

A CLASSROOM

as Wide as the World

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The world in which today's students will graduate is fundamentally different from the world in which we grew up. The quickening pace of globalization over the past 20 years—driven by profound technological changes, the rise of China and India, and the accelerating pace of scientific discovery—has produced a whole new world. Companies manufacture goods around the clock and around the world; ideas and events traverse the Internet in seconds; a financial crisis in the United States affects farmers in Africa; and pollution in China influences the air in Los Angeles.

As never before, education in the United States must prepare students for a world where the opportunities for success require the ability to compete and cooperate on a global scale. But we have not emphasized global knowledge and skills in our schools. Indeed, compared to their peers in other countries, U.S. students are woefully ignorant of other world cultures, international issues, and foreign languages. A 2007 report from the National Academy of Sciences warns, "The pervasive lack of knowledge of foreign cultures and languages threatens the security of

the United States as well its ability to compete in the global marketplace and produce an informed citizenry" (Committee to Review the Title VI and Fulbright-Hays International Education Programs, 2007, p. 1).

Moreover, although the United States led the world in high school and college attendance for much of the 20th century, other countries are now catching up and even surpassing us in high school attendance and graduation rates, and in math and science achievement. So we have a gap in both global knowledge and global achievement.

We can no longer afford to be lagging behind other countries in high school graduation rates and in math and science standards, while producing graduates who lack the world knowledge, skills, and perspectives to be successful in this global era. All of our students will be left behind if we don't transform their education with this new global context in mind.

What are the key global trends that we need to pay attention to? What does a well-educated person in the 21st century need to know and be able to do? How can we get all of our students globally ready? This chapter analyzes major global trends that will affect education, describes what innovative schools are doing to produce students who are college-ready and globally competent, and suggests what steps policymakers need to take to make such education available to all our students.

Global Trends

Five global trends are transforming the context for future generations. These trends are related to economics, science and technology, demographics, security and citizenship, and education.

Economic Trends

The globalization of economies and the rise of Asia are central facts of the early 21st century. The economies of China, India, and Japan, which represented 18 percent of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) in 2004, are expected to represent 50 percent of the world's GDP within 30 years (Wilson, 2005). And other parts of the world, such as Russia and Brazil, are also projected to grow in importance, as part of "the rise of the rest" (Zakaria, 2008). Already, one in five U.S. jobs is tied

to international trade, a proportion that will continue to increase (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004a). Moreover, the majority of future growth for most U.S. companies, whether small, medium, or large, will be in overseas markets, which means that they will increasingly require a workforce with international competence. According to the Committee for Economic Development (2006), a nonprofit organization of more than 200 business leaders and university presidents,

to compete successfully in the global marketplace, both U.S.-based multinational corporations as well as small businesses increasingly need employees with knowledge of foreign languages and cultures to market products to customers around the globe and to work effectively with foreign employees and partners. (pp. 1-2)

Trends in Science and Technology

In his famous work *The World Is Flat*, Thomas Friedman (2005) describes how the "wiring of the world" and the digitization of production since 1998 are making it possible for people to do increasing amounts of work anywhere and anytime. As a result, more and more things are going to be made in global supply chains. In addition, scientific research, a key driver of innovation, is increasingly being conducted by international teams as other countries increase their scientific capacity. So the ability to collaborate with people in different time zones, across languages and across cultures, at a professional level, becomes ever more important.

Demographic Trends

If there were just 100 people in the world, only 5 would be American. Although this proportion was not consequential when economies were largely national, since 1990, more than 3 billion people in China, India, and the former Soviet Union have moved from closed economies into the global economy. Another effect of globalization is also readily apparent in our own backyards. New immigrants from regions such as Asia and Central and South America are generating a diversity in U.S. communities that mirrors the diversity of the world, and they are transforming the cultures of local communities, workplaces, and even the local

mall. The Hispanic population is 15 percent of the estimated total U.S. population—and will continue to grow. The Asian population is projected to grow 213 percent from 2000 to 2050 compared to a 49 percent increase in the population as a whole over the same period (U.S. Census Bureau, 2004b). Life in the United States increasingly involves interacting and working with individuals from vastly different backgrounds and cultures—a challenge and an opportunity that requires new skills and perspectives.

Trends in Security and Citizenship

The most pressing issues of our time know no boundaries. Challenges facing the United States are both more complex and more global than in the past—from environmental degradation and global warming, to pandemic diseases, to energy and water shortages, to terrorism and weapons proliferation. The effects of poverty, injustice, and lack of education elsewhere spill across borders. What we do affects others, and the actions of others affect us. The only way to solve today's challenges will be through international cooperation among governments and organizations of all kinds. More than ever, our security is intertwined with our understanding of other cultures. And as the line between domestic and international issues increasingly blurs, U.S. citizens will increasingly be called upon to vote and to act on issues—such as alternative energy sources or security measures linked to terrorism—that require greater understanding of the 95 percent of the world's population who live outside our borders.

Trends in Education

In this interconnected world, there is also a growing global talent pool. In the second half of the 20th century, the United States set the world standard of excellence. It was the first country to pursue and achieve mass secondary education and mass higher education. This stock of human capital helped the United States become the dominant economy in the world and take advantage of the globalization and expansion of markets. However, over the past 20 years, other countries have caught up with, and in some cases have passed, the United States. International comparisons from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and

Development (OECD) show the United States is now 18th in the world in high school graduation rates and 13th in college completion (OECD, 2008). In 2006, U.S. 15-year-olds ranked 25th in math performance and 21st in science (Schleicher & Stewart, 2008). Surveys from the Asia Society and the National Geographic Society have also shown that compared with their peers in other industrialized countries, U.S. high school students lag behind in knowledge of other countries and cultures. And while learning a second language is standard in other industrial countries, only 50 percent of U.S. high school students study a foreign language (Pufahl, Rhodes, & Christian, 2001).

Implications of Global Trends

What are the implications of these global trends for our students? Certainly education as usual won't do. Just as our schools made the transition from teaching skills needed in an agrarian society to those needed in an industrial and scientific society, so too we need to transform our learning systems to equip students with the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in this new global era.

International knowledge and skills are no longer just a luxury for a few would-be specialists but are a new basic for all students. Preparation for a competitive global job market and for citizenship in the interconnected world of the 21st century is critical for all young people. Our national goal should be that all students must graduate from high school college-ready and globally competent, prepared to *compete, connect, and cooperate* with their peers around the world.

Clearly, many students are at risk of being unprepared for the demands and opportunities of this global age, especially disadvantaged youth for whom U.S. schools have historically fallen short. While agreeing with the need to introduce global content, many educators fear that doing so would divert attention from accountability demands to close the achievement gap in basic skills. Even if that gap is successfully closed, standardized tests of basic skills do not measure the thinking and complex communication skills that spell success in college (Conley, 2005) or the global skills needed for the knowledge-driven global economy. For

low-income and minority students, closing the basic-skills gap is only a first step toward real equality of opportunity (Jackson, 2008). Indeed, the Asia Society's International Studies Schools Network, a national network of design-driven secondary schools in low-income and minority areas, has shown that by providing relevant and engaging global content and connections, schools can both improve scores on required standardized tests and give students the global knowledge, skills, and perspectives that will be important in the 21st century.

Global Learning

Over the past few years, schools and districts across the United States have begun to respond to this new reality and are seeking to redesign education to produce students who are both college-ready and globally competent. What is global competence?

We do not yet have an established nomenclature for the dimensions of the newly emerging field of "global competence" or "global literacy," but it is generally agreed to include these elements:

- Knowledge of other world regions, cultures, economies, and global issues
- Skills to communicate in languages other than English, to work in cross-cultural teams, and to assess information from different sources around the world
- Values of respect for other cultures and the disposition to engage responsibly as an actor in the global context

How can schools produce global competence? Consider these examples.

The Walter Payton College Preparatory High School in Chicago, an inner-city magnet school that is one of Chicago's most ethnically diverse schools, has shown how integrating global content enhances academic excellence. Founded in 2000 and now one of the top schools in Illinois, the school's mission is to prepare students for "leadership in their community, the nation and the world." Every student studies a world language for four years and experiences a home-stay exchange with a sister

school in China, France, North Africa, Japan, Switzerland, Chile, Italy, or South Africa. Use of technology, including videoconferencing, connects Payton classrooms to their sister schools and to subject matter experts around the world. An array of international visitors, students, and seminars further develops the international spirit of the school. The school is also the flagship of Chicago's Chinese language program, the largest Chinese program in the country.

The John Stanford International School (JSIS) in Seattle is a public elementary immersion school that was started after a survey of the needs of families and the business community. Students spend half the day studying math, science, and literature in either Japanese or Spanish. They spend the other half of the day learning reading, writing, and social studies in English. The school also offers ESL classes for parents. The school is connected to an impoverished school in Mexico, for which the JSIS students raise funds for school supplies. Videoconferencing with students in Japan takes place in an after-school program. The program bridges the time difference because the participants in Seattle can stay late in their after-school program and the Japanese participants can come in early. As a result of the school's success in developing students' fluency in second languages combined with high academic standards in English, Seattle is planning to open several more internationally oriented schools.

These schools, winners of the Goldman Sachs Prizes for Excellence in Education, are clearly outstanding schools. But data collected on hundreds of schools that have applied for the prize—from more than 40 states and from rural and inner-city areas, as well as suburban and private schools—show that many schools are embarking on similar journeys. Our research on these schools and on the Asia Society's own network of internationally themed secondary schools serving low-income and minority communities around the United States shows that schools typically start in a small way, with one or two courses or a single international element such as an exchange, and gradually broaden their approaches. Over time, globally oriented schools develop key common elements (Asia Society, 2008). Typically, they do the following:

- Create a global vision and culture by revising their mission statements and graduate profiles and creating a school culture that supports internationally focused teaching and learning. Although many schools start by creating a single international element or perhaps an international strand, bringing together a school-community group to develop an internationally focused vision and mission statement, such as that of Walter Payton's, can serve as the foundation for creating an inclusive, globally focused school culture. Schools often begin the development of their international culture and focus with external symbols such as maps and flags. But day-to-day practices that go beyond this, such as regular assemblies at which speakers present different perspectives on important world issues, help to develop a school climate that is an intellectually rigorous and emotionally safe place to engage students in serious discussions from multiple vantage points.

A powerful way to gain clarity about an international vision for a school is to develop a profile of the graduate who will emerge from it. A good example of this is the Asia Society's International Studies Schools Network Graduate Profile, which describes the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that define a student's global competency as well as college readiness. Once created, the graduate profile becomes the compass for all school work. Curricular alignment, development of courses of study, and enrichment experiences enable students to meet the learning outcomes that the profile defines. The profile can also provide the yardstick of achievement for student portfolios that demonstrate the dual goals of college readiness and global competence.

- Develop an internationally oriented faculty by recruiting teachers with international interests and encouraging teachers to take advantage of the many professional development and study/travel opportunities offered through universities and international organizations. Although shockingly few teacher preparation institutions as yet prepare teachers to teach about the world (Longview Foundation, 2008), schools can actively recruit teachers who have the dispositions that are essential to effective teaching and have acquired deep international knowledge and

interests through study abroad, service in the Peace Corps, or their own linguistic or cultural heritage.

However, recognizing that many teachers have not had exposure to the world outside the United States in their own training, successful schools put in place an array of opportunities for adult learning. Most universities and colleges in the United States have increasing international expertise on their faculties, and developing partnerships with local universities can be a great source of professional development for teachers, enabling them to deepen their own knowledge of world regions and issues. Many travel and study opportunities are available through Fulbright, Rotary, and other programs that can energize and inform teaching through authentic exposure to other cultures. Schools can also create a global learning culture within the school; international book clubs and collaborative curriculum development can encourage thoughtful reflection and extend practice. In a nutshell, successful schools expand opportunities for teachers to increase their own international knowledge and to kindle their excitement about other cultures so that they can foster the same curiosity in their students.

- Integrate international content into all curriculum areas, bringing a global dimension to science and language arts, as well as social studies and languages. Although many people associate international content solely with social studies and world languages, in the 21st century, every discipline can be given a global perspective. Thus, international education is not a separate subject but an analytical framework that can transform curriculum and instruction in every discipline and provide rich content for interdisciplinary work.

Teaching and learning about the world can take place in many ways. Consider these examples:

- Social Studies—Schools can offer world geography, international economics, world history, and world religions, as well as teach U.S. history in a global context.
- English/Language Arts—Classes can be given an international dimension by expanding the traditional canon to include novels and

poetry in translation from around the world and by using literary analysis to illuminate both universal themes and differences across cultures. Students can write articles for their peers in other countries, getting real-world practice in cross-cultural communication.

- Science—Schools can use the methods of scientific inquiry to engage with world problems, and students can work collaboratively with students abroad as real scientists do.

- Mathematics—Using the world to understand mathematics and using mathematics to understand the world are key components of global competence.

- Arts—Creativity transcends borders, and the arts are a great way to connect to other cultures. Schools can use international films, cultural performances, and art exhibits, many of which are available free on the Web.

- Career and Technical Education—Courses can offer numerous opportunities to learn about the world as careers and professions of all kinds become global.

Schools use many approaches to “going global.” Some use the courses and professional development of the Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate programs as a framework. Others develop their own approach, building on the universities, businesses, and cultural organizations in their community and the vast international resources available on the Web to create programs that link to state and local standards and circumstances. Whatever approach is taken to improving student learning, this broadened curriculum must be married to the best practices in instruction. These include motivating students through engaging relevant content; combining a focus on deep content knowledge with reasoning skills and analysis of multiple perspectives; using purposeful interdisciplinary inquiry and simulations to answer large questions; using primary sources from around the world; and emphasizing interaction with people in other parts of the world as part and parcel of the learning process.

- Emphasize the learning of world languages, including less commonly taught languages such as Chinese and Arabic. In a globally oriented school, the study of world languages and cultures has to have a prominent place. In fact, opinion polls suggest that the public increasingly understands the importance of languages. A 2007 Phi Delta Kappa/Gallup poll showed that 85 percent of respondents believe that learning world languages is important, and 70 percent believe it should begin in elementary school (Rose & Gallup, 2007). But language instruction in most schools has simply been too little, too late.

Instead, successful schools are creating new models of effective language learning. Building on the large research base on effective language learning, they start earlier; focus on proficiency rather than seat time; and engage students by giving them meaningful, motivating tasks that allow them to use world language as a tool for communicating with others. Many schools are developing content-based learning, delivering lessons in another subject in a second language, as in the example of the John Stanford International School. And from podcasts to Skype to movies to online language courses, technology is allowing students to immerse themselves in language as never before. Although most world language offerings in schools have remained essentially unchanged for 50 years, a College Board survey reports a more than 200 percent increase from 2005 to 2008 in the number of schools teaching Chinese—a sure sign that parents, students, and schools think language can open doors (Asia Society & College Board, 2008).

Global Connections

Thanks to technology and to the Internet, all children now are children of the globe, not just children of the neighborhood where they live. Today’s tech-savvy kids already have the tools for global learning at their fingertips. Gone is the day when education was synonymous with a building housing a teacher and a blackboard. Today, the opportunities for learning beyond the school walls and beyond the school day abound, enabling students to connect the local to the global and back again. Globally oriented schools can do the following:

- Harness technology to tap global information sources, create international collaborations, and offer international courses and languages online, especially to underserved communities. Information and communication technology is our greatest asset in internationalizing education. It allows students to access information from every corner of the world, to overcome geographic barriers, to communicate and collaborate with their peers in other countries, to publish findings, and to share words, images, and videos with a worldwide audience—even to talk to one another in real time.

Lack of timely educational resources about other parts of the world was once a major constraint on teaching about the world. Today's students can tap into free, relevant information and networks from around the world; but at the same time they need to learn critical-thinking skills to assess the wealth of global information that can be found online. Online courses can allow students access to languages or other internationally focused courses that are not available in their local school district. And Internet-based, classroom-to-classroom projects, which allow students to learn *with*, not just *about*, their peers in other countries, are a forerunner of what one day will become truly global classrooms. These learning opportunities made possible through technology are powerful for all students but are especially valuable in rural areas, where global connections or local diversity may be limited.

- Expand learning time to give students more time and support to achieve global skills. Although we live in an interconnected world, many of America's disadvantaged young people are disconnected. Studies show that many young people from low-income communities never travel more than a few miles outside their neighborhood. We now realize that some young people need more learning time and support to reach the goals of schooling and that we need to look at the school day and school year very differently.

According to the Afterschool Alliance (www.afterschoolalliance.org), informal learning programs, such as after-school, before-school, and summer programs that take place in a wide range of settings—including

schools, community-based and faith-based organizations, cultural institutions, and museums—now serve more than 6.5 million children. The after-school environment offers many ways to promote global skills. Its traditions of project-based learning can engage young people in learning about world issues; field trips can turn local communities into living museums of local-global connections; and involving families can expose young people to the diverse cultures in their communities and around the world through exploring identity, heritage, and universal cultural pursuits. For older students, programs can provide a voice and an opportunity to develop leadership skills by allowing them to take action on issues of local or global relevance or learn about international options for college or future careers.

Most important, after-school and summer programs can help to extend global literacy opportunities to young people who might be unable to access them otherwise. They can expand horizons—from the neighborhood to the world (Asia Society, 2009a).

- Expand student experiences through internationally oriented travel, service learning, internships, and partnerships and exchanges with schools in other countries. Whether the experience consists of a week of living in a home and attending school classes, or a summer, semester-, or year-long foreign exchange program, living abroad can be life altering, bringing new perspectives, increased intercultural awareness, tolerance, and confidence in dealing with other people (AFS International Programs, 2008). School partnerships or exchanges, in which a school develops a long-term relationship with a school or schools in another part of the world, are increasing in number and bring added benefits as they enable both U.S. and international students and teachers to participate in regular exchanges, real or virtual, and deepen understanding on both sides.

Many schools value the academic and social benefits of service learning. When it is integrated into courses in a globally oriented school, service learning can also help students see the connections between their local actions and global issues. Finally, internships in local companies

or nonprofit organizations can both allow students to apply academic skills to the workplace context and give students insight into growing global interconnectedness.

Going Global: Preparing Our Students for an Interconnected World, a report of the Asia Society (2008), provides further concepts and examples for each of these elements, drawn from more than 70 schools in places as different as Vermont, West Virginia, North Carolina, Texas, Florida, Kansas, Wisconsin, and Oklahoma. The ways in which individual schools harness community resources to link the local to the global demonstrate that teaching and learning about the world is within reach of every type of school. Other approaches and best practices are being collected and shared through the Partnership for Global Learning, a national network of educators dedicated to ensuring that our students are prepared for work and citizenship in an interconnected world (see www.asiasociety.org).

Going to Scale: The Role of States

Across the United States, hundreds of innovative efforts are under way in schools and local districts to add global content and connections. But as encouraging as these efforts are, they are islands of excellence. How can we get all of our students globally ready? For this we will need state and national action to take these approaches to scale.

States are critical to creating internationally oriented school systems. State governments increasingly understand the need for an internationally competitive workforce, recognizing that they are no longer competing with the state next door but with countries around the world. More than 25 states have participated in the States Network on International Education in the Schools, in partnership with the Asia Society and the Longview Foundation. They are beginning to put in place a series of steps to raise awareness about the importance of global knowledge and skills; build leadership among education, business, and political leaders; and create policies and programs that will introduce these new skills. A report by the Council of Chief State School Officers (2008), *Putting the World into World-Class Education*, reviews these developments and proposes a set of recommendations to give *all* students access to a

world-class, globally oriented education. The report recommends that each state take stock of its existing efforts and create a framework for systemic change beginning in the elementary grades and extending through high school. The framework should include the following elements:

- Redefining high school graduation requirements to include global knowledge and skills. Every state should include global competence in its overall recasting and modernizing of high school graduation requirements. Requirements should include world languages and assessment of international knowledge and skills across the curriculum. As they redesign middle and high schools to ensure that all students graduate with the skills needed for success in the 21st century, states should consider creating internationally themed schools to act as models and professional development centers.
- International benchmarking of state standards. Across the globe, countries are increasing their high school and college graduation rates, increasing their achievement in math and science, and expanding students' global knowledge and skills. States need to learn about education practices in other high-performing and rapidly improving countries and use the best of what has been observed to help us continue to grow and improve. States should review their curriculum standards and statewide assessments to ensure that they include global knowledge as well as the analytical, higher-order thinking, and cross-cultural communication skills that students will need to face the challenges of a changing world.
- Making world languages a core part of the curriculum from grades 3 through 12. States need to create a long-term plan to expand their capacity in world languages and build on effective approaches to language learning, including starting early and creating longer sequences of study; using more immersion-like experiences; focusing on proficiency rather than seat time; and harnessing technology (such as online language courses). High-quality alternative certification routes should be created to speed up the production of language teachers from heritage communities and enable the development of programs in less commonly taught languages, such as Chinese and Arabic.

- Increasing the capacity of educators to teach the world. Teachers who are being prepared for the learning environments of tomorrow need greater knowledge of the world. States need to work through their teacher certification mechanisms and, with their institutions of higher education (which are themselves becoming more global), to internationalize teacher preparation programs (Longview Foundation, 2008). States should reexamine professional development for teachers in light of the new global context and encourage international experiences for both prospective and practicing educators.
- Using technology to expand global opportunities. The 21st century is both global and digital, and technology is perhaps our biggest asset in internationalizing education. State technology offices should encourage the use of information sources from around the world, help teachers engage in classroom-to-classroom collaborations to connect students with international peers, expand opportunities for students to take internationally oriented courses and world languages online, and promote student-created international projects on the Web.

The National Challenge

The speed of change around the world creates urgency for action at every level. Graduating the next generation of students prepared for the challenges of a diverse, globally interconnected world is a national imperative, not just a state or local one. For 50 years, the federal government has played an important role in fostering foreign language and area studies expertise at the postsecondary level; however, in the 21st century, knowledge of the world is no longer a luxury for a small group of experts but a requirement for any educated person. As the Obama administration and Congress consider the reauthorization of federal funding for elementary and secondary education, a new federal-state-local partnership could make access to an internationally competitive, world-class education and graduating globally competent citizens a national priority. Five areas of investment should help to create 21st century learning environments (Asia Society, 2009b):

- Providing states with incentives to benchmark their educational systems and standards against other countries so that school leaders can understand the changing global skill set and share best practices from around the world.
- Supporting initiatives to redesign middle and high schools to raise high school graduation rates and transform secondary schools for the 21st century in order to create college-ready and globally competent graduates.
- Investing in our education leaders' and teachers' knowledge of the international dimensions of their subjects to modernize our education workforce.
- Building national capacity in world languages from kindergarten through college by offering incentives to begin learning languages in elementary school, promote online language learning, and recruit and train language teachers from our diverse linguistic communities.
- Expanding federal programs that support the engagement of U.S. students with the rest of the world in order to better prepare our students and strengthen America's image abroad.

Concluding Thoughts

What would a truly modern 21st century learning system look like? What would I hope for my grandchildren? I would like to see a day when our students' education is not bound by the four walls of a school but can be as wide as the world:

- When learning languages and cultures begins in the elementary years and can continue anywhere, anytime, through online learning.
- When all our secondary students have access to courses on global issues, whether in science, economics, or the arts.
- When every school in the United States has ongoing partnerships with schools in other parts of the world, enabling students to learn through real or virtual exchanges with their international peers.

- When prospective teachers have the opportunity to study abroad—to kindle their own excitement about other cultures so that they can foster the same curiosity in their students.
- When school leaders, like business leaders, share best practices from around the world, continuously benchmarking their own schools against international standards.

In short, every school would open every student's eyes to the complexity, opportunity, and challenges of a globalized world and equip students with the competence to succeed and to lead in this new era.

Given political will and some focused resources, I believe that educators can rise to these challenges. Doing so not only will make us more successful and innovative in the global economy, but also will lay an important foundation for peace and a shared global future.