

### “A Challenge to Act”

So it is time to redefine my philosophy of education. The topics that were explored in this *Globalization and Advocacy* course have influenced my thoughts about education. How could they not? We are certainly in a new era of globalization, one unknown to me when I first developed such a philosophy. Pondering the differences between the old and new, I realize that this modern version has a theme to it. The new educator is a catalyst, one who allows the student to discover his true self and develop into a self-reliant, successful learner because he understands how to learn. Let me articulate the details of my current philosophy of education and how this course content has helped shape it into one that considers the impacts of globalization today and in the future.

Education should give students encouragement to explore, problem solve and create. Today's education should prepare students to be successful in our future age. This future age is described in Mark Milleron's article, *Transcendence and Globalization: Our Education and Workforce Development Challenge* as a “creative age” which needs “technology, talent, and tolerance to drive success.” (2007 p. 35) Furthermore, education should develop students into people who know how to learn. In other words they should become critical thinkers. “I am talking about tough-minded tools for living and learning; the core thinking skills; the ability to take information, assess its sources, synthesize it, and analyze it...the ability to learn--to embrace continual learning.” (Milleron 2007 p.34) Education must provide resources for students to learn from and it must show them how to use the resources in ways that will be most beneficial.

Knowing how to learn develops confidence for a student which is essential for another element of what education should be. It should be an avenue for students to foster self-esteem and individualism as described in our study of “Identity and Our Schools”. In today's

globalized society, students need to be taught that humanity is shared, and at the same time grasp the importance of the uniqueness of one's own identity. Going along with the norm and blending into the crowd, will not set students up for success in the future. Education must motivate them to be personable and creative; to be their own unique selves; to set them apart and be captivating to future employers. Alan S. Binder says the services most needed by students in the future will be "personal services". In his article, *Offshoring: The Next Industrial Revolution* he says, "Services that cannot be delivered electronically,... have one essential characteristic: personal, face-to-face contact is either imperative or highly desirable."(2006 p.6) He continued by saying, "...how children are educated may prove to be more important than how much...people skills may become more valuable than computer skills... Creativity will be prized...it is necessary to steer youth away from tasks that are routine or prone to routinization that requires real imagination."(2006 p.10)

As alluded to above, education should provide students opportunities to be successful in our future world. Globalization is changing our world, in that, it is not as expansive and unattainable as it once was. The world is a place that is accessible and exposed to everyone. Students need to understand and work with diverse people. As Thomas Friedman explains, the world is "shrinking" by globalization and it is doing so with a "diverse group of individuals". His ideas in *It's a Flat World, After All* bring forth that we are educating people who live and work differently today due to our technological advances. He says that technology enables us to "...innovate without having to emigrate". (2005 p.3) He shows that education must include collaboration. This influences my philosophy of education by including teacher modeling of how to listen, to be accepting of others and to take responsibility for your duties in a project. He says, "...a global, web-enabled playing field...allows for multiple forms of collaboration on research and work in real time without regard to geography, distance or, ...even language." (2005 p.4)

Finally, to complete my modern philosophy of education, I would include the school's responsibility to view students as individual learners, with unique learning styles, or as Howard Gardner refers to them as "intelligences". His idea of people possessing multiple intelligences that are used interchangeably and sometimes simultaneously, according to what is being learned, should be embedded in the philosophy of education. This idea is mirrored by Amy Gutman in her article, *Challenges of Multiculturalism in Democratic Education*. She tells us how to help foster student self-esteem. Here is what she says, "For schools to cultivate a sense of self-esteem in students that is sustainable alongside mutual respect among citizens, schools need to help every student succeed academically. Students learn to appreciate themselves as accomplished individuals when schools help them become accomplished learners."(1996) Her thoughts of students appreciating themselves as accomplished individuals and learners is connected to an understanding that we learn in different ways for different purposes. Learners are all unique and can use their "intelligences" to achieve their highest learning potential. Thus far in considering education today, in an interconnected world that has its challenges and its simplicities due to globalization, my hope is that this philosophy of education covers the essential components of education. Next is considering how globalization impacts my teaching, students, the school and society.

For me as a teacher, after studying globalization, it will impact my teaching in a few different ways. First, I feel that I am obligated to provide my students with opportunities to understand what it means to live in a global world. They need to be shown that what we do, how we think and how we act locally, will have an impact on others around the world. This would be teaching them how to think and behave like global citizens. In turn, I need to treat my students as global students by making connections and references outside of our small town to places around the world. Also, with globalization in mind, I will change the problem-solving tasks that I present, in all content areas, to ones that are globally relevant. Finally, I will need

to supply adequate resources, and mostly technological ones, that include opportunities to collaborate with others outside our local area.

Globalization will impact student learning because students will be much more than memorizers or regurgitators of information. Learners in our present and future days of globalization are collaborators, and not just with each other in their own classrooms, but with diverse populations from numerous places around the world. They will have access to a plethora of learning materials and will be able to manage new information with a global perspective, considering points of view that are impacted by environmental, political, economic and cultural experiences far different from their own. They will be participating in discussions where they listen to others' global viewpoints and share their own unique ones. They will use critical thinking skills as they learn how to become learners and they will use technology as their primary tool to access that learning. Students will use creativity and their own uniqueness to express what they have learned and to find ways to learn more. Student learning will continue to evolve with the changes globalization brings to our world

The effects globalization has on students and teachers will impact the school community and our society as a whole. For one, a school community will need to share the idea of global citizenship for students by encouraging social justice as a norm to be accepted by all. Schools and societies will need to celebrate creativity of its students and teachers and view it as an important skill to use that sets oneself apart from others and makes one marketable. Schools will need to see themselves as part of the globe and begin comparing themselves to schools all over the world, rather than just in their own town, state or nation. One of the most important changes our schools will need to make, for the good of students, is to understand future trends for job opportunities and offer curriculum that will match "personal services"; those non-outsourcing, non-offshoring jobs of the future. Also, schools will need to improve technology by having it available and accessible to everyone. This means ensuring proper

training for teachers, support within the schools for teachers and students, using free Web 2.0 tools, keeping up to speed with new technology and funding the upkeep and replacement of technology hardware. Finally, schools and society will need to uphold the message of tolerance of diverse cultural groups as essential and have it be the only acceptable attitude for education to flourish in.

As far as our society as a whole, it will also be impacted by globalization. First, it will need to practice acceptance toward multiculturalism in order for students to have a chance at living to the full positive potential of a globalized world. This includes again, tolerance of differences among people, meaning justice and equality for all groups. In addition, society will need to go beyond being helpful and charitable only within its own borders, but will have to act with compassion and generosity towards people in need all over the world. Further, our society will need to put more funding into fine arts and promote creativity among its population so its members can be prepared for the future changes in types of available jobs. Our students are dependent on their school community and their society to help them prosper in this new era of globalization.

The educational issues from globalization are many. Education must promote a shared humanity through the educators' role-modeling of it; it must help develop a sense of cosmopolitanism for students; and it must properly tackle the possible increase in immigration. As far as promoting a shared humanity the teachers must speak about and show interest in humanity outside of the local area. Students must be given opportunities to be involved in discussions about the impacts their decisions have on others both locally and globally. Educators must show students that they are living in a time that information is easily and rapidly shared around the world. Students will need to be shown that they can affect others who are living very far away from them, through the use of technology and its communication tools. To help students understand the importance of shared humanity, educators must speak the term

regularly to have it become a natural way of student vocabulary. In addition, teachers need to include cultural studies and experiences of diversity wherever possible in the students' daily studies.

Globalization offers education the chance to help students develop a sense of cosmopolitanism, where they are exposed to many different cultures. Teachers can help this happen by extending our science and social studies topics to include topics that affect people of diverse cultures and in far away places. Some topics could include natural disasters, geographical landforms and climate, holidays and celebrations, agriculture, and animal populations just to name a few. Education can expose students to global issues by posing problems to solve that are relevant to others outside of their locale as well as themselves. It can bring global issues into writing assignments, research topics and technology use. These are some possible ways to help students see that they are living in a world surrounded by various cultures, with similar problems and sometimes very different needs than their own.

Education may be impacted by an increase in immigration as some countries are left with smaller work pools and larger retirement populations. There may become a reliance on immigration to fill their manpower needs. With immigration comes increased diversity of culture and a possible lack of shared identity. Education will need to address acceptance of diverse cultures by creating an atmosphere of equality and justice for all. At the same time, each student should be given both the chance to be and see himself as unique and the chance to experience similarities with peers. Students can discuss and problem solving real problems that immigrants encounter. Technology can be used to exemplify these problems in different places around the world. Technology can be used to share stories of immigrants and present solutions to problems through Web sites, blogs, wikis, videos and digital stories.

The challenge for me is to address the reality of globalization with real, working experiences for my second graders. Currently my classroom is filled with technology capability,

and I am increasing my use of it with my students rapidly, so technology use will continue to be a prevalent part of our daily learning. Its use will keep growing in my classroom and I will encourage it to happen in all classrooms in our school. One technology tool that offers collaboration opportunities is Google and its many applications. My students and I use Google for searching for information, images and videos. We use Google Docs, Presentation, Forms, Blogger, Spreadsheets and Gmail. There are more apps for us to explore and I will add them to our tech tools list and give more opportunities to use the ones mentioned. The motivation behind this is to become more culturally aware and collaborative with others. One way that we will use these, in hopes of making globalization alive in our classroom, is by creating digital stories about diverse cultures, or depicting global problems and solutions. We will also use Google to search for global needs other children, families and even animals have that we can learn about and react to. We will read Web pages and digital stories from other students around the world to learn about their challenges and then discuss and brainstorm ways we could help. Another project my students and I will undertake is beginning e-pal communications with students in other North American countries as we study North America this year. We will create and maintain a class Wiki to share with others about our classroom, what we are studying, our school and our town and share it with our e-pals and others in hopes of opening up broader areas of communication. We will search online for other classroom Wikis and Blogs to learn about people from other places. Then we will start our own class blog to share. In our reading program we will choose more multicultural and more geographical books to promote learning about other cultures, places and people. We use Reading A-Z, RAZ-Kids, and Writing A-Z, all on-line programs that will provide these resources. Finally, we will try to use video conference calling through Skype or a similar tool and take virtual field trips to give students opportunities to speak to and see others live, in other areas of the world.

This course has motivated me to offer a new kind of learning for my students. There are so many opportunities for me to expose my students to our great world. There are many ways that I can help them be prepared for the type of world that they will one day work in and contribute to. The most important message I took from this course is that we are not living in a small space in the world anymore, but we are sharing the great big world. It is tangible and belongs to us all to share together. This message will be modeled and shared with my students from now on.

## Resources

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