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# Guest editorial: Global education and pedagogy in PK-12 schools and teacher education for the 21st century

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## Introduction: special issue of social studies research and practice on global education and pedagogy in PK-12 schools and teacher education for the 21st century

The purpose of education in any given society regardless of its ideological and philosophical beliefs and values is to assist the young in cultivating critical and reflective knowledge base, skills, attitudes and values for responsible, transformative citizenship – national and global – and for sustainable development and future. The failure to achieve this is detrimental. Over the years, advocates for proper education of the young have articulated the rationale and imperative for paradigm shift in educating for a world that is so intricately wired together. In 1985, Robert Mueller called out the imperative for educating the young for global citizenship. In his prophetic statement, he stated:

A child born today will be faced as an adult, daily with problems of a global interdependent nature, be it peace, food, the quality of life, inflation, or scarcity of resources. He will be both an actor and a beneficiary or a victim in the total world fabric, and he may rightly ask: “why was I not warned?” Why was I not better educated? Why did my teachers not tell me about these problems and indicate my behavior as a member of an interdependent human race? It is, therefore, the duty and the self-enlightened interest of governments to educate their children properly about the type of world in which they are going to live (1985, p. 1).

After 35 years, and as a critical global educator and scholar, I find Mueller’s profound warning alarming, worrisome, given that in 2021, research shows that students remain inadequately prepared for global learning, competence and citizenship (National Geographic-Roper, 2016; Ukpokodu, 2020). According to MetLife Inc (2009) survey, American teachers rated their students fair or poor in their knowledge of other nations and cultures, while the students rated their teachers’ abilities to teach them about other nations and cultures the lowest among their knowledge and skills. This is troubling! More than ever, our world has become increasingly interdependent, interconnected, integrated, diverse, and yet challenged by common, persistent, complex and unprecedented daily phenomena that defy singular, national resolutions. Among these challenges are racial injustice, environmental and ecological degradation, devastating effects of climate change, poverty and economic disparity, racial and religious tensions and conflicts, political turmoil, migrant and refugee crises, epidemic and pandemic viruses and diseases, natural disasters, terrorism/cyberterrorism, child exploitation, cyber espionage, cyber stalking, cybercrime, cyberterrorism, drug, human trafficking, banking fraud, email frauds and more. These global concerns require a well-educated global citizenry with talents and skills to collectively work to solve them (Banks, 2017; Ki-Moon, 2012; National Council for the Social Studies [NCSS], 2013). Former UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon reminded us of the dire state of the planet. He called for collective ambition and action to rise to the pervasive turmoil, insecurity, inequality and intolerance that characterize today’s human family (2012, n.p.).



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The notion that nation-state is global and global is nation-state cannot be more real! Imperatively, we are reminded of the urgent need to rethink how to prepare the young generation for critical national and global citizenship. Increasingly, like [Mueller \(1985\)](#), educators, researchers, students, institutions and organizations are calling for educating the young for critical and successful global citizenship ([Banks, 2017](#)). The United Nations, in its vision and goals for sustainable world, development and future has called for educating for global citizenship. Historically, education has been taunted as a vehicle for preparing the young for the workforce. While this economic imperative is justified, yet, ideally, education today should be about citizenship – national and global. Today and tomorrow’s youngsters must cultivate an authentic global citizen identity that includes recognizing who they are as global citizens, their place in the world, and their roles and responsibilities to reconstruct a troubled world for equity, social justice, harmonious and peaceful co-existence. In other words, they need to cultivate the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to live their full humanity in a culturally diverse, interconnected and interdependent world.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, horrific terrorist attack on America, global education became a popular discourse across academic and social circles. A lot of attention was devoted to analyzing and debating the effects of the tragedy on students and how teachers and other educators should teach about the tragic event. [Merryfield \(2002\)](#) argued then that the educational effect of 9/11 was not only a pedagogical matter, but an authentic assessment of global education and raised the importance of fostering students’ global competence and citizenship and teachers’ global perspective pedagogy. How well has global education become embedded in P-16 students’ learning and global citizenship development? Not well! Even as organizations such as the Asia Society, Longview Foundation, the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the US Department State of Education (see Fulbright Teachers for Global Classrooms), the United Nations, among others, have developed programs and resources for educators to use, research shows that global education remains marginalized across P-12 and teacher education. At the P-12 level, research shows that most teachers lack the knowledge, understanding, and the competence to teach and promote global learning for student global citizenship development ([Rappaport, 2010](#); [Ukpokodu, 2020](#)). Most teachers avoid or ignore integrating global learning into their curricula or enact curricula that essentialize, trivialize and conflate concepts ([Rappaport, 2010](#); [Ukpokodu, 2020](#)). Studies find that teachers feel challenged by the content and how to present it to students ([Banks, 2014](#); [Rappaport, 2013](#)) and because of curricular mandates, and prioritization of US narratives and national identity.

Similarly, research finds that teacher education programs fail to internationalize their programs and thereby inadequately prepare teacher candidates and classroom teachers for global perspective pedagogy ([Apple, 2011](#); [Merryfield, 2002](#); [Ukpokodu, 2010, 2020](#); [Zong, 2009](#)). Even as teacher education accreditation agencies ([AACTE, 2012](#); [CAEP, 2013](#)) have established standards and themes such as global awareness, perspectives, issues, teachers leave their programs without developing the global competence and global perspective pedagogy for fostering students’ global citizenship development ([Merryfield, 2000](#); [Ukpokodu, 2020](#); [Zhao, 2010](#); [Zong, 2009](#)).

Global illiteracy and lack of global competence among teachers and students constitute a national risk. Given the reality that today’s world is more dire, troubled, volatile, unjust, complex and uncertain, and if we are to meet the [United Nations Sustainable Development \(2015\)](#) goals and the [United States Teacher Education for Sustainable Development Network \(2013\)](#) 2030 goals that aim to build a more sustainable world for today and the future, P-12 schools and teacher education must take seriously the responsibility to provide students the knowledge, skills, and values and attitudes to enter the office of global citizen. Another consideration for rethinking and repositioning global education in P-12 and teacher education is the inclusion of global competence in the Program for International Student Assessment

(PISA). For decades, OECD has administered the assessment in math, reading and science literacy – the so-called core of human capital. Civic literacy or social studies has been conspicuously left out of PISA. In 2018, PISA began assessing global competence, with a focus in areas of self-awareness, respect for difference, sense of global connection, empathy, among others. PISA’s move and aim to assess global competence is to draw attention to developing students’ abilities to examine issues of local, global and cultural significance, and the understanding and appreciation of perspectives and worldviews of others and taking collective action for collective well-being and sustainable development. Specifically, OECD (n.d.) aims to determine if students are globally competent citizens, ready to live and thrive in a world with unprecedented opportunities and unprecedented challenges. Although US students did not participate in the 2018 PISA global competence assessment, due to former President Trump’s opting out of it, it is only a matter of when, and not if. Classroom teachers and teacher education programs must become intentional and systematic in integrating global education and learning into students’ curricular experiences if they are to prepare them for successful participation in PISA. This charge is specifically for social studies teachers and social studies teacher education programs. It is for this, among other reasons, that this special issue of the *Social Studies Research and Practice* is notable.

This special issue of *Social Studies Research and Practice* brings together a collection of articles that address the above-noted concerns on global education and pedagogy in P-12 schools and Teacher Education for the 21st century of social studies. The articles highlight the works of authors who are teacher educators/scholars and P-12 practitioners within the field of social studies education and global education.

Hilary Landorf and Catherine Wadley’s article examines the importance, implications and application of John Dewey’s philosophy for global learning in the social studies. It provides a useful guide and illumination of concrete examples on how Dewey’s exposition of democratic education, experiential learning and reflective thinking relevantly applies to global learning. Similarly, Aaron Johnson and Taylor Hamblin in the article “The politics of naming and global citizenship education” draw on Dewey’s work to examine and model how contemporary politics could be used to engage students in global citizenship education, with specific reference to issues of racism and linguistic discrimination. They provide designs of inquiries and resources that teachers can use to foster student global citizenship education.

At the P-12 level, several contributions illuminate specialized programs, curriculum, projects and practices oriented toward global education, international mindedness, justice-oriented global citizenship and perspective consciousness. In “I had a big bias”: Disrupting children’s biases, stereotypes through studying cultures, Heidi Torres sheds insights into an intervention activity that helped young children deconstruct their biases and stereotypes. The articles of Tocci, Charles; Ryan, Ann Marie; Ensminger, David; Rismiati, Catur; Moughania, Ahlam and Karen Chernoff examine and interrogate the often-acclaimed curriculum of the International Baccalaureate Humanities programs that purport to foster students’ international mindedness and illuminate the limitations that include the exclusive focus on Eurocentric narratives to the exclusion of social-cultural history, and the tensions classroom teachers experience enacting the curriculum. In the article “Using what you have” to “Teach for Global Citizenship” Andrea Christoff illustrated how one classroom teacher in similar International Baccalaureate program engaged in *proactive pedagogy* to navigate the tensions inherent in the IB program and creatively enacted practices that foster “Justice-Oriented Global Education within Three World History Teachers’ critical global citizenship education. Similarly, in “Justice-Oriented Global Education within Three World History Teachers’ Worldviews and Practice” Hanadi Shatara illuminates how world history classroom teachers developed a global justice-oriented worldview that shaped their curricular practice that intersected world history and global education and exemplified insights into how the participants introduced and

facilitated issues of injustice such as climate change, capitalism and inequality in the world history courses as well as contemporary issues like Black Lives Matter.

Within this special issue, two contributions feature teacher educators' approaches to integrating global learning and issues into social studies practice. Barbara Cruz and Cristina Veira in "Preparing the next generation of global educators: An imperative in teacher education" focused on teacher agency and the integration of global lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ +) issues into preservice teachers' learning. Using an interdisciplinary inquiry approach, and drawing on diverse resources, Guichun Zong and Barbara Salyer illustrate how they engage, mode and empower preservice teachers in learning about and integrating issues of global sustainability and curricular unit construction.

The significance of this special issue of *Social Studies Research and Practice* is underscored by the focus, scope and breadth of these timely topics that address the gap in social studies research and practice. Collectively, the articles in the special issue bring critical perspectives and approaches that should encourage and empower social studies teachers and teacher educators to embrace and disrupt the marginalization of global education in the social studies and lend to adequate preparation of the young for critical global citizenship. It is hoped that these articles will generate interests that will advance critical conservations and creative curricular enactment within the field of social studies, teacher education and education in generation.

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