Global Education – Review of the Literature

Global education is a term that has gained in usage in education and international development settings over the past two decades. In its broadest sense - the usage we found employed by most educators and teachers in our study - global education includes any effort to introduce international issues in the classroom. However, a number of educational experts have tried to give global education a much more precise definition, one which specifies a certain set of topics, issues, attitudes and pedagogical practices, and which responds to the key challenges of an increasingly globalized world. In this chapter we look at the evolution and conceptualization of global education, and explore what recent researchers tell us about its implementation.

Global Education: The History of an Idea

For many years, in Canada and around the world, the teaching of international issues has been a feature of public education. In the early 20th century, for example, both British and Canadian public school children learned about the role of the British Empire, European wars, and the importance of charity. However, as early as 1910, teachers and educational organizations in Canada, the US and Britain had begun to develop alternative curricula about international issues. Organizations such as the New Education Fellowship and the Workers’ Educational Association made important efforts to link the study of international issues to the promotion of world peace, learner-centred models of pedagogy, and education for international understanding. Social Studies also developed as a distinct school subject in this period, separated from the “older” subjects of History and Geography, in which knowledge was taught about “other” countries.

At the end of World War II, these alternative approaches to teaching about international issues were incorporated into the mandates of several United Nations organizations. Thus the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and its sister organization, the International Bureau of Education (IBE), began to advocate a form of teaching that fosters world peace through international understanding. The idea is succinctly captured in the preamble to UNESCO’s constitution: “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.” This idea was later echoed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which includes the following passage:

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (Par. 2, Article 26)
Teaching about international issues, however, remained relatively unchanged in the years immediately after World War II. Public school curricula tended to retain a predominantly national focus, concentrating on molding children into membership in national society and introducing only the high politics of world affairs (Rauner, 1998). Cold War tensions reinforced these traditional, nationalistic approaches.

An important sea change began to unfold in the 1960s, as international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and returning international development workers began to expand their public engagement efforts. Along with UNICEF and other UN organizations, these NGOs helped to establish the field of “development education,” reaching schools across Europe and North America. Another movement, for “peace education,” developed in the US and the UK with support from anti-war and anti-nuclear advocacy movements. The approach of both movements drew heavily from Paulo Freire’s critical pedagogy and Johan Galtung’s concepts of “positive peace” and “structural violence.”

Drawing on these educational movements, a group of academics and educationists began to systematize these alternative approaches to teaching about international issues in the 1970s and early 1980s. Such early thinkers as Anderson (1977) and Hanvey (1976) argued that children were learning little or poorly about how to live in an increasingly interdependent world. They criticized the official curriculum’s focus on “other peoples and cultures” as inculcating a “them/us” perspective. They viewed the emphasis on foreign affairs as obscuring active citizen involvement. Along with others, these educationists began to link the goals of the “development education” and “peace education” movements with the UN’s “education for international understanding and human rights” efforts, and with progressive notions of child-centred and affective learning. They also forged a link to domestic educational movements for civil rights and multiculturalism, and included the burgeoning efforts of the new human rights education movement (Fujikane, 2003). Issues of environmental sustainability later complemented those of social justice and intercultural understanding within human societies (Pike & Selby, 1988, 1999, 2000; Richardson, Blandes, Kumano & Karaki, 2003; Osler, 1994, 2002).

By the early 1980s, global education was a well-established field of curriculum inquiry that had generated interest and support from teachers’ organizations, UN bodies and international aid agencies. Increasingly, global education has appeared as a goal or theme in national curricula, often modified as “global citizenship education” to amplify the philosophy of active learning and public engagement that underpins the work of global education proponents (Rauner, 1998). As Davies suggests, this new focus on global citizenship “is a confirmation of the direct concern with social justice and not just the more minimalist interpretations of global education which are about ‘international awareness’ ” (2006, p. 6). Today, the term global education and its related educational movements appear increasingly in formal curricula around the world.

Despite its apparent success, the history of global education has not been without its tensions and setbacks. From the late 1980s through the 1990s, government cut-backs and a back-to-basics philosophy dominated educational policies across OECD countries, limiting the actual implementation of global education in schools. Tension continues between the global education ideal and efforts to focus schooling on the preparation of an internationally competitive workforce. More recently, in the context of the events of 9/11, debates about the value of national identity, immigrant assimilation, and conflict between specific religious or ethnic alliances and a universal model of global citizenship have emerged. Such tensions make the implementation of global education increasingly complex and difficult, and threaten the very notion of a universal global education/global citizenship ideal.
Global Education: A Composite Ideal

What then is included in the concept of global education? Drawing from a range of descriptions provided by academics and international groups (see Table 2.2 at the end of this chapter), we found that there is a broadly concurrent set of issues, goals and approaches associated with the term. Six main orientations seem to be common across all of the formal definitions of global education we reviewed:

- A view of the world as one system – and of human life as shaped by a history of global interdependence.
- Commitment to the idea that there are basic human rights and that these include social and economic equality as well as basic freedoms.
- Commitment to the notion of the value of cultural diversity and the importance of intercultural understanding and tolerance for differences of opinion.
- A belief in the efficacy of individual action.
- A commitment to child-centred or progressive pedagogy.
- Environmental awareness and a commitment to planetary sustainability (the most recent addition).

Some authors have conceptualized global education as a continuum that begins at traditional practices for teaching about world affairs and world cultures, and moves along towards an ever-deepening version of global education that focuses not simply on content knowledge but on the attitudes, values and behaviours needed for global citizenship. At the far end of this continuum would be a commitment to global social justice, universal rights and ecological sustainability.

We can also describe agreement among global educators around a set of “dos” and “don'ts” for educational practice, as seen in Table 2.1 on page 10.

It should be clear from the previous section that the global education concept is both very wide in scope and extremely demanding to implement. The idealized vision of global education put forth by its proponents has raised many questions and concerns. In this section we name and briefly describe four major challenges or tensions in the global education construct:

1. Conflicts between global education ideals and the values held within the broader communities and contexts in which teachers work

Global educators often posit very specific views of what is “good” and “valuable” – sometimes in ways that have not gained widespread public endorsement and that would raise immediate objections. There are three clear examples. First, global educators are often dismissive of efforts to link learning to the enhancement of international competitiveness (Richardson, 2004). Yet many parents and leaders think that education is legitimately related to greater economic success for both individual and nation. The notion of global citizenship is also contentious when defined as belief in the need for a supranational political authority – something many view with skepticism (Heater, 1996). Similarly, not everyone will agree with Oxfam's definition of global education as something that is essentially concerned with moral outrage and a sense of social injustice (Oxfam, 1997). We know from research that teachers will steer away from direct engagement with issues that imply conflict – often retreating to the “thin” version of global education which simply introduces students to other cultures and societies (Bickmore, 2005).
### TABLE 2.1
THE DOS AND DON’TS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Global Education teaches...</th>
<th>Global Education does not teach...</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Global Interdependence</td>
<td>• Them/us mentality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Links local to global</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Global social justice</td>
<td>• Global competitiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Solidarity</td>
<td>• Charity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tolerance</td>
<td>• Chauvinism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Valuing diversity</td>
<td>• Aiming for uniformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cosmopolitan or post-national citizenship</td>
<td>• National citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Every human shares same rights and responsibilities</td>
<td>• Nation as main or sole allegiance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Active citizenship</td>
<td>• Elite forms of citizenship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transformative potential of individual and collective action</td>
<td>• Sole focus on formal mechanisms of the national and international government: leadership, laws, electoral politics, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Role of international organizations in fostering global citizenship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Critical thinking including deliberative and decision-making skills</td>
<td>• Passive or uncritical thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• “Transmission approaches to learning”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attention to sources of disagreement and conflict including forms of “structural violence” and structured social exclusion</td>
<td>• Issues and cultures in a way that ignores conflictual and contested issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Strong sense of moral purpose (often including a sense of outrage about injustice)</td>
<td>• A value-neutral view of world issues</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Ambiguity and under-definition

If we look again, for example, at the notion of global citizenship, we can see first that there is a problem in transposing the notion of citizenship to a global scale precisely because there is not a fixed political system or enforceable set of rights and responsibilities on this scale (Kymlicka, 2003). Furthermore, there are tensions in the notion of citizenship itself – among, for example, more republican views that stress responsibilities, liberal views that focus on rights and freedoms, and social democratic and communitarian views that focus on equality or group membership (Kymlicka & Norman, 1995). Tucking all these theoretical divisions into the overarching notion of “global citizenship” glosses over the complexity facing teachers when they try to implement global citizenship education in their classrooms (Evans, 2006).

3. Complexity of holistic or world-system approaches

Global educators not only advocate incorporation of a large number of themes or issues (for example, see Pike & Selby in our Table 2.2 below), they also want educators to introduce these issues in an integrated fashion, using pedagogical innovation. Evans notes widespread concern about teachers’ readiness to respond to a challenge of this scale and complexity (Evans 2006). We also know that there are competing
views of how the global system actually works, and how its various parts affect one another. For example, how economic growth and capitalism affect social well-being and the spread of political freedoms is a hotly contentious issue, as is the relationship between human prosperity and ecology. Teachers, as Evans (2006) and Davies (2006) suggest, are likely to steer away from these uncertainties.

4. Tension between the “universal values” that are advocated by global educators, and the origins of these values

Notions of individual freedom and autonomy, of freedom of speech, and of equality among persons, particularly as these are inscribed in United Nations conventions and declarations, are all part of the heritage of Western modernity. As such they have not infrequently been criticized for further entrenching the hegemony of the West and its value-systems (Young, 1989; Mitchell, 2003). Among the most trenchant criticisms have been those directed at the institutionalization of children’s rights (Niewenhuys, 1998; Pupuvac, 2001; Stasiulis, 2002). Global educators often gloss over the fact that there may be value systems that are fundamentally irreconcilable with global citizenship commitments, and fail to address the competing allegiances that pit global, national, regional, community, ethnic or religious identities and values against one another (Kymlicka & Norman, 1995).

Recent Research on Global Education

Over the past decade, there has been a spate of new research on or related to global education. New research has begun to tell us more about what children know about global issues, how they learn, and which pedagogical strategies are most effective. Whereas in the past, global educators focused their energies on the development of an idealized vision and curricular innovation, today there is a new emphasis in gathering empirical evidence to guide the implementation of global education strategies.

At the most general level, recent research in political sociology and child psychology has provided important evidence about the value of political socialization in young children (Sapiro, 2004). We now know that children develop abstract categories and schemas of social relationships (including stereotypes, allegiances and identities) at very young ages, and that cynicism about politics starts in the juvenile years. There is strong evidence that classroom pedagogy in the US and the UK still emphasize what Barbara Rogoff calls “transmission” rather than “intent participation” and that children from different economic classes are taught different things about citizenship and politics (cited in Sapiro, 2004). However, there is surprisingly little evidence that parents transmit their political habits or views directly to their children. Instead, research suggests that children can influence their parents and often affect their parent’s political participation. Each of these findings suggests a very strong reason for strengthening global citizenship education in schools, particularly at the elementary level.

A number of researchers have looked at the attitudes and beliefs children hold in relation to global issues. What is perhaps most interesting here is the growing evidence that there is considerable cross-national variation in knowledge and attitudes. In Britain, for example, where a centralized education system with a strong citizenship curriculum is combined with active government funding for global citizenship education and a coordinated NGO commitment to global education, a national survey of children has shown that 80 per cent believe that it is important to learn about global issues (MORI, 1998). Far fewer youth in Canada appear to have this global orientation and level of knowledge about global issues, a recent national poll found (War Child Canada, 2006).3

On a smaller scale, a pilot study of high school student views on global education comparing Canada and Japan found many areas of overlap (for example, in terms of support for the importance of global
citizenship and membership in a world community, and prioritization of environmental issues). But the same study found that the Canadian students were far more optimistic about the future and their role in it than the Japanese sample – an optimism confirmed in a 2006 national poll of Canadian youth (Richardson et. al. 2003; War Child Canada, 2006). Much more research is needed to explain such variations, ideally in the form of longitudinal cross-national studies that also explore change over time.

Research on the changing content of national curricula has also produced findings of relevance for global education. Rauner (1998), for example, looked at national social studies and history texts from around the world over a 40-year period and found a general shift in emphasis from national citizenship and national politics to emphasis on membership in a global community, universal rights, and interdependence. Others, however, have found that Social Studies education in general, and citizenship education in particular, are marginal subjects in most national curricula, and that the focus of most social studies education is still strongly national in orientation (Davies & Issitt, 2004).

Finally, there has been some very interesting research, mainly out of the UK, on the beliefs and practices of teachers and schools. From these studies, we know that teachers continue to favour didactic instruction (Griffiths, 1998), and are quite selective about the international issues they bring into their classrooms. While UK teachers increasingly see global citizenship and human rights as priority values to be taught in the elementary classroom, they tend to focus on cooperation and caring rather than more contentious issues (Davies, Gregory & Riley, 1999; Davies, 2006; Robins, Francis & Elliott, 2003; McKenzie, 2000). Among the many challenges identified by teachers, a 2003 Department for International Development (DfID) study suggests that there is limited sharing of knowledge about teaching global education at district or even school level; a lack of access to materials and limited time for implementation; and anxiety about teaching controversial issues. Similar issues are raised in Lynn Davies’ vivid ethnographic study of global citizenship education in eight UK elementary schools, and in UNICEF UK’s survey of citizenship education in the UK (Davies, Harber & Yamashita, 2005; UNICEF UK, 2000, 2004).

Several studies also demonstrate that despite renewed commitment to global education in the UK, whole-school efforts that integrate extracurricular and classroom activities, and link school management, teachers, parents and children in a sustained global citizenship curriculum, are very rare. Thus, for example, UNICEF’s Citizenship Education Monitoring Project has shown that while knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child has increased, this process has often occurred in a didactic fashion (through school-wide assemblies) and rarely leads to the inclusion of Children’s Rights in any of the governing policies of the schools themselves (UNICEF UK, 2004).

Conclusion

In this chapter, we began by looking at the evolution of the global education concept, showing how it became the umbrella for a variety of curricular movements. We described the essential elements of global education as developed in a range of academic and practitioner literatures. Finding the concurrent elements of global education allowed us to build a composite picture or “ideal type” for global education that we use as a starting point for our analysis of global education practices in Canada.

We also reviewed some of the challenges and tensions that are raised by various components of the global education ideal, and explored what recent research has added to our understanding of global education practices. Both provide a foundation for analyzing the challenges and achievements of global education in Canada. They also alert us to the need for more critical research on global education itself.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Anderson     | Global education = “Education for responsible citizen involvement and effective participation in global society.” (p. 36)        | • Asserts new global scale and scope of human interdependence and membership  
• Competence in perceiving one's involvement in global society  
• Competence in making decisions and judgments  
• Competence in exercising influence  
• Opposes education about other peoples and cultures, creates a them/us dichotomy  
• Opposes education about foreign affairs and foreign policies, which obscures roles of individuals, NGOs and international organizations in world affairs |
| Hanvey       | Education for a global perspective                                          | • Perspective consciousness  
• State of the art planet awareness  
• Cross cultural awareness  
• Knowledge of global dynamics  
• Awareness of human choices        |
| Richardson   | Global education                                                            | “The term global education is as good as any to evoke the whole field... It implies a focus on different though important levels from the very local and immediate to the vast realities named with such phrases as world society and global village. It also implies a holistic view of education, with a concern for children's emotions, relationships and sense of personal identity as well as with information and knowledge.” |
| Case         | Global perspective refers to a point of view or lens for viewing people, places and things around the world - it has both a substantive and perceptual dimension. | *Substantive dimensions:*  
• universal and cultural values and practices  
• global interconnections  
• present worldwide concerns and conditions  
• origins and patterns of worldwide affairs  
• alternative future directions in worldwide affairs  
*Perceptual dimensions:*  
• open mindedness, full-mindedness, fair-mindedness  
Continued |
### TABLE 2.2
KEY CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
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</table>
| Pike & Selby    | “Global education is an approach to education that's based upon the interconnectedness of communities, lands, and peoples, the interrelatedness of all social, cultural and natural phenomena, links between past, present and future, and the complementary nature of the cognitive, affective, physical and spiritual dimensions of the human being. It addresses issues of development, equity, peace, social and environmental justice, and environmental sustainability. It encompasses the personal, the local, the national and the planetary. Along with these principles, its approach to teaching and learning is experiential, interactive, children-centered, democratic, convivial, participatory, and change-oriented.” | Four dimensions: spatial, temporal, issues, human or inner potential  
• systems consciousness  
• perspective consciousness  
• health of planet awareness  
• involvement in consciousness and preparedness  
• process mindedness  
Encompasses:  
• Development education  
• Environmental education  
• Human rights education  
• Peace education  
• Health education  
• Gender equity education  
• Education for multicultural society  
• Human education (animal welfare)  
• Citizenship education  
• Media education  
+ World mindedness: commitment to principle of one world |
| Oxfam           | A global citizen is someone who:  
• is aware of the wider world and has a sense of their own role as a world citizen  
• respects and values diversity  
• has an understanding of how the world works economically, politically, socially, culturally, technologically and environmentally  
• is outraged by social injustice  
• participates in and contributes to the community at a range of levels from local to global  
• is willing to act to make the world a more sustainable place  
• takes responsibility for their action | Knowledge and understanding  
• peace  
• globalisation and interdependence  
• sustainable development  
• diversity  
• peace and conflict  
Skills  
• critical thinking  
• ability to argue effectively  
• cooperation and conflict resolution  
• ability to challenge injustice and inequalities  
Values and attitudes  
• empathy  
• sense of identity and self esteem  
• belief that people can make a difference  
• concern for environment  
• value and respect for diversity  
• commitment to social justice and equity |
TABLE 2.2  
KEY CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF GLOBAL EDUCATION (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
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</table>
| Osler, A.         | “Global education encompasses the strategies, policies and plans that prepare young people and adults for living in an interdependent world.” | Key principles:  
• Cooperation  
• Nonviolence  
• Respect for human rights  
• Respect for cultural diversity  
• Respect for democracy  
• Tolerance  
+ Pedagogical approaches based on human rights and a concern for social justice which encourage critical thinking and responsible participation  
+ Learners are encouraged to make links between local, regional and world wide issues and to address inequality. |
| Evans and Reynolds | “Global Citizenship Education”                                                | Goal = Develop informed, purposeful, and active citizenship by addressing:  
• Controversial issues/conflict  
• Decision-making and deliberation  
• Pluralism and equity  
• Political participation  
• Global/international orientations  
Opposes:  
• elitist citizenship education (as defined by A. Sears): education that teaches “mainstream versions of the national history as well as technical details of how public institutions function” and, an idea that citizens are active mainly through electoral politics. |

ENDNOTES:

1. Galtung argued that peace is not only the absence of physical war and oppression, but also required freedom and equality in social, political and economic relations.

2. Contrast, for example, American political scientist Francis Fukuyama’s recent calls for stronger national citizenship education with the nuanced view of the value of multicultural education proposed by Canadian political scientist Will Kymlicka (1995).

3. Thus for example, fewer than half of Canadian youth are aware of the Universal Convention on the Rights of the Child (War Child Canada, 2006); while research from UNICEF’s Citizenship Education Monitoring Project has shown that, since 2001, there have been impressive gains in knowledge of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in UK schools (UNICEF UK, 2000, 2004).