9 in 10 students recognize that jobs are becoming increasingly international in nature and believe they would be stronger employees with a better understanding of different cultures.

Students believe their appetite and enthusiasm for global education has not been met with an adequate level of instruction in global studies.¹

¹Global Education Exploration Study
All of our futures are increasingly linked to the challenges of the global community. The world’s population is predicted to grow from our current 7.3 billion to 8.5 billion in 2030 and to nearly 10 billion by 2050. Such population growth will affect a host of global issues including pollution, disease management, and depletion of energy, food and water resources. For students to participate effectively in this changing world, they must understand it. The 21st century student will sell to the world, buy from the world, work for international companies, compete with people from other countries, manage employees from other cultures, collaborate with people all over the world, and solve global problems.

**For students to participate effectively in this changing world, they must understand it.**

The mission of the United States Department of Education is “to promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access.” Few would disagree that achievement, preparation, competitiveness, excellence and equal access are worthy aspirations for the educational systems serving students today. While specific definitions for those terms vary and strategies to achieve them are vast, there is a sustained expectation in the U.S. for elementary and secondary education to effectively prepare students to make their way through successive grade levels, college, jobs and the world in general.

In education, global competitiveness can be characterized as the set of skills and factors that support individuals’ personal and professional productivity in their communities and in the world. Being globally competitive today requires developing global competence. Equipping students with specific hard skills to compete in a global job market is important, but cultivating their abilities to effectively share ideas and communicate across cultures in appropriate and respectful ways is critical.

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1. Global Education Exploration Study
2. World Population Prospects

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80% of teachers agree that it’s more important than ever for students to learn about other countries and cultures... yet only 30% say they often incorporate material about other countries and cultures into their lesson plans. Nearly 6 in 10 teachers report this is due to a lack of resources or administrative support, not for lack of student support.
Existing and emerging K–12 educational efforts — including 1:1 technology initiatives and language, International Baccalaureate, STEAM, and cross-cultural exchange programs — are in service to students’ global competence. But while these efforts are growing in popularity, they are still not available to every student.

All students — regardless of where they live or their socioeconomic status and cultural backgrounds — are equally deserving and capable of responding to educational experiences and opportunities that prepare them to be globally competent. So how do we as educators continuously create opportunities and deliver instruction that affects the global competence of them all? One option is to provide students with instructional practices that consistently engage global content, multicultural perspectives and problem solving across subject areas.

A simple term for this is global education.

The most successful global education approaches recognize the attitudes, skills and knowledge students need to navigate, contribute to and flourish in the world — and they integrate activities that purposefully resolve opportunity gaps among students on a daily basis. In the pages that follow, we will look closely at the characteristics of globally competent students and address how to utilize global education practices to equitably prepare all students for success.

DEFINITIONS

Global competence
Dynamic term that includes in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and ability to learn and work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and skills to function productively in an interdependent world community.

Global education
An interdisciplinary approach to learning concepts and skills necessary to function in a world that is increasingly interconnected and multicultural. The curricula based on this approach are grounded in traditional academic disciplines but are taught in the context of project- and problem-based inquiries.

Opportunity gap
The ways in which race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, English proficiency, community wealth, familial situations or other factors contribute to or perpetuate lower educational aspirations, achievement and attainment for certain groups of students.
WHAT DO GLOBALLY COMPETENT STUDENTS LOOK LIKE?

While the definition of global competence is dynamic, these soft skills and characteristics are widely seen as what students need to be globally competent today.
Appreciation of culture
Students see their own cultures as strengths, seek to understand the cultures of others, are aware of similarities and differences among cultures, and understand that behaviors and values are often tied to cultures.

Evaluation of information
Students regularly question easily accessible information to seek deeper understanding and thoughtfully evaluate materials and perspectives, rather than accepting things at face value.

Cross-cultural communication skills
Students effectively exchange ideas with peers and adults from different backgrounds — either virtually or in person — and have the skills to enter new communities and spaces.

Perspective taking skills
Students demonstrate curiosity and empathy and may show compassion for the perspectives of others.

Intelligent humility
Students understand that their knowledge is not finite and appreciate how much more there is to learn about the world. Students understand the grandiosity of the world and its complexities.

Divergent thinking
Students see alternative or original solutions to existing problems and can envision the world differently from how it currently exists.

Technological literacy
Students utilize and explore existing technologies to communicate and collaborate with others, and to learn and share new ideas and information. Students create new technologies or discover new uses for technologies that help them and others navigate their worlds.
How Do We Effectively Prepare Globally Competent Students?

Instruction aimed at helping students develop global competence does not need to be restricted to social studies or global studies courses. Many global education strategies are relevant across grade levels and academic subjects, and can be applied in any classroom. Here are just a few examples of instructional strategies that can be used across disciplines to support students in developing key global competence skills.

### Definitions

**Culturally responsive teaching**

The use of cultural knowledge, prior experiences and performance styles of diverse students to make learning more appropriate and effective for them.  

**Project-based learning**

A teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for extended periods of time to investigate and respond to engaging and complex questions, problems or challenges.

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<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
<th>Strategy/Approach</th>
<th>What it looks like in the classroom</th>
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| Appreciation of culture | Culturally responsive teaching techniques | - Students are empowered to share their own backgrounds and heritages.  
- Students study prominent figures and people from diverse backgrounds.  
- Student input and interests are incorporated into daily instruction.  
- Students engage in open dialogues and discussions.  
- Parental inclusion is prioritized. |
| Evaluation of information | Student-centered and project-based learning | - Learning is focused on evaluation and critical thinking, rather than consumption of information.  
- Students address real-world problems and create projects that align to probable solutions.  
- Teacher serves as facilitator, learns alongside students and models how to evaluate information.  
- Learning often incorporates multiple disciplines in one class period to model how information is typically presented and applied in the real world.  
- Lessons are driven by compelling questions rather than set “need-to-know” outcomes, and they provide students with time to explore and experiment. |

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1. Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice
1. Buck Institute for Education
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<tr>
<th>Skill</th>
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| Cross-cultural communication skills       | Virtual and local exchanges to highlight shared experiences                        | • Students and teacher participate in real-world exchanges with people in the community and around the world to enhance learning.  
• Students develop connections with peers in different communities or countries.  
• Students have opportunities for authentic and contextual language learning through in-person or virtual exchanges. |
| Perspective taking skills                 | Resources and access to texts, tools and tech                                      | • Rich, current and relevant resources are used to provide students with diverse perspectives and ideas.  
• Students study multicultural literature and texts which may utilize primary sources and real-world accounts. |
| Intelligent humility / Divergent thinking | Diverse experiences with cultural contexts                                         | • Students and teacher take virtual or real-time field trips to different places within the community.  
• Students and teacher model and share alternative ideas or approaches to questions being considered.  
• Students are exposed to situations or contexts that provide opportunities to view things from different perspectives.  
• Students are encouraged to reflect on how their views of "normal" experiences and behaviors are fueled by their own cultural circumstances. |
| Technological literacy                    | Ample use of technology and time to experiment / explore                           | • Students use tech in structured and unstructured ways on a daily basis.  
• Students have consistent access to a wide range of technologies and software.  
• Teacher encourages exploration and risk taking rather than implying that there is a “right way” to use tech. |

*Students prioritize global education over reading, writing, math and a host of other subjects. If students could elect to have more instruction in only one subject, they are most likely to choose world events, followed by foreign language, then math, the sciences and economics.*

© World Savvy Global Competency Research Results
How Do We Equitably Prepare All Students to Be Globally Competent?

The last part of the U.S. Department of Education’s mission — to ensure “equal access” — is often perceived as a hurdle for educators and school systems. Agreement on the need to prepare globally competitive and competent students is a start, but how do schools provide equitable opportunities for students to get there?

Common concerns for not being able to deliver global education to all students include lack of funding or resources, pressures to adhere to district requirements and standardized assessments, and lack of support for global education initiatives in school communities — sometimes including bias against student populations. However, integrating teaching strategies that build students’ global competence is not inherently expensive, nor do these strategies deviate from standards-based instruction. In addition, culturally responsive and student-centered approaches to instruction work against the idea that students’ neighborhoods or socioeconomic circumstances are indicators of their inability to be prepared for success. Global education approaches engage with, rather than isolate, the cultural and intellectual experiences of all students in a classroom so that no single perspective is presented as “normal.” These approaches do not assume that certain students are starting from a deficit — instead the inherent diversity of any classroom becomes an opportunity for learning and connection.

In the stories that follow, our experts offer examples of how educators and schools can and are embracing global education practices across K-12 grade levels and academic subjects to support the preparation of all students.

DEFINITIONS

Equity Justice according to natural law or right; specifically: freedom from bias or favoritism.

The inherent diversity of any classroom becomes an opportunity for learning and connection.
Below are four suggestions for inviting collaboration and engagement with the families of English language learners.

1. **Adopt a growth mindset.**
   Rethinking your own mindset and the ways you view the circumstances of English language learners and their families is an important start. Mindset author Carol Dweck explains, “When people... change to a growth mindset, they change from a judge-and-be-judged framework to a learn-and-help-learn framework. Their commitment is to growth, and growth takes plenty of time, effort and mutual support.” ESL educators and parents of English language learners share a common goal: their students’ success. Adopting a growth mindset is key to achieving this goal.

2. **Honor cultural differences.**
   When you get to know the parents of students and learn about and invite cultural diversity into your classroom, you send the powerful message to both students and their families that they are in a safe space in which their cultures are respected and valued. English language learners’ diverse cultural backgrounds provide rich fodder for culturally responsive teaching. At the same time, however, cultural differences can pose challenges. Different cultural norms may influence parent expectations about their roles in their children’s education. Honor these differences and forge strong relationships with the families of English language learners by:
   - Getting to know students’ parents.
   - Learning about the different cultural norms of your students.
   - Directly communicating to parents your support for their children and respect for their cultures.

3. **Don’t fret over language differences.**
   As students acquire English as a second language, they are developing the competitive advantage of being bilingual. Nevertheless, if you don’t speak your students’ home languages, it’s easy to view communication with their parents as a major challenge. Address that challenge to communicate effectively with parents by:
   - Using straightforward language and avoiding jargon.
   - Inviting native-language speakers to join discussions on grading, testing and report cards.

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**Mindset**

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[1] Mindset
Arranging student-led conferences.
• Using community or school resources to support translation needs.
• Giving hands-on demos at back-to-school nights.
• Encouraging L1 reading in home settings to promote first language literacy and second language acquisition.

Be creative about logistics.
Child care issues, transportation challenges and work schedules can all get in the way of arranging meetings with the parents of English language learners. A little flexibility and creativity will help in finding ways to connect with parents in person or virtually. Some ideas for solving logistical issues include:
• Planning ahead when possible.
• Meeting parents at their home or workplace.
• Engaging parents virtually through Skype, Twitter or WhatsApp.
• Arranging for child care at school events.

It takes time and effort to nurture relationships with the families of English language learners. But as parents understand you as an advocate for their child’s success, your investment will pay off.
GLOBALIZING ENRICHMENTS

Enrichment subjects offer spaces to get creative and collaborative with global learning.

In approaching enrichment lessons through a global lens, consider:

- Whether your lesson topics might tie into another content area.
- If you can align your goals and objectives with lessons taught by other subject area teachers.
- What your students’ interests are and how they may be tied into activities.
- If enrichments not offered at your school (dance, robotics, etc.) could be incorporated.

[Elon Elementary School](http://elon-school.com) in North Carolina used the World Cup to create a great example of how to apply student-centered, standards-based global learning experiences across disciplines.

**Art**

**Activity**

Students created flags representing participating countries or they designed original flags to be displayed around the school during the World Cup games.

**Example of standards addressed**

North Carolina Essential Standards Kindergarten Visual Arts

K.V.3: Create art using a variety of tools, media, and processes, safely and appropriately.

K.CX.1: Understand the global, historical, societal, and cultural contexts of the visual arts.
Activity
Students researched information about the World Cup, loaded the flag designs they created in art class into an online design program and printed them out for display.

Example of standards addressed
ISTE Standards
6.a.: Understand and use technology systems.
6.b.: Select and use applications effectively and productively.

Activity
Students learned the rules and basic skills for playing soccer and then competed in tournament games throughout the week.

Example of standards addressed
SHAPE — National P.E. Standards
Standard 2: The physically literate individual applies knowledge of concepts, principles, strategies and tactics related to movement and performance.

Activity
Students learned traditional chants used by fans of various countries participating in the World Cup. Students then took turns chanting during the P.E. soccer tournament.

Example of standards addressed
National Association for Music Education Standard
MU-Re7.2.6b: Identify the context of music from a variety of genres, cultures, and historical periods.