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THE BENEFITS OF A GLOBALIZED PERSPECTIVE IN THE CLASSROOM

The world is becoming smaller and smaller with innovations in technology and the international interaction of organizations and businesses. It is important to prepare young minds to become the effective and successful people of today's globalized society. We are all living in a world where interaction is no longer limited to the distance we can travel. We can interact face-to-face using web-based communication. Teaching young minds to become globally aware citizens will only strengthen international communication in the future. The process can begin right in the classroom with teachers who benefit from a more global perspective.

The key to having a global perspective is the ability to objectively compare similarities and differences between different cultures and people. Being knowledgeable about the bigger world is critical to making stronger connections with it. When people begin to understand different perspectives, they not only become more accepting, but also the relationships between people with those perspectives becomes more amiable as well. As time goes by, and technology continues to shorten the distance between once distant people, the diversity of ideas and beliefs grow more substantial. Tolerance and the will to understand one another becomes more essential in the daily life of all people. Cultures are connected through businesses or mixed because of the movement of people, and every person has a responsibility to promote harmony through out their own society. This mutual tolerance, and hopefully acceptance, is an important step to breaking down the prejudice and stereotypes build up by the turbulent, and often violent, past interactions of nations. The

most effective place to plant the seeds of tolerance is with our young people, and what better arena is there than in the classes they already attend.

The student benefit of a globalized classroom will be the development of a more well-rounded view of the world. Author of the popular guide “The Ultimate Study Abroad Guide” very eloquently stated:

“Part of growing up involves developing certain skills that are necessary to function in society: independence, time management, organization, social skills, [and]self-confidence. While students who have never experienced life outside of the traditional classroom still have the ability to realize these skills, those that have grown up learning in [a] global classroom have a very tangible advantage (1, Sec. 3).”

This does not only have to be a result of international travel, it can still be possible to give students very real situations and scenarios in which they can learn to be more globally savvy. Students often crave new and exciting material, so what better way to satisfy that craving than with global situations that they can relate to and actually connect with their lives outside the classroom. Students who engage in many different cultural experiences will have the ability to gain a more open-minded view of the world and of the people with whom it is shared. They will have to use critical thinking to consider the in-depth questions often asked when comparing multiple cultures. Critical thinking will help students to decipher information and distinguish the differences in the social norms of different cultures and how that relates to their own culture and individual lives. They are more likely to advocate tolerance and understanding when confronted with real life situations of diversity, but personal growth is not the only area in which students will benefit. It is reasonable to expect that as time passes the students who are taught in this way will continue to strength

the cross-cultural bridges being formed by business and world leaders today. If more students are taught in a global setting, our whole society will see cultural growth as well. Today's employers are looking for people who are capable of representing their company in the best way possible both locally and internationally. Students who come into the workforce already having practical knowledge of the global economy and international relations will have greater job opportunities than students who have no exposure to international diversity. The benefits of a global education will continue to present themselves in new ways as their lives and careers progress.

Teachers who possess a more global perspective, whether through research and community experiences or through time spent abroad, will be more well-rounded educators. Educators who think and teach globally will be able to enrich their classrooms with realistic connections to the world outside the classrooms. When students can make connections in their everyday lives, the material becomes more meaningful. Having knowledge and experiences with different cultures will allow educators to view their classrooms differently. Foreign cultures depicted in textbooks and mass media often show only a shallow, factual image. It can sometimes minimize the human aspect of a culture. When educators are able to tell of the emotion and the sensual aspect of a culture students are more likely to be more receptive and engaged in the learning. This causes the lesson to be more effective and memorable.

Many teachers who spent extended periods of time in foreign countries often feel that it has only made them more effective educators. Craig Nun, who teaches at a primary school in the UK, spent many years abroad including time spent in a non-English speaking

country. One third of his school's population does not speak English as a their first language, because of his time abroad he is more sensitive to the difficulties and awkwardness associated with being in a new environment and trying to use an unfamiliar language. He feels that his teaching practices are more inclusive for all his learners because he is able to empathize with their struggles. Recently, I completed my student teaching in a North Carolina middle school, during this time I taught a unit on the Byzantine Empire. Part of this unit was to teach about the Eastern Orthodox Christianity and ancient Russian culture (2, Sec. 2). I feel that had I been able to have the experience in Russia prior to teaching that unit, I would have been able to make more tangible connections with my material. I had been to an area that was effected by this culture, I have walked in churches and monasteries and experienced the “more sensory church service of Eastern Orthodoxy,” and seen the Byzantine influence on Russian culture. Now when I teach lessons on the topics like the Byzantine empire, the Russian Czars, the Cold War, or World War II I will have one more perspective from which to teach.

The benefits of teaching and learning with a globalized perspective can impact both personal lives and society as a whole. Students need to be ready to meet the demands of globalized world, and teachers should be able to facilitate an environment serving those needs. Global awareness must begin in early in life to truly promote open-mindedness and tolerance, with which will come a natural curiosity for the surrounding world. As more and more people invite the chance to learn from multiple perspectives, global ties will continue to grow stronger. The world is at our doorstep, we need to be ready when it knocks.

Works Cited:

1. Nault, Nate. "The Benefits of Learning In A Global Classroom." *The Study Abroad Blog*. Ed. Nate Nault. N.p., 2013. Web. 22 Mar. 2013.
<<http://thestudyabroadblog.com/benefits-of-global-education/>>.
2. Eustice, Kerry. "How Have International Experiences Influenced You as a Teacher." *The Guardian* . Ed. Chris Elliot. Guardian News & Media Limited or its affiliates, 12 Sept. 2012. Web. 22 Mar. 2013.
<<http://www.guardian.co.uk/teacher-network/2012/sep/29/international-experiences-influence-on-teachers>>.

~For more articles about globalizing classrooms and its impact on learners I recommend the following website:

- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/teacher-network/series/teaching-and-learning-in-the-global-classroom>