Global Education

Stories from Australia

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Abstract. Students today are living in a global world. There is a need for schools to educate students about this world. This world needs to be seen through a range of perspectives - social, cultural, environmental, political, economic and spiritual. In order to educate about this 'world', 'new' curriculum policy needs to reflect this globalised world. This proposal will give an insight into the curriculum designed to prepare students for the future worlds they are entering with specific reference to Victoria, Australia.

Keywords: Global Education, Curriculum, change

Today, students in the developed world are living, working and being in a globalised world. Within seconds connections are made across oceans and lands, viewing real time events are commonplace, Nike, Coca Cola and Sanyo can be seen on every continent in the world and environmental problems are no longer local in nature - global warming the most pressing issue currently facing our world. This 'global' world prompts a reorientation for schools and Universities to educate students about this world.

As an education response to, about and for this 'global world', 'new' curriculum policy and practices are required – a 'global' education. Teaching and understanding 'global education' is perhaps more important in schools and Universities today than at any other time. Students live in a global, interconnected and interdependent world characterised by change. Economic, environmental, political, spiritual and social forces are prompting education to become increasingly global in focus and outlook.

'New' curriculum is needed to provoke understanding of the complexity of issues facing the world today. The 'new times', 'the knowledge economy', and 'globalisation' are the language of these forces. These changes create an imperative for students to understand and view the world through a series of complex and interrelated lenses. No global issue can be seen in isolation or through a single perspective. The complexity of global issues offer challenges to teachers and teacher educators to construct an education for students that critically reflects and analyses inter-relationships in a rapidly changing world.

The challenge for schools, regardless of curriculum structure is to prepare young people who can not only survive in a global world, but who can constantly transform it so that it is locally viable, personally meaningful and socially beneficial. (Prior, 2003).

In this paper, I describe a case study of a University teacher education program, with particular focus on assessment.

The theoretical basis for the development of the unit was informed by understandings of global education expressed in the Global Perspectives statement (Curriculum Corporation, 2002). By using this statement as theory, students had to refer and include aspects of the statement into their report on assessment.

The Global Perspectives statement (Curriculum Corporation, 2002) produced for Australian schools included a rationale, learning emphases, aims, and a checklist for a globally engaged school as well as examples of practice. This document includes a number of statements about global education, with extracts shown below:

Global education seeks to prepare students to live in an increasingly globalised world and to be active, participating citizens who contribute to shaping a better future. It operates from two assumptions that people and communities are becoming increasingly interdependent, and that as a global community it is possible to shape the world for a better place. Global education is transformative. Global education aims to enable and equip young people for global citizenship. (Curriculum Corporation, 2002, p. 6)

This statement also includes the following 'learning emphases' designed to be across the curriculum organisers.

- One world: Globalisation and interdependence
- Identity and cultural diversity
• Dimensions of change
• Social Justice and Human Right
• Peace Building and Conflict
• Sustainable Futures

Curriculum Corporation, 2002 (pp 10-13)

In this paper I also develop a ‘new’ definition of global education that builds on the work of Curriculum Corporation (2000) and Calder and Smith (1993). The definition extends the perspectives now required for understanding the dynamics of our world.

The definition includes: a purpose of teaching global education - for the development of a peaceful, just and sustainable world; acknowledges the importance of beginning with the individual and self: expands perspectives to include spiritual and linguistic; includes values and the importance of being a global citizen.

The below definition moves beyond previous definitions of global education (Pike, 2000; Kirkwood, 2001; Hicks, 2003) and reflects the complexity, interdependence and multiple perspectives required for today’s classroom.

‘Global education begins with understanding self. It is teaching for understanding the world through multiple perspectives – social, economic, linguistic, historical, spiritual, cultural, environmental and political - to promote positive values and enable students to reflect critically on their own value systems, to empower them to be global citizens who contribute locally to a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

A deeper response to teaching in and to a global world invites questions such as ‘what’ ‘how’, ‘why’ and ‘who’ and ‘what if’. ‘What’ is taught is developed by the subjects we teach, ‘how’ is developed from the methods and techniques employed to teach, the ‘why’ is linked to the purpose of the teaching, the ‘who’ is the person that teaches and their self in relating to students and ‘what if’ are the possibilities of what are the preferred and possible futures.

Teacher Education Program

The unit is located within the teacher education course at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. The University sector in Australia is financially dependent on the international student market and the consequent development of an internationalised curriculum.

The Vice Chancellor Professor Sally Walker states:

‘The University facing change can be attributed to globalisation and the internationalisation of higher education in terms of student mobility to and from Australia, curriculum development and the desire for internationally recognised credentials.’ Deakin University, 2006, p1

In 2006, as a teacher educator I developed a teaching program of approximately 30 hours titled - Contemporary Global Issues in Social, Political and Environmental Learning. This is an education unit for students studying to become secondary teachers.

The purpose of the unit is stated as:

‘This unit focuses on an approach that develops a critical thinking and inquiry into global issues facing our world and communities. This is a curriculum studies elective designed to complement teaching in Humanities and Commerce areas of the curriculum. The unit studies relevant and contemporary issues such as global warming, HIV AIDS, technology, development, poverty, the nature of work, leisure and lifelong learning.

The unit aims to enable students:

• To develop an understanding of complexity of global issues
• To demonstrate analysis, critical thinking and inquiry
• To explore themes such as globalization and internationalism, environmental change, culture, economy, technology, trade and development.

(Deakin University, 2006)

The composition of the class reflected globalisation in the education market, with Canadian students who were undertaking a one-year Graduate Diploma of Education. The class composition of Canadian and Australian students added to the range of viewpoints on issues and helped students to understand and value different perspectives.

The design of the unit and the assessment tasks were influenced by the following:

• Opportunities for students to explore their own interests and passions in terms of ‘global’ and the meanings attached to this.
• To increase knowledge of perspectives embedded in a selected global issue and the contested nature of resolution
• Use of ‘authentic’ assessment tasks with potential for transference to the classroom;
• Link to theory from Global Perspectives statement and current curriculum policy
• To present hope and ways forward within choice of issues and scenarios.

By way of introduction in the first tutorial, I asked students to introduce themselves in terms of anything that was ‘global’. This open-ended question received
diverse responses. I quickly noticed how little trouble students had responding to themselves being in a global world. Students talked about jobs they had, travel, interests and passions that reflected the ‘global’ world. One student had been to Bangladesh in the holidays to visit literacy programs through a Christian based aid agency, another student was passionate about sustainable farming, another a member of local environmental group and another student had worked at Oxfam. The world was located within the classroom.

The teaching program had two assessment tasks each worth 50%. The first task was designed as an individual task the second was a group task – Hypothetical. The sequence of individual then group was deliberate to ensure that students undertook some individual research followed by working together as a group.

The outline of tasks are:

**Assessment Task 1 – Presentation**

The seminar is to include the following:

- Introduction which outlines the nature of the issue, why this is an issue and the range of views on this issue.
- Links to *Global Education* Statement
- Links to multi strands in VELS and or post compulsory such as VCE
- Demonstration of two engaging teaching strategies
- Range of resources across, web sites, sites for excursions, books kits
- A Handout for members of the group that presents the issue, notes the resources and teaching strategies.

International students may use their own local curriculum framework.

Students will hand in a 2,000 word report that outlines the complexity of the issue, a comment on the design and delivery of the teaching sequence (this may be included in full as an Appendix), a comment on the presentation, feedback, how this would change next time and the resources compiled.

**Assessment Task 2 – Teaching Global Issues - Hypothetical**

In this task students are to develop a teaching package on a selected global issue. This is a group task for up to four students.

Each group is to prepare a scenario focused on a selected global issue which highlights four different perspectives /viewpoints. These perspectives/viewpoints will form profiles to be developed into scripts for dialogues between members in the class presentation.

Outline

In this teaching resource students are to include:

- Background to the issue – why study it, how is this issue of importance to students.
- Links to curriculum statements – where in the curriculum could this issue be included
- Links to the Global Perspectives statement
- Brief description of each profile noting what issues are highlighted
- Scripting and performing of selected issue.
- Annotated Resource Sheet: A range of appropriate resources with annotation and teacher friendly commentary
- Directions and strategies for using the scenario in the classroom to develop critical perspectives (ECS 420 Unit Guide, 2006)

**Developing ‘Authentic’ Assessment Tasks**

In developing these assessment tasks, I was influenced by attendance at a recent conference which showcased a Hypothetical on the issue of Fair Trade. The performers all had a role description then played out their role under the guidance of a skilled facilitator. The first half of the ‘Hypothetical’ was presenting the complexity of the issue seen from a range of viewpoints – soccer ball manufacturer, ‘Fair trade organisation, worker in developing world, soccer fan, soccer club. The complexity of the issue was seen through competing and conflicting viewpoints and values – profit vs people as an example. The second half of the ‘Hypothetical’ was orientated towards solutions, ways forward, programs that are making a difference in Fair Trade.

The Hypothetical is a rich teaching tool – it requires a breadth of knowledge about an issue, as well as drawing on in-depth knowledge from a particular viewpoint, and requires individuals to work as a team. It embedded critical pedagogy to develop perspectives, complexity, interconnectedness and multiple perspectives.

Examples of student selected topics are in Table 1.
Table 1: Hypothetical Topics and Roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Roles</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aids</td>
<td>Australian representative to the UNAIDS orphans, UN representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pharmaceutical industry representative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whaling</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Marine Scientist</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Japanese Whaler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Conservationist Greenpeace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genetic Modification</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ANZFA Representative,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Greenpeace Activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senior Business Executive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Elderly Couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair Trade Coffee</td>
<td>Consumer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Oxfam worker</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nestle</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coffee farmer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Refugees</td>
<td>Behind the News,</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Australian Foreign Affairs Minister</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Indonesian President</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kofi Anan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Women and Poverty</td>
<td>Women’s refugee worker</td>
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<td></td>
<td>UNIFEM worker</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>NGO Baptist world aid</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Minister Iraqi government</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Host</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was also a deliberate attempt to play out the definition of global education through these assessment tasks. Through the construction of this task students developed understanding not mere replication of knowledge. The process of research, scripting the roles, speaking the role and then interaction with others ensured a multilayered approach to understanding and developing depth of knowledge... Students were also asked for positive ways forward for the resolution of the issues based on real life scenarios, or ‘good news’ stories. There was also a question and answer time at the end of the presentation for engagement with the audience.

When teachers have the opportunities to interact with their subject matter in ways that they aim for their own students to do, they are more likely to engage in those practices in their classrooms.’ Darling-Hammond & Bransford 2005 p 395

The acting out of the Hypothetical was also fun. Students took to dressing up, playing the role to the extent of dress, accent and props. One Hypothetical used a swimming pool with a hose to indicate a Japanese fisherman in the ocean, part of a whaling scenario. Students embraced new media and technology in developing and presenting scripts. Greater rapport was built between students as they worked towards a common goal.

The outcomes from this unit have provided students with improved frameworks of understanding in their journey to become teachers, with the assessment task practical in nature it builds on a vision for good teaching.

1 asked students for a response – what they had learnt from the Unit. It was clear from some responses that they valued the opportunity to ‘work’ with issues rather than just have them taught to them.

Darling-Hammond & Bransford (2005) states that

...teachers need to do more than simply implement particular techniques; they need to be able to think pedagogically, reason through dilemmas investigate problems and analyse student learning to develop appropriate curriculum for diverse learners... (p.392)

Students were asked to align the scenario to the learning emphases from the Global Perspectives statement – this ensured that global issues were couched in a theoretical framework with a breadth of global education perspectives. Another aspect of the assignment was to link with the current curriculum policy statement which in Victoria is called the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS).
Responses from students attested to the value they saw in the assessment task which furthered their understandings of global education as well as enriching their repertoire of teaching practice and pedagogy. They also saw the importance of seeing issues through more than one lens or perspective. Students saw the global issue through more than one perspective through the scripts and hence the world through a series of interrelated lenses and links to the definition of global education by

...understanding the world through multiple perspectives – social, economic, language, historical, spiritual, cultural, environmental and political (Dyer, 2006)

A selection of student responses comment on the pedagogy used in the unit – from direct comment about the assessment task to the use of the Global Perspectives statement. It was not only knowledge that students commented on but rather a style or approach to the teaching in the unit.

Rachel sums this up in her comments:

Knowledge of global perspectives through learning about Curriculum Corporation’s ‘Statement on global education for Australian schools’ was a key learning. The way this information was presented through the seminar and subsequent assignment work highlighted the importance of these document/principles. The various ‘learning emphases of global education’ will serve as an important reference point and provide guidelines when developing future lessons (not just SOSE subjects). The ‘critical perspectives’ notion expanded knowledge of the complexity of global issues and served to promote greater understanding of issues of diversity. (Rachel email)

More specifically teaching pedagogy was noted upon by Peter where he used an actual example of a Hypothetical about the oil industry and the range of views and perspectives.

The teaching methods that were introduced in the unit 420/720 developed my understanding of contemporary global issues by providing a context. For instance, the second assessment – Hypothetical allowed each group to present a global issue and include a variety of perspectives based on different stakeholders involved. One group discussed the world’s oil supply and how a shortage would affect different people in both negative and positive ways. The leaders of OPEC may have a positive view of the shortage of the oil supply since they could increase the price of oil and generate increased profit. However, individuals in developed nations may view the situation negatively, as a means to compensate for a shortage of oil could cause many financial burdens. (Peter email)

Students valued the opportunity to understand global issues through the range of perspectives to see many viewpoints and see their importance to the classroom.

Mary says:

My understanding of globalisation and global education has been enhanced through complexity of issues and solutions and interconnectedness. Critical perspectives (as part of global education like this ideal of awareness of viewpoints & thinking independently, critical literacy aspects, why I like teaching)

Important values were highlighted – e.g. democracy, citizenship

Can cross into other subject areas (Mary email)

Students commented on the design of the assessment tasks that aligned to practice and the classroom. Clare explains this by saying:

Well thought out assignment design was clever as illustrated in practical way how to teach global issue in classroom (learnings / skills could be transferred directly into teaching practice. (Clare email)

These responses highlight the importance of developing assessment tasks that required students to critically examine issues and show links to classroom practice. These tasks lead to higher engagement and participation, and enjoyment in learning.

**Conclusion**

This paper provides a case study of teaching pedagogy and practice in higher education that responds to a changing global world. Through a strong focus on engaged and authentic assessment as well as a framework for understanding, this teaching was engaging, fun, modelled pedagogy, and dealt with real issues. It prompted and began the process of transformation to being a teacher in a global world.

If the world is becoming more globalised and interdependent, then education needs to swiftly respond to this ‘new’ world. Education that acknowledges and embeds the importance of a global education is required. ‘Global’ education becomes a critical vehicle to be in schools for the 21st century. The challenge is to develop teachers with competencies and knowledge to teach in changing times for a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.
In this paper I have provided a case study of practice to equip our next generation of teachers to see their own worlds through new eyes and insights, this represents a further step along their journey and mine.

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About the Author

Ms Julie Dyer
Julie has had an extensive career spanning education across teaching, consultancy and research. Currently in teacher education, Julie is developing programs for pre-service teachers in Social Education, Curriculum Studies and Global Education with links to local and global communities. She is also developing programs for pre-service teachers to undertake school experience in new places-interstate and overseas. Julie is researching the teacher stories of travel in a global world.