helping developing countries help themselves. The Canadian International Development Agency is part of the “school solutions framework” where curriculum and real life intersect.

A transformative paradigm suggests change and change can only begin with the individual. Selby (1991) believes that "an emerging awareness of the world goes hand-in-glove with a growing level of self-awareness" (p. 16). Toh Swee-Hin (1993) states "the fundamental aim of the transformative paradigm is to act as an agent of change" (as cited by Maheu, 1993, p. 18). Clearly, to act as an agent of change requires self control and self understanding. Hin identifies five themes that he believes should be addressed: a) ethical living, b) planetary survival, c) ecological security, d) think globally—act locally, and e) conscientizing and empowering pedagogy. The theory of emotional intelligence (Goleman) examines the knowledge and awareness of self in relation to those around us. It appears that social/emotional growth is a necessary precursor to global connection. Sandy Parker captures the essence of this mutuality:

> *If I am despairing of myself, I despair of the world's future*
>
> *If I am hopeful of myself, I have hope for the world*
>
> *If I am uncaring of myself, I am careless of my environment and of my sister creatures*
>
> *If I am loving, I see the world as cooperative and caring*
>
> *If I am helpless, I see the world at the mercy of events*
>
> *If I feel empowered, I see myself making a difference to my friends and my environment*
>
> *The outer world acts as a mirror to my inner world*
>
> (as cited in Selby, 1991, p. 17)

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (SACSC) identifies four A's as essential components of global citizenship where the development of self is intricately tied to the development of social responsibility: attachment, achievement, autonomy, and altruism. Through the adaptation of Brendtro and Long's work (1995), SACSC identifies these four

elements as essential in the creation of a safe and caring environment. Global citizenship derives from the notion of altruism, or generosity, and is cultivated through concern for others. Research tells us that people gain a sense of self-worth from helping others—a sense of purpose in life. The philosophy of the Circle of Courage states, "In helping others, youth create their own proof of worthiness: they have the power to make a positive contribution to another human life" (Reclaiming Youth Network, retrieved November 3, 2005). The four A's become concentric circles where altruism and global responsibility are synonymous and enveloping of attachment, achievement, and autonomy.

Thus, global education can be likened to the butterfly effect—it begins with the individual—the social/emotional self. Only through the intrapersonal dimension can we begin to move ourselves away from the centre thereby developing the capacity for empathy and ultimately expanding our narrow perspective. The Dalai Lama strongly believes that "every one of us has a responsibility and that is to make a good society" (as cited by Iyer, 2004, p. 69). This could easily be perceived of as our moral or ethical responsibility and to sum up Sergiovanni's (2005) third motivational rule—what is good gets done.

Approaches to Global Education

In their recent article, Joseph and Efron (March, 2005) examine seven practices that they perceive as separate entities yet are all intrinsically connected to moral education.

Character Education—rests on the premise that schooling can and should shape the behaviour of young people by inculcating the *proper* virtues: self-discipline, compassion, responsibility, friendship, work, courage, perseverance, honesty, loyalty and faith.

Cultural Heritage—is closely connected to character education in that it too is focused on values but rather than being taken from the mainstream, they are derived from the traditions of non-dominant cultures. In this model, the spheres of school, home, and community are interconnected. An example of cultural heritage would be the Aboriginal perspective where values emphasized would include "respect for people and their feelings (especially elders), and living in harmony with nature" (p. 527).

Caring Community—this model emphasizes the social and emotional health of all its members: nurturing, closeness, emotional attachment and respectful/supportive relationships. Interpersonal and intercultural understanding is accentuated through inclusiveness. Research strongly supports that "students with a strong sense of community are more likely to act ethically and altruistically, develop social and emotional competencies, avoid drug use and violent behaviour, and be academically motivated" (p. 528). The catalyst for moral development becomes emotional well-being.

Peace Education—is founded on an "awareness of the interdependence of all things and a profound sense of responsibility for the fate of our planet and for the well- being of humanity" (p. 528). The components of this moral world include conflict resolution, human rights education, peace studies, environmental education, and the interdependency of world issues.

Social Action—through justice and compassion, young people become social agents capable of affecting change by critically examining unjust situations and participating in political processes. This approach "taps students' idealism for bringing about a better world—to heal, repair, and transform the world" (p. 529). Learning becomes active, integrated, self-directed and meaningful. Students become moral agents of change by way of their involvement.

Just Community—stems from the ideas of Lawrence Kohlberg where moral reasoning follows stages of development. Students are encouraged to reflect on real-world dilemmas such as "freedom combined with responsibility, cooperation over competition, and how to balance the needs of individuals with those of the community" (p. 531). Justice becomes the safeguard of individuals' rights and the community's well-being.

Ethical Inquiry—also influenced by Kohlberg's theory that deliberation promotes moral development. Students consider "how human beings should act; life's meaning and the human place in the world; the sources of evil and suffering; and universal existential concerns and ways of knowing such as the meaning of friendship, love, and beauty" (p. 531). Ethical inquiry can and should be integrated into all academic areas thus providing opportunities for students to appreciate others viewpoints and to bring different perspectives into their own deliberations. The search for moral identity becomes an explicit goal. A predominant fit is created between Joseph and Efron's seven practices and CIDA's Global Classroom Initiative—specifically the Caring [Global] Community, Peace Education, Social Action, and the Just Community.

The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities (SACSC) focuses on a *comprehensive* approach to learning. The SACSC topics (*what*) are weaved throughout existing curriculum and can easily be connected with global issues. Addressing the Millennium Development Goals through projects in developing nations—CIDA's mandate - requires an understanding and awareness of the SACSC topics: *Living Respectfully; Developing Self-Esteem; Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice; Managing Anger and Dealing With Bullying; and Working It Out Together/Resolving Conflicts Peacefully.* Clearly, global issues and the SACSC topics complement each other. By using three approaches: *modeling* (how),

curriculum integration (what, how) and *instructional methods* (how, why), SACSC attempts to identify all avenues that may affect the learning process. Referring to Joseph and Efron's (2005) seven practices of moral education, the reader is introduced to the '*what*' of moral education. Werner (1996) focuses on the '*how*' of infusing a global perspective into the classroom. Only the SACSC programming addresses all of these elements.

It can be argued that Joseph and Efron's (2005) *moral worlds* can, in fact, act as various components to what we have come to understand as global education. Returning to the UNESCO International Commission on Education, they cite four main pillars of learning as integral to a global connection: **learning to know**, **learning to be**, **learning to do**, and **learning to live together**. There happens to be a very familiar ring to these pillars when recalling SACSC four A's and their approaches to integration. Rather than attempting to minimize the definition, maybe the approach would better be suited to creating an umbrella where the notion of global education is all encompassing. It seems silly to continue beating the same drum. So…what is global education? It is multi-dimensional with multiple perspectives; it is critical and creative; it is committed to self-directed learning; it is empathy, altruism, tolerance, diversity, awareness, and respect; it is responsibility; it is action; it is presence; it is historic; it is holistic; it is systems (economic, political, ecological, technological); it is demanding; it is misunderstood and misinterpreted; it is human.

Curriculum Integration

According to Werner (1996) there are various starting points for infusing a global perspective into existing school curriculum:

Systems focus—shifts students from seeing problems in isolation towards looking for possible relationships among them: an appreciation of context, complexity, tolerance of ambiguity, and uncertainty, and suspicion of oversimplification of local, regional and global issues.

Future focus—linking the present with the future; an ethos of 'Our future is now!' may lead to effective oriented initiatives

Moral focus—a belief that people share a common humanity. Students are sensitized to the fact that our interrelatedness always implies the question of morality.

Reflexive focus—the individual's view of the world is unique and not universally shared; self-reflection is necessary for open-mindedness and objectivity; students need to acquire a social sensitivity, an accommodative, inclusive, altruistic ethos, and a demonstrated preparedness to look at realities from different (often conflicting) viewpoints.

(as cited by Hendrix, 199, p. 306)

Implications for Teaching and Learning

1. Global education must be integrated into existing curriculum using a multidisciplinary approach.

2. Students and teachers should take an active role in their understanding of CIDA's Millennium Development Goals (MDG's) and the roles that Canadians play in International affairs.

3. Students of all ages should be given the opportunity, through curricular content, to become familiar with and accepting of themselves before being expected to empathize with the external world (social emotional learning - SEL). This progression is emphasized in the SACSC topics _ respect and responsibility first; understanding our self identity and building self esteem in ourselves, then in others; respecting diversity in people and preventing prejudice; becoming aware of and managing our own emotions and the emotions of others; and understanding and resolving conflict.

4. Preservice and experienced teachers' teaching practices will benefit from professional development focusing on melding global issues with existing curriculum content.

5. Learning must be authentic if it is to be meaningful—students must see a connection between the classroom and the 'real' world.

Recommendations

1. That some form of 'moral' education be weaved throughout a school's culture: character; cultural heritage; caring community; peace education; social action; just community; ethical inquiry.

2. That students be involved in at least one project per year (individually, small groups, or whole school) where teaching and learning affects positive change in developing countries.

3. That students learn about and appreciate the role that Canadians play (Non Governmental Organizations—NGO's) in helping people help themselves.

4. That schools have a greater awareness of The Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities and a greater opportunity to implement the SACSC programming into their curriculum and culture.

5. That the 4A's (Altruism; Autonomy; Achievement; Attachment)—SACSC philosophy—become the springboard from which schools choose to become actively involved in world issues/concerns

6. That part of professional development for teachers and support staff include social emotional development.

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