

## Appendix E

### Illustration From a Threaded Discussion on Readings About What a Difference a Global Educator Can Make.

Their assignment was to read "What a Difference a Global Educator Can Make!" from *Educational Leadership* and then write about how those ideas compare with their own conceptualization of global education. The purpose of the discussion is to examine conceptual issues about what makes a teacher a global educator and clarify differences between global educators and other teachers teaching the same subject.

#### Message no. 151

Posted by **Ben** on Monday, June 24, 2002 10:12am

#### **Subject Is Global education really what's important here?**

Being on the East coast of the US and one that rises early I thought I might get our discussion going here.

After reading "What a Difference a Global Educator Can Make" and looking at the examples of practices from Global educators vs. other educators I wanted to know more about the teachers themselves. Understandably, as noted in the article "...there are many important characteristics of individual global educators that are beyond the scope of this article." Yet, I viewed the examples that were given, such as differentiating diverse Arab cultures within the Muslim world, as examples of exemplary teaching vs. examples of traditional or less experienced teaching.

Could these "global educators" be the individuals in the schools who are at the forefront of all teaching initiatives? Mention is made in the article that the "Global educators" teach critical thinking skills and realize the importance of using multiple, conflicting perspectives. Using different criteria, might they be considered the ones who have the more advanced teaching skills? Might they be the educators recognized as most child-centered? Playing "devil's advocate" here, could it be that more important than the fact that they are viewed as "Global educators" is the fact that they merely are examples of "Exemplary teachers"?

I must admit that although I consider myself a pretty good teacher, one that readily searches out primary source materials and stresses the need for my 7th graders to be critical thinkers, I've got some growing to do as a teacher. Educators within my district that show the kind of skills that were listed in the article's examples of "Global educators" are the individuals that I search out as resources of quality teaching practices. The fact that they might be considered "Global educators" might not be as important

as the fact they they are just plain good teachers. I've taken this course with the realization that having a more global perspective in the classroom is important in good teaching. But, playing devil's advocate again, is what's important here not the role of "Global Education", but the role of "Good Teaching Practices" and presenting global perspectives just one example of that practice?

Ben

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**Message no. 165**[Branch from no. 151]

Posted by Alice on Monday, June 24, 2002 2:51pm

**Subject Re: Is Global education really what's important here?**

Thanks for starting the discussion, Ben.

You have raised a great question -- what is the difference between being a good teacher and a global educator?

I can look back at what I considered to be good teachers when I was in high school in the 1960s. They certainly taught me well by the standards of the time and place (I grew up in the South and didn't realize that the South had lost the Civil War until I did reading on my own -- it was "the War Between the States" in my high school textbook).

There was no global perspective -- my education was Eurocentric. We were taught that only the US and Europe were important enough for us to study their literature and history and languages (I studied French and Latin). We only learned about Africa and Asia in history when white people went there. Korea was studied only during period of the Korean War. And only American historical sources were read; only American and British literature was taught. From K-12 I was never taught any perspective besides a mainstream white Southern American worldview.

Tarzan was popular in those days, and I never learned anything in school to combat those stereotypes -- jungle, primitive, witchdoctors (always bad ones), savage, etc. No African doctors, leaders, positive images, people like us. Or anything that would challenge the idea of Africa being of interest only because of its animals or as an exotic backdrop for whites.

Maybe the question you raise is answered by the differences in traditional ways of teaching about the world versus global education.

What do you think?

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**Message no. 172**[Branch from no. 165]

Posted by **Pat** on Monday, June 24, 2002 4:37pm

**Subject Re: Is Global education really what's important here?**

After reading the article I was struck by the concept of the "exotica" . In my school this is the area where student's cultural assumptions really show up. My ninth grade students often fixate on "infantacide" in China or the " restriction" of Muslim women. These areas seem to take on a life of their own and be very hard to counter act.

I was struck in the article by the use of experiential and primary sources as a way to counteract them. Is this effective? I would like to learn how to draw the larger community into my classroom.

I too saw the global teaching attributes discussed in the article as "best practice" teaching. Critical thinking, evaluating perspective and bias, using a variety of sources these are all important components of any well taught class. However, I thought perhaps the uniqueness of global education might lie in the ends of the teaching-not simply factual comprehension-but personal growth???

Pat

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**Message no. 180**[Branch from no. 172]

Posted by **Bill** on Monday, June 24, 2002 6:16pm

**Subject Re: Is Global education really what's important here?**

Pat, You said: "My ninth grade students often fixate on "infantacide" in China or the " restriction" of Muslim women."

Would you say this is true about all people in the world? It is so easy to say, "Americans are rich" and other stereotypes even on the other side of the world. I think we are faced with a great opportunity to break down the barriers of 'simple' thinking worldwide.

As stated about Tarzan and Europeanized, I feel I was dealt the same hand as a student. Global Education is so complex and rich. I love how everyone is smashing my own beliefs about global education.

Bill

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**Message no. 199**[Branch from no. 172]

Posted by **Merry** on Monday, June 24, 2002 11:01pm

**Subject Re: Is Global education really what's important here?**

I see it in the obsession with the Masai or so called "Bushmen" (the San) instead of more typical African ethnic groups. Or teaching about Arab shiiks, belly-dancing and the harem.

I think experiences and primary sources can make quite a difference in learning insider perspectives.

I like what you said here: I thought perhaps the uniqueness of global education might lie in the ends of the teaching-not simply factual comprehension-but personal growth???

I think global ed is as much about perspective and experience as it is about "the facts".

Merry

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**Message no. 204**[Branch from no. 172]

Posted by **Yasemin** on Monday, June 24, 2002 11:28pm

**Subject An example of crosscultural experience**

I do not have any first hand teaching experience in America. However, I had the opportunity to work with a great social studies teacher back in Colorado. I also took a methods course from him. I can say that he used more than 50 different teaching techniques and let students construct their own knowledge.

While he was teaching about Islam, as you mentioned students simplified Middle East into 3-4 issues. So, he contacted the Muslim student organization in the university and also the imam (preacher) of the local mosque. He requested Muslim women to come to the high school and talk to his students. Indeed, two ladies came, one of whom wore the Jilbab (black traditional outwear worn by some Muslim women). These women helped the students to see that when we compare a specific culture to another, we may set our culture as the norm. I guess our students should first learn that they should not set the norm to their culture and then they can learn to look beyond their culture and examine another culture without simplifying. Of course, as Will responded to this issue, this is not confined to US students or confined just to students. We as adults, most of the time, have biases and stereotypes.

Hope to talk to you again.

Peace, Yasemin, Cultural Consultant for Middle East.

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**Message no. 220**[Branch from no. 204]

Posted by **Carter** on Tuesday, June 25, 2002 9:33am

**Subject Re: An example of crosscultural experience**

I think what you say regarding not setting our own culture as the 'norm' is the most essential concept to get across to students.

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**Message no. 594**[Branch from no. 220]

Posted by **Jim** on Saturday, June 29, 2002 5:11pm

**Subject Re: An example of crosscultural experience**

In message 220 on Tue Jun 25, 2002 09:33, Carter writes:

>I think what you say regarding not setting our own  
>culture as the 'norm' is the most essential concept to  
>get across to students.

Carter,

I agree with what you stated here but I have been challenged by a book I am reading as to define what culture exactly is. Dean MacCannell, the author of *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* states the following:

"When we talk in terms of a culture, we automatically suggest the possibility of a consensus.....To suggest in the first place, that culture rests on a consensus, reveals, it seems to me, a profound misunderstanding of culture and society...all cultures are a series of models of life. Cultural models are "ideal" only from the standpoint of everyday life. They are not ideal from the standpoint of any absolute such as religion, a philosophy, or a sociology. There is no "mother" representation, itself inaccessible, behind all the others copied from it" (p.25)

What are your thoughts on this? It really has made me think and challenge my preconceived idea of what culture actually is.

Jim

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**Message no. 589**[Branch from no. 172]

Posted by **Brittany** on Saturday, June 29, 2002 4:25pm

**Subject Re: Is Global education really what's important here?**

Lots of people are responding to this one! I just wanted to say that my high school students, who have academic and emotional problems, have an extraordinary ability to retain "information" such as that Jews have sex through a hole in a sheet, or that Japanese eat babies(!), and an equally extraordinary inability to retain information that makes sense. I'm trying to teach them some criteria by which to judge stuff that they read or hear but they resist...

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**Message no. 2570**[Branch from no. 165]

Posted by **Cynthia** on Tuesday, October 8, 2002 3:15am

**Subject What is the difference between.....?**

I would like to respond to the original question for this discussion topic "What is the difference between a global educator and a teacher teaching the same subject

without a global perspective?"

Reading the article was like a mini-refresher "course" for me in global ed. I especially enjoyed reading the specific examples at various grades levels and various social studies subjects - two out of the four subjects

I have had the opportunity to teach for a number of years in American schools outside of the U.S. It is in that context that I would like to respond to this question.

When I began teaching 8th grade U.S. history at Cairo American College in Cairo, Egypt back in 1986 I was had a course syllabus which was essentially a photocopy of the textbook's table of contents. I found a number of old lesson plans in a filing cabinet which basically outlined a lecture for each class and then for homework had the students answer the questions at the end of each section in the chapter. I then heard how entertaining the previous teacher had been since he would bring his guitar to class occasionally and sings songs with the students. Initially, I thought that this was definitely going to be a hard act to follow. I soon forgot all about trying to be this previous teachers' "equal" and became deeply immersed in what I thought should be done in the classroom. Developing the hand-on activities that I thought would help motivate students to learn the material was my central focus. I sit here today and I can say the same thing. I am once again immersed in the job of creating innovative, relevant curriculum for my students. (More on that later.)

Anyway, I saw the U.S. history curriculum at that American school in Egypt as almost identical to the U.S. history class I took at City High School in the early 1970's. I was crestfallen to see that nothing had really changed since then. I remember student teaching high school U.S.history in Indiana. My supervising teacher was a wonderful man, head of the social studies department and very kind and helpful. However, he essentially told me how the course would be taught whether he was doing it or I was doing it. The students had to remain in rows facing me at all times. I was to lecture and lead class discussions. The only time I was allowed to give an essay question on a test was when a student was caught cheating on a multiple choice test and it was used as a make up test. I did as I was instructed to do. That experience only reconfirmed what I knew I would NOT do if I ever had the opportunity to be a teacher with my own classroom of students.

To this day I remember that experience and it still guides me daily as I plan lessons for my students. Since my student teaching experience I have had the opportunity to teach various courses at various grade levels - 7th grade to university students and even adult education. I have

always found that varied instructional techniques which allow students to become actively involved in their learning and which allows students the opportunity to share that learning in a variety of ways motivates students of all ability levels to learn and experience success. As the years passed by at C.A.C., I continued to learn and implement various teaching techniques. However, whenever current issues in the news would be discussed in class the students seemed to show more interest in what was going on in the world today than learning about the history of one particular country - regardless of all the innovative techniques used. I asked them for a couple of years what they saw as the ideal 8th grade social studies course.

The majority would consistently express the need for learning about what was going on around the world. They wanted to be able to relate to the material being studied. So, in 1988/89 I developed what I called the "Global Approach to teaching U.S. history." I was still required to use the book and teach the chronological history of the U.S. However, I added a current, global element to the course which the students enthusiastically accepted.

All concepts were tied to current global events. For example, once we studied revolutions or civil war in the class we would look for current revolutions or civil wars in the world and apply all the levels of Blooms taxonomy to the assessment. (Amazingly enough there were always current examples to use for comparison.) Students would then present their findings to the class and in the end make a prediction as to the outcome - essentially an "educated guess." This eventually became the format for the final exam of the year. Students actually left the exam saying that they learned something new even during the exam period. All this was extremely satisfying and exciting.

As I read the article it took me back to the time when I was concerned about "measuring up" to my predecessor. I never met him but from what I could tell we most definitely had different styles and approaches to teaching and education. I see myself in the article going from experiencing the traditional teaching approach in high school and then my student teaching experience to doing what I thought was best simply based on personal experience as a student in a traditional classroom and my gut feeling as to what students wanted.

I am sure there are many students who prefer the traditional approach to teaching/learning and that every technique has its advantages and disadvantages. However, from my personal experience I have found and continue to find that making the information current, relevant, hands-on, and allowing the students the

opportunity to view topics from various sources and perspectives in order to draw their own conclusions has been a motivating and successful teaching approach. So, it looks like I have been a global educator longer than I actually thought starting back in the late 1980's - long before I was really aware of the field of global education.

I hope I am not assuming too much here by saying that, however. I no longer teach U.S. history - I thought I would take a break from it after 14 years. However, I always wanted to find a good source for the Native American perspective of the European "invasion" of the Americas. I will definitely look into getting a copy of the book **Rethinking Columbus** and sharing it with my U.S. history colleagues here in Singapore. Thank you.

Cynthia

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**Message no. 201**[Branch from no. 151]

Posted by **Ramon** on Monday, June 24, 2002 11:14pm

**Subject Re: Is Global education really what's important here?**

Ben,

I'd like the way you tease out the ideas from the article and started this discussion. I see "good teaching" as good practice and "global education" as content and orientation. Good teachers have the ability of providing multiple perspectives to what they are teaching. They are able to challenge their students to think differently or outside of the box and not to accept things as they are; but to question it. Having knowledge about global issues or different cultures is helpful to teachers.

Some individuals may know about a certain culture but if they are ineffective as teachers then, they can't help their students see beyond their prejudices or gain/acquire deep understanding and multiple perspectives on a given issue may it be cultural, political, etc.

Would like to hear how people react to this?

Thanks again for starting the conversation

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**Message no. 318**[Branch from no. 151]

Posted by **Darlene** on Wednesday, June 26, 2002 11:26am

**Subject Re: Is Global education really what's important here?**

**Is "global education" really what's important**

**here?** That's a good question. I am not a teacher in the school system but a trainer and administrator in an

organization. The principles that you apply in teaching, I apply when training employees. I want them to be "critical thinkers" and to arrive at decisions in a constructive, well-thought out manner. I work with many managers and this is very important.

Why did I reply to you? The last line of your message caught my attention. I have actually read this message three times and this time it hit me. I agree with you that the role of "good teaching practices" is to present a global perspective on learning. I may not categorize teachers as "global educators" vs. "traditional educators." I think an "exemplary" teacher would always have a "global perspective" and display that in his/her teaching and learning. All educators should have a global perspective and realize the relevance of it in education. I may see this entirely different because I am not in the school system but your ideas seem parallel to mine.

Darlene

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**Message no. 320**[Branch from no. 318]

Posted by **Ben** on Wednesday, June 26, 2002 12:19pm

**Subject Re: Is Global education really what's important here?**

Darlene, Thanks for your response.

Yes I think we're heading in the same direction with our thoughts. I agree that "Exemplary teachers" would have a "Global perspective" but as an additional thought I'd like to add that not all teachers with a global perspective would necessarily be exemplary teachers. Having a global perspective and encouraging the same in your classroom or workplace is just a start.

You also have to know how to relate that perspective to others in a way that fits their individual needs.

Ben