***NCSS Position Papers on Global and International Education***

<http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/global>

**Preparing Citizens for a Global Community**

A Position Statement of National Council for the Social Studies (Revised)

National Council for the Social Studies believes that an effective social studies program must include global and international education. Global and international education are important because the day-to-day lives of average citizens around the world are influenced by burgeoning international connections. The human experience is an increasingly globalized phenomenon in which people are constantly being influenced by transnational, cross-cultural, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic interactions. 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. The increasing globalization in the human condition has created additional opportunities and responsibilities for individuals and groups to take personal, social, and political action in the international arena.

Global education and international education are complementary approaches with different emphases. The integration of both perspectives is imperative for students to develop the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for responsible participation in a democratic society and in a global community in the twenty-first century. International studies focuses on the in-depth study of a specific area or region of the world to develop knowledge and understanding of another culture. A global perspective is attentive to the interconnectedness of the human and natural environment and the interrelated nature of events, problems or ideas. An important characteristic of global studies is the analysis or problems, issues, or ideas from a perspective that deals with the nature of change and interdependence.

<http://www.socialstudies.org/positions/global/whatisglobaled>

**What are Global and International Education?**

Descriptors

The terms global education and international education are used to describe strategies for:

* gaining knowledge of world cultures;
* understanding the historical, geographic, economic, political, cultural, and environment relationships among world regions and peoples;
* examining the nature of cultural differences and national or regional conflicts and problems; and
* acting to influence public policy and private behavior on behalf of international understanding, tolerance and empathy.

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Global education focuses on the interrelated nature of condition, issues, trends, processes, and events while international education emphasizes specific world regions, problems, and cultures. International education encompasses studies of specific areas or regions of the world as well as the in-depth examination of a single culture or some aspect of that culture, such as its history, language, literature, religion, political organization, economic system, or current issues. it also includes cross-cultural studies that use a comparative approach in the examination of the characteristics of two or more cultures. Multi-cultural education is a closely related approach that explores the interactions among differing cultures within a political region.

**Development of the Concepts of Global Education**

In a social studies classroom, international studies targets the in-depth study of a specific area or region of the world to develop knowledge and understanding of another culture. In the elementary or middle school classroom, area studies focus on specific cultures or nations such as the Andean region or Zimbabwe, as a means of introducing students to the geography, history, economic relationships, and cultures of other countries. Such studies should also include an introduction to a nation’s literature, music, folklore, visual arts, and popular culture. A comparative approach helps students understand similarities among cultures as well as the distinctive qualities of societies. At the high school level, global and international studies are integrated and folded into specific disciplines or areas of study such as geography, economics, history, political science, and current affairs. At this level, the causes and effects of international problems or conflicts are a major focus of study.

The concept of international education is not limited to the social studies classroom. An opportunity for the socials studies teacher to engage in an interdisciplinary approach to international education can be found in the foreign language classroom. Here the primary object of study is language as a form of communication and as a powerful vehicle of culture and identity. The major goal of second language learning is the development of both the language skills and the cultural understandings needed to function in and to appreciate another culture. In addition to study of the linguistic structure, the second language classroom integrates experiences that focus on patterns of everyday living, such as social mores, occupations, and family live, as well as history, literature and the fine arts. Students are encouraged to compare another culture with their own in order to gain a better understanding of both. The international influences of the target language and culture are also examined. For example, students might identify and study the areas of the world where French or Spanish are spoken, explore the influence of Japanese culture in the visual arts, or the contributions of Germany in science, literature and music.

Global education as a concept has been more difficult to put into practice. Social studies efforts have fallen short by presenting a fragmentary view of the world. Global Studies does not deal in isolation with a problem, an area of the world, or an aspect of a specific culture. Instead, the dynamic expressions and influences of that culture must be examined. An important characteristic of global studies is the analysis of problems, issues or ideas from a perspective that deals with the nature of change and interdependence. This perspective refers to the interlocking components of both human and natural systems. Change in one part of a system is likely to affect other elements of that system and related systems. Accordingly, a global perspective attentive to the interconnectedness of the human and natural environment and the interrelated nature of events, problems, or ideas. It is important for students to understand that activities or decisions made by individuals or nations in one part of the world can have an important impact on both the local and world environment and on people in other parts fo the world. In fact, such an understanding should be central to global studies.

For example, a global perspective on a topic such as population change might lead to and examination of the impact of this change on environmental quality and resource management. As a case study, these issues would be analyzed within the context of a specific nation or culture, and interactions with other areas of the world would be identified. Students would examine the cause and effect issues relating to population growth and movement in a specific area, nation or community. The impact of changes on live in near-by areas also would be explored, and comparisons could be drawn to world population patterns. The learning tools acquired through the in-depth study of this topic would then be applied to other topics or issues.

The integrative nature of global and international education can be seen in these examples. In order to understand problems or issues that are global in nature, a student must have a strong knowledge base from several disciplines. The skills to acquire and analyze information about specific cultures and regions of the world must be developed. Central to this process is the existence of a civic environment which permits the responsible exchange and debate of information and ideas.

Why are Global and Education and International Education Important?

Discussion

Global education and international education are important because the day-to-day lives of average citizens around the world are influenced by burgeoning international connections. The goods we buy, the work we do, the cross-cultural links we have in our own communities and outside of them, and increased worldwide communication capabilities all contribute to an imperative that responsible citizens understand global and international issues.

In studying the traditions, history, and current challenges of other cultures, the perspective consciousness of our students must be raised and ethnocentric barriers must be addressed. The social studies curriculum should provide a forum for discussion of issues of inequity and unfairness, racism, and power in and among societies.

Multiculturialism is a component of interdisciplinary curricula, but it must be distinguished from global and international education. Multicultural issues focus on accepting people from many cultural backgrounds within a political entity, whereas global and international education move far outside of one‚sown country. Studying the common threads and themes of daily live in other countries helps students see the human condition, clarifying their understanding that across the globe, people share common concerns, but find solutions in different ways.

The Internet is one tool among a wide array of technological resources that is revolutionizing the access to up-to-date information that social studies teachers can utilize in teaching a global perspective.

**Evidence of Globalization**

In summary, the imperative of global and international studies is found in the following evidence of globalization characteristic of our planet.

* the technical developments of global systems of communication and transportation;
* the change from local, regional, and national economies into a global economy;
* the increased interaction among societies, resulting in a need for understanding the distinctiveness as well as commonalities of world cultures that coexist with an array of distinctive local, national and regional cultures;
* the world-wide political interdependence that is altering traditional boundaries between domestic and international politics;
* the impact of human activity upon the planet‚s ecosystem and the constraints on human activity imposed by limits of the system;
* the power of art and popular culture to communicate common affective and cognitive experiences around the globe;
* the perspective consciousness that expands our daily awareness that we are members of the global human species, with the world as our community;
* the changes in land use

**Teaching and Learning Concepts**

Social studies teaching and learning concepts that issue from the imperatives of globalization include;

* rapid change is operative and characteristic;
* there are an increasing number of corporations and jobs with international connections;
* the Information Age increases interrelatedness among all peoples;
* political changes across the world and increased interaction among governments require understanding of others‚ traditions and cultures. This is central to cooperative problem solving;
* interdependent global economy and internationalization of economies is a reality;
* there are problems as well as benefits related to globalization.

How Should We Teach Global Education?

Recommendations

The social studies should emphasize:

* That the human experience is an increasingly globalized phenomenon in which people are constantly being influenced by transnational, cross-cultural, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic interactions. Viewing human experience only in relation to a North American or European frame of reference is unrealistic given the globalized nature of American society today. Today, the social studies should include a world centered treatment of humankind. For example, the teaching of history can be improved by the use of a global approach to the study of our past and by the addition to the curriculum of more content focused on developing nations and domestic minorities.
* The variety of actors on the world stage. The dramatic increase in transnational interactions in recent years has produced growing numbers of individuals, groups, and agencies with international contacts and influence. The character and influence of multinational corporations, church groups, scientific and cultural organizations, United National agencies, and local, state, and federal agencies working with and serving the community deserve fuller treatment in the social studies curriculum.
* That human kind is an integral part of the world environment. The human-natural environment should be seen as a single system. This requires an emphasis on (1) the ultimate dependence of humankind upon natural resources;(2) the fact that natural resources are limited: (3) the nature of the planet’s ecosystem: and (4) the impact of ecological laws on human culture.
* The linkages between past actions, present social, political, and ecological realities and alternative futures. Students should perceive the close relationships between past, present and future. The use of “historical flashbacks”, for example, can add to students‚ understanding of the relation of past to present. Greater emphasis is needed on studies designed to improve students‚ ability to see present choices as links to possible alternative futures.
* Citizens‚ participation in world as well as local affairs. World affairs have been treated as a spectator sport in which only the “expert” can participate. The increasing globalization in the human condition has created additional opportunities and responsibilities for individuals, and groups to take personal, social and political action in the international arena. The curriculum should demonstrate that individuals and groups can influence and can be influenced by world events. Furthermore, social studies curriculum should help develop the understanding, skills, and attitudes needed to respond effective and responsibly to world events.

To become a more effective agent of citizen education in a global age, the school in general, and the social studies teacher specifically, needs to continue to expanded efforts to globalized the curriculum and the classroom.

To engage students in global education, educators should:

* use an interdisciplinary approach within and beyond social studies and make links to multicultural education;
* take advantage of technology, including Internet and e-mail;
* utilize primary sources from other countries, from constitutions to literature to artifacts;
* include internationally experienced persons; students, teachers, parents,and others in the community;
* emphasize interactive methodology, such as a model United Nations and cross-cultural simulations and role plays;
* address global issues with an approach that promotes multiple perspectives and intellectual honesty and action;
* encourage new avenues for research in the international arena and encourage teachers to participate and/or make use of this research in their classrooms.