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## Global Education as a Cross-curricular Approach to Language Teaching for Democracy

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### ABSTRACT

Global education is a cross curricular discipline, originating in the 1970s and 1980s, developed for schools by international educators in the United Kingdom, Europe and North America. One definition describes it as "education which promotes the knowledge, attitudes and skills relevant to living responsibly in a multicultural, interdependent world" (Fisher & Hicks, 1985, p. 8). Another definition states that "global education consists of efforts to bring about changes in the content, methods and social context of education in order to better prepare students for citizenship in a global age" (Kniep, 1985, p. 15).

This article introduces the field of global education, describes its aims and objectives, and outlines the rationale for taking a global education approach to language teaching. It will describe and discuss a variety of initiatives undertaken by global language educators in classrooms, programs and schools around the world that promote democratic citizenship, foster social responsibility and engage students in working to solve local and global issues. It will conclude by encouraging language teachers to explore global education as a valuable cross-curricular approach to language teaching for democracy.

**Keywords:** global education; democratic citizenship; teacher training; foreign language teaching

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## Introduction

Exploring diverse academic fields in order to improve the effectiveness of foreign language teaching is nothing new. Language teachers have always gone to other disciplines to learn about new ideas, techniques and resources. Educators who wish to expand their knowledge of language turn to the field of linguistics. Classroom teachers who wish to deepen their understanding of motivation turn to the field of psychology. And curriculum designers interested in how language is used in society turn to socio-linguistics. In the same way, if we are serious about teaching language to promote democratic citizenship for a global age, then we need to turn to fields that specialize in achieving this goal. One such field is the relatively recent discipline of *global education*.

## GLOBAL EDUCATION

### *The Field of Global Education*

Global education was developed by international educators in the United Kingdom, Europe and North America in the 1970s and 1980s as a cross curricular discipline aimed at bringing an international perspective into schools (Cates, 2013). In the UK, it has been defined as "education which promotes the knowledge, attitudes and skills relevant to living responsibly in a multicultural, interdependent world" (Fisher & Hicks, 1985, p. 8). In the United States, a key American definition states that "global education consists of efforts to bring about changes in the content, methods and social context of education in order to better prepare students for citizenship in a global age" (Kniep, 1985, p. 15).

Global educators emphasize that global education is a pedagogical approach, not just a "teaching technique". They encourage teachers to design dynamic classroom lessons that empower students to engage with the world and its problems in a positive way, not depressing classes full of doom and gloom that demotivate students and lead to despair. The goals of global education can be divided into the four domains of knowledge, skills, attitudes and action.

- Knowledge about the world, its peoples and problems is the first goal. If we want students to become responsible citizens of our multicultural world, our teaching should promote understanding of the world's peoples and nations as well as a basic knowledge of world problems, their causes and possible solutions.
- Acquiring skills necessary to survive in a global age is the second goal. This involves teaching that promotes communication skills, critical and creative thinking, problem solving, informed decision-making and the ability to see issues from multiple perspectives.
- Acquiring global attitudes is the third goal. This entails fostering a respect for diversity, an appreciation of other cultures, a sense of global awareness, a commitment to justice and empathy with others.
- The final goal of global education is action. This requires teachers to design lessons that inspire students to work for a better world and foster democratic participation in the local, national and global community.

### ***Historical Background***

To understand the roots of global education, it is helpful to review the history of globalization (MacGillivray, 2006, pp. 10-12). The term “globalization” itself is derived from the word “globe” and traces its roots back to the first modern globes in 15<sup>th</sup> century Europe. The adjective “global” is much more recent, making its first documented appearance in *Harper’s Magazine* in 1892. The term “globalization” did not become an official word until its first dictionary listing in 1961. Even then, it was defined only in narrow terms related to international trade. The term “global village” came along soon after, when it appeared as the title of a classic 1968 book by media expert Marshall McLuhan. Use of this term increased after 1972 when the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) issued its first public photo of Planet Earth. This famous photo had a powerful impact on people around the world and echoed the 1948 prophecy of British astronomer Fred Hoyle that, “Once a photo of Earth from space is seen, humanity will never be the same.” Not long after, the first 24-hour TV station to broadcast news from a global perspective – CNN – was founded in 1980. A decade later, the term “global citizen” began to gain popularity, stimulated in part by the publication of Donella Meadow’s 1991 manifesto, “The Global Citizen”. The development of a “global” approach to education, thus, can be seen as a result of the increased international awareness and growing globalization that occurred worldwide in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### ***The Rationale for Global Education***

There are three major points in the rationale for global education. The first is the fact that our planet faces serious world problems. As one educator has noted, "Hardly a day goes by without an announcement of terrorist activities, the newest lake poisoned by acid rain, the latest energy crisis, the suffering of displaced people in refugee camps or the repression through violent means of people seeking their human rights" (Kniep, 1987, p. 69).

The second point concerns the interdependence of our modern world. Given the interconnected nature of our global village, it is impossible to ignore the global problems that our planet faces and the way these impact our lives, schools and communities. As two British global educators have pointed out, we live in a world “where a distant political struggle is a luggage search for plane passengers at Manchester airport. An upheaval in Iran is a lowered thermostat in Buenos Aires. An assassination in India sparks off demonstrations in South London” (Pike & Selby, 1988, p. 6).

The third rationale concerns current education systems. Many concerned educators feel that young people are not being adequately prepared to cope with the global problems that our world faces. Too often, schools around the world are locked into traditional education systems that feature rote memorization, passive learning, examination pressures and the discouragement of critical thinking. This concern has been expressed by figures such as Edwin Reischauer, who stated:

*we need a profound reshaping of education ... humanity is facing grave difficulties that can only be solved on a global scale. Education is not moving rapidly enough to provide the knowledge about the outside world and the attitudes toward other people that may be essential for human survival. (Reischauer, 1973, p. 4).*

### ***Global Education Across the Curriculum***

Global educators emphasize that global education is not a separate subject but an approach which is valid across the curriculum. Pike and Selby, for example, in their pioneering handbook *Global Teacher, Global Learner* (1988, pp. 235-267) argue that integrating a global perspective into

"traditional" school subjects can enliven these subjects while furthering the goals of global education. In their book, they devote an entire chapter to the topic of "subject-based approaches to global education" with examples of how a global perspective can be integrated into areas as diverse as mathematics, foreign languages, art, music, the sciences (biology, chemistry, physics) and home economics. The school subject where most work has been done is social studies (Evans, 2021). Geography instructors, in particular, have done pioneering work resulting in books such as *Teaching Geography for a Better World* (Fien & Gerber, 1988). Initiatives by language arts teachers include resource books such as *Social Issues in the English Classroom* (Hurlbert & Totten, 1992).

### ***Teaching for World Citizenship***

A key concept that global education promotes is "world citizenship." This is not just a vague ideal, but a very real concept that has been analyzed for decades by scholars and discussed in books such as Heater (2002) and Dower (2003). With the rapid pace of globalization, this has become a popular phrase in the media, academia and even popular discourse. A casual Internet search for "world citizen" will turn up over 4 billion hits.

For many, the phrase "world citizenship" has a very modern feel. This concept, however, has a long pedigree, going back to ancient Greece and the famous quote by Socrates: "I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world" (Choue, 1986, p. 30). Historically, the idea that people should have a loyalty to the human family above and beyond their national citizenship has been advocated by people as diverse as Einstein, who called nationalism 'the measles of mankind' and by Pablo Casals who declared, "The love of one's country is a splendid thing. But, why should love stop at the border?" Writers such as Ferencz and Keyes (1991) and Rotblat (1997) argue that, just as historically we learned to extend our loyalty to our family, community and nation, we must now take the final step and develop an allegiance to humanity if we are to solve the global problems which face us all.

Teaching for world citizenship may sound like an ambitious goal. However, efforts to promote this concept predate the rise of global education by several decades. Education aimed at promoting world citizenship has developed under various names, including *Education for International Understanding* (1947), *Education in World Citizenship* (1952) and *World Studies* (1980s). At present, various initiatives to promote this are being carried out by individuals, organizations and ministries of education around the world.

Various attempts have been made to sketch out what an 'education for world citizenship' might entail and how it might be implemented (Fisher & Hicks, 1985; Knip, 1987; Pike, 2008; Pike & Selby, 1988). In contrast to the more traditional term "world citizenship," current practitioners use the term "global citizenship education." The aims and content for this have been outlined by scholars such as Peters et al (2008) and Sant et al. (2018). International non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as *Oxfam* have issued online guides to "Education for Global Citizenship", "Global Citizenship in the Classroom" and "English and Global Citizenship" (Oxfam, 2015). Other initiatives have addressed the challenges of teaching in a digital age, such as the *Digital Citizenship Education Handbook* (Council of Europe, 2019).

### ***Multiple Loyalties and Levels of Citizenship***

A common misunderstanding that global educators face is the "either-or" claim that "global citizenship" is in direct conflict with "national citizenship." To counter this false dichotomy, global educators point to their emphasis on "good citizenship" and stress the need to raise student awareness of "multiple loyalties." Global citizens, they argue, are not that different from

local or national citizens. The only difference is the level. So, what does it mean to be a good citizen?

- Good *local* citizens identify with their community, share a sense of solidarity with their neighbors and contribute to improve their town or city. Because they love their community, they work to end local violence, poverty and prejudice, and take action to protect the local environment.
- Good *national* citizens identify with their country, share a sense of solidarity with fellow nationals, and contribute to improve their country. Because they love their nation, they work to end violence, poverty and prejudice nationwide, and take action to protect their country's environment.
- Good *global* citizens identify with the wider world, share a sense of solidarity with the other members of our global family, and contribute to improve our world. Because they love our planet, they work to end violence, poverty and prejudice worldwide and take action to protect the global environment.

Local, national and global citizenship, then, are not mutually exclusive. They are three parallel types of citizenship that operate at different levels. There is no need to choose between them. Most of us easily juggle these “multiple loyalties” and feel no conflict in simultaneously being a citizen of our city, our province and our country. In the same way, being a global citizen is not a denial of local or national citizenship. It is just a different dimension that allows us to contribute to the wider world as valued members of one global family, a level of engagement that has been elaborated in books such as *World Citizenship: Allegiance to Humanity* (Rotblat, 1997).

While it is true, then, that global education emphasizes the importance of “world citizenship”, ultimately the job of global educators is to promote “good citizenship” – at the local, national and international level – so that young people can contribute to creating a better future for their communities, their countries and the wider world. For language teachers, this mission has been explored in more depth in the book *Citizenship and Language Learning* (Osler & Starkey, 2005), which documents how educators in Latin America, Europe and Asia are working to promote responsible citizenship through their foreign language teaching, as well as in texts such as Byram (2008) and Byram et al. (2016) which explore in detail the concept of “intercultural citizenship.”

## GLOBAL EDUCATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

### *A Global Education Approach to FLT*

A global education approach to language teaching has been defined as one that aims at “enabling students to effectively acquire a foreign language while empowering them with the knowledge, skills and commitment required by world citizens” (Cates, 1990, p. 3). For language teachers, this involves integrating a global perspective into our content, methods and materials through a focus on international themes, global issues, classroom activities linking students to the wider world, and concepts such as social responsibility and global citizenship.

Some practitioners may ask, “What has global education got to do with us as language teachers? Isn't our job just to teach grammar, vocabulary and communication skills?” There are a number of good reasons for integrating global education into language teaching. One concerns the aspirations we have to be a “profession”. The idea that professions have a moral responsibility to

society goes back to the Hippocratic Oath in ancient Greece where doctors swore to use their professional skills for the good of society. Professional groups working to solve world problems through research, education and action include the *Union of Concerned Scientists*, *Physicians for Social Responsibility* and similar groups for lawyers, psychologists and other fields. If language teachers aspire to be a "profession" in the real sense of the word, we must consider this aspect of social responsibility.

A second reason concerns the status of language teaching within the field of education. The education profession has always recognized its unique responsibility in promoting peace, justice and an active concern for the world's problems. The aims of the *World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession*, for example, included the promotion of equality, peace, justice, freedom and human rights (WCOTP, 1989) while the group *Educators for Social Responsibility* (ESR), in books such as Berman and La Farge (1993), argued that we need to go beyond the three "R's" of traditional teaching - reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic - to make "responsibility" the 4th 'R' of school education.

### ***Global Education and English Language Teaching***

Within the field of foreign language teaching, global education has had its biggest impact among teachers of English. Given the status of English as a "global language" (Crystal, 2003), it is natural that the EFL classroom has become a key place for introducing global education ideas. Scholars such as Birch (2009) have discussed the special role that English teachers can play as global educators. Introducing a global education approach to ELT, however, has required a rethinking of the aims of English teaching and an expanded understanding of what "English" is.

How English educators define their subject determines what they do in their classrooms. So, what is "English"? And how do different definitions of English impact what teachers do in their classes? Traditionally, English has been defined as:

- (1) a linguistic system of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar
- (2) a school subject and a topic on national examinations
- (3) a language of "conversation" about family, sports, hobbies and daily life
- (4) the language, culture and literature of native English-speaking countries

These four traditional views have influenced historical approaches taken to teaching English. If we define English as a linguistic system, then our curricula will be built around a grammatical syllabus of nouns, verbs and sentence structures. If we define English as a school subject, our materials will be built around Ministry objectives, textbooks, and exam preparation. If we view English as a language of "conversation", then our classrooms will feature dialogs, conversational phrases and situations (*at the bank, at the station, at the hospital...*). If we view English as the language of native English countries, then our materials will focus on topics such as American pop culture or British literature.

A global education approach to ELT goes beyond these traditional views to add two further dimensions. In addition to the above, it sees the English classroom as a place for teaching:

(5) English as a global language for communication with people around the world

(6) English as a subject for learning about – and engaging with – the world's peoples, countries and problems

*The four traditional views of English, of course, are valid strands of ELT course design and should inform the work of English instructors. A global education approach, however, adds a further dimension of teaching English as a language of world citizenship for learning about our global village, communicating with people from other cultures and working to solve global problems.*

### **Key UNESCO Documents**

The special responsibilities that language teachers have as global educators have been outlined in a number of documents issued by the *United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO).

#### *The 1974 UNESCO Recommendation on Education for International Understanding*

The official title of this 1974 UNESCO document is the *Recommendation Concerning Education for International Understanding, Cooperation & Peace, And Education Relating To Human Rights & Fundamental Freedoms*. In addition to recommendations made to Ministries of Education, it calls on teachers in schools around the world to promote:

- an international dimension and global perspective at all levels of education
- understanding and respect for all peoples, their cultures, values and ways of life
- readiness on the part of students to participate in solving local and global problems

#### *The 1987 Linguapax Kiev Declaration on Language Teaching*

Linguapax is a UNESCO initiative that was designed to promote international understanding, linguistic diversity and language rights (Marti, 1996). The name "Linguapax" combines the Latin words *lingua* (= language) and *pax* (= peace). The first major Linguapax conference in 1987 brought together experts from groups such as the *World Federation of Modern Language Associations* (FIPLV) to discuss the *Content and Methods that could Contribute in the Teaching of Foreign Languages and Literature to International Understanding and Peace*. The resulting "Linguapax Kiev Declaration" urged the world's language teachers to:

- be aware of their responsibility to further international understanding
- eliminate stereotypes and prejudice from language teaching textbooks
- design curricula based on peace, tolerance and international understanding
- stress the potential of languages for acquiring knowledge of world issues, foreign nations and cultures

*The 2018 UNESCO Global Citizenship Education Project (GCED)*

A more recent initiative aimed at the world's teachers, schools and Ministries of Education is UNESCO's *Global Citizenship Education* project (GCED). This promotes values, attitudes and behaviors linked to responsible global citizenship such as creativity, innovation and a commitment to peace, human rights and sustainable development. The project, part of UNESCO's *Education 2030 Agenda*, promotes languages in education, education about genocide, and education aimed at preventing violent extremism.

## GLOBAL EDUCATION INITIATIVES

There are a variety of ways in which language instructors around the world are working to integrate global education into their teaching. These range from teaching content, methods and materials to course design, extra-curricular activities and overseas initiatives.

### *Content*

Global education, through its emphasis on meaningful communication about real-world topics, aligns with the aims of content-based language instruction (Mohan, 1986). As a result, it is not surprising that content is one key area where foreign language educators have worked to integrate a global perspective. The rationale for this has been described as follows:

*"Global issues" and "global education" are hot new buzzwords in the language teaching world. Global education is the process of introducing students to world issues, providing them with relevant information and developing the skills they will need to help work towards solutions. Those who support global education usually defend it in this way: we all need to use reading passages, dialogues and discussions in our teaching, so why not design these with content that informs students of important world issues and challenges them to consider solutions? (Provo, 1993)*

Three key content areas that global education emphasizes are *geographic literacy*, *world themes* and *global issues*. Integrating these into our language teaching curricula, courses and materials can help students to acquire the knowledge that democratic citizens need to function in our multicultural world.

- *Geographic literacy* promotes a knowledge of the world's peoples, countries and cultures. This can often be a challenge. Many teachers have encountered students who cannot find their way around a world map or who think the language of Latin America is Latin. Geographic illiteracy can be overcome by designing language teaching materials that engage students with world maps, regional studies and information on the world's places, countries and cultures. Strategies for doing this have been outlined by educators such as Demko (1992), Fersh (1978) and by the organization *National Geographic*.
- *World themes* refer to broad international topics. These include daily life themes such as *world customs*, *world food* and *world music*, visual topics such as *world flags*, *world festivals* and *world writing systems*, and more serious themes such as *world religions*, *world literature* and *world political systems*. Designing materials on these types of multicultural themes allows students to study, research, discuss and compare the rich diversity in our multicultural world. Strategies for doing this have been outlined by thematic educators such as Kepler (1996).



- *Global issues* are traditionally divided into the four categories of war and peace, human rights, environmental problems and development issues. As American global educator Willard Kniep (1987) has argued, if young people are to be truly informed about their world, their education must engage them in inquiry about the causes, effects and potential solutions to the global issues of our time. Language teachers can contribute to this goal by designing teaching units that deal with these issues. Key texts that can help in this task include *Global Issues* (Hite & Seitz, 2021) and *Introducing Global Issues* (Snarr & Snarr, 2016).

## Methods

Global education is as much a matter of how we teach as of what we teach. For global teachers, this involves a shift from passive to active learning, from teacher-centered to student-centered classes, and from language-as-structure to language-for-communication-about-the-world. Ensuring effective language teaching that promotes global awareness and democratic citizenship requires integrating ideas from areas such as communicative language teaching (Littlewood, 1981), content-based instruction (Brinton, 1990), cooperative learning (Johnson et al., 1998), humanistic education (Steivick, 1990), and inquiry-based learning (Maguth, 2020).

Global educators such as Wien (1984) have criticized traditional teaching methods which produce passive students and cite Nazi Germany to warn of the dangers of promoting excessive obedience through our teaching. Others, such as de Matos (1988), ask how respect for peace, human rights and democratic citizenship can be achieved in language classes characterized by teacher authoritarianism, intense competition and violations of learners' rights.

Global educators stress the need to design democratic classrooms and schools that respect student rights, promote student choice, practice civic discourse through debates and discussions, and involve students in course design and school administration (Brookfield & Preskill, 2005). They emphasize project-based learning featuring initiatives such as campus recycling surveys and student presentations on global issue NGOs (Kusube, 2004). They encourage teachers to arrange guest speakers such as African ambassadors, war correspondents, refugees and Peace Corps volunteers in order to promote language skills as well as interest in foreign cultures and world affairs.

A shift to global education teaching methods can stimulate instructors to experiment with new approaches such as project-based learning (Cates & Jacobs, 2006) and experiential learning (Roberts, 2015). This can lead to trying out activities that get students out of their seats and actively involved in using the foreign language to explore global issues. This might result in collaborative foreign language projects with sister cities overseas or with classroom simulations in which students role play blacks and whites in apartheid South Africa, homeless people on city streets or indigenous peoples in tropical rainforests.

A number of language teachers are working with role play activities that promote education for democracy. These include a US election simulation created for EFL college students in Japan (Kowalski, 2016) and a class project that has English students research, discuss, then vote on nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize (Swenson, 2021). Language teachers are also experimenting with the *Model United Nations* (MUN), a simulation in which students role play UN ambassadors who discuss, then vote on measures to address international issues such as hunger, poverty and war (Kikuchi & Harmon, 2019).

### **Materials**

A global education approach to foreign language instruction requires that teaching materials impart the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to help students become socially-responsible citizens. Historically, in traditional textbooks, world problems and social issues were largely absent and, if touched upon, were often treated as an overlay on the linguistic syllabus. Starkey, among others, criticized the tourist-consumer flavor of traditional language texts, with their focus on shopping, travel and fashion, and concluded “foreign language textbooks provide fertile grounds for discovering bias, racism and stereotype” (Starkey, 1988, p. 239). Given this, pioneering language teachers dealing with global themes were forced to turn to other sources for teaching materials, including the mass media, social studies and fields such as global education.

Beginning in the 1990s, commercial language texts dealing with global themes began to emerge with lessons on topics such as Martin Luther King, tropical rainforests, Mother Teresa and world hunger. Early EFL texts include *Worldways: Bringing the World Into Your Classroom* (Elder & Carr, 1987), *The Global Classroom* (de Cou-Landberg, 1994) and *The World Around Us* (Hoppenrath & Royal, 1997). More recent EFL textbook titles include *Living as Global Citizens* (Ozeki & McManus, 2021), *Impact Issues* (Day, Shaules & Yamanaka, 2019), *World Voices: English as a Lingua Franca* (Graham-Marr, 2018) and *Democracy Around the World* (De Soete & Namita, 2012).

For language teachers interested in integrating global themes into their teaching materials, one good place to start is the online publication *Textbooks for Sustainable Development: A Guide to Embedding* (UNESCO/MGIEP, 2017). This UNESCO guidebook, written for textbook authors and materials writers, offers concrete guidelines on how to “embed” themes of peace, sustainable development and global citizenship into school textbooks in four subject areas: mathematics, science, geography and languages.

Another good source of teaching materials is non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Many of these have education departments and can provide foreign language instructors with classroom materials ranging from fact sheets, posters and DVDs to picture books, card games and simulations. Major organizations known for their teaching materials include *UNICEF* (children), the *Red Cross* (war, peace, disasters), *Oxfam* (poverty), *WWF* (environment) and *Amnesty International* (human rights). A quick look at their websites will reveal a wealth of educational resources designed for teachers on topics ranging from landmines and rainforests to street children and Esperanto.

### **Course Design**

Foreign language course design is another area where teachers have been experimenting with global education ideas. Some teachers have devised courses on themes such as “cultures of the world” in which students practice English skills while deepening their knowledge of foreign countries (e.g. Shang, 1991). Others have designed content courses on “global issues” that engage students with world problems – war and peace, the environment, human rights, world hunger - and explore each issue, its causes and solutions through videos, games, quizzes, discussions, role plays and simulations (Cates, 2019). Some teachers have designed language courses around world music (Sullivan, 2014) and on pop songs that deal with social issues (Haynes, 2019). Yet others such as Fast (2011) emphasize the value of designing courses around foreign language films. Fukunaga (1998), for example, designed and taught an “English through Global Issue Movies” course where students acquired language skills while studying films such as “Mississippi Burning” (civil rights), “The Killing Fields” (war and peace) and “The Burning Season” (tropical rainforests). Similarly, Mark (1993) designed a one-semester college EFL course around the movie

"Gandhi" aimed at improving students' English skills while enabling them to explore themes of racism, colonialism and non-violence.

A global perspective can be introduced not only into general education school foreign language classes but also into children's classes, literature courses and "language for special purposes" programs such as *Medical English* and *Business English*. One example of the latter is Friel (1991) who designed an ESP English-for-engineering course aimed at producing socially-responsible engineers. The course concerned the building of an imaginary dam and involved students in discussing pro- and anti-dam arguments, role playing loggers and environmentalists, and presenting environmental assessments.

### ***Extra-Curricular Activities***

For global teachers, learning does not stop when the bell rings. A global education approach to the classroom urges language teachers to see themselves as educators in the broader sense. Education beyond the classroom means giving students opportunities to use their language skills through real-world experiences in the local community and the wider world (Bentley, 1998). Extra-curricular activities offer one such way for language teachers to add a global dimension to their foreign language programs. This can involve holding English speech contests on global themes, organizing a school "Global Awareness Week" or arranging language learning excursions to peace museums, homeless shelters, cultural festivals, NGO conferences and recycling centers.

A key field for engaging language students with the world outside the schoolyard is *service learning*. This educational approach aims to have students acquire knowledge, skills and experience through tackling real-life problems in the local community. Good guides to this field include books such as Kaye (2010) and organizations such as the US *National Youth Leadership Council*. Books that specifically discuss the role of service learning in English language teaching include James Perren's *Learning the Language of Global Citizenship* (2015). The value of these kinds of out-of-class volunteer activities has been described by Bamford (1990, p. 35) who comments,

*volunteer work with global issues can be a perfect context for teacher-student contact outside class. Personally, because I'm committed to a just world free of war, hunger and poverty, and because I'm committed to my students learning English, I find there's no better combination than working on global issues with students outside the classroom. While students get the language practice that I need them to get to complement my classes, we are working together for the future world of our choice.*

One annual activity Bamford organized was a charity walk-a-thon in Tokyo where students and teachers practised English while walking 35 kilometers to raise money to help end world hunger.

A more activist approach to engaging language students with democratic citizenship can be seen in the classic book *The Kid's Guide to Social Action* (Lewis, 1998). This outlines ways to promote civic awareness, engagement and action among young people through building basic citizenship skills such as researching social issues, phoning city hall, writing letters to politicians, organizing study groups, drawing up petitions, fundraising, lobbying government agencies and arranging media coverage.

### ***Beyond the Classroom***

Global education is a bi-directional approach. It aims both to bring the world into the classroom and to take students out into the wider world. A number of teachers have emphasized the value of taking students abroad to improve their language skills, promote global awareness and further international understanding (Cates, 2010a).

Overseas school tours and homestay programs provide one way to achieve these goals. For English language teachers, these have traditionally been organized to native speaker countries such as the United States and United Kingdom. Global language educators, however, often aim for alternate destinations. One example is Hinkelman (1993) who took his Japanese EFL students to the Philippines to practice English, raise Asian awareness, experience poverty and engage students with Third World development issues.

A second way to achieve these goals is to arrange cross-border exchanges between language learners. International youth exchanges of this type enable young people from different nations to deepen their cross-cultural understanding and build international friendships (Cassidy, 1988). One example is a Japanese girls high school that took students off to visit its sister school in South Korea. Since English was the only common language between the Korean and Japanese girls, their students came home with improved English skills as well as a greater understanding of Korea, its people and culture (in Cates, 2016).

A third way is to engage students in overseas volunteer programs. Smith (2002), for example, describes how his foreign language students in Japan flew off to countries in South-East Asia to do community volunteer work, teach disadvantaged children in rural areas and build houses with the NGO *Habitat for Humanity*.

A fourth way is to take students abroad to attend international events that promote language practice, cross-cultural communication and global citizenship. McCloskey (2014), for example, has reported on the role of English teachers in creating an international EFL peace camp in Eastern Europe that involved young people from conflict areas. My contribution in this area has been to create a special *Asian Youth Forum* (AYF). This annual event, organized by EFL teachers, brings together college students from across Asia for a week of seminars, workshops and social events aimed at promoting international understanding, cross-cultural communication and leadership skills, all through the medium of English. Each AYF event is attended by students from 10-15 Asian countries such as Japan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Pakistan and the Philippines. The students who take part not only improve their English communication skills but also broaden their horizons, deepen their understanding of other cultures and begin to see themselves as Asian citizens with an important role to play in working for a better future (Cates, 2021).

Giving students a chance to use language skills in real-world situations overseas is an invaluable experience that can promote personal growth, global awareness and language learning motivation. Educating beyond the classroom, whether at the local, national or international level, is an important part of our work as foreign language teachers and represents a concrete response to appeals by UNESCO's *Recommendation on Education for International Understanding, Cooperation and Peace* (1974) and the Council of Europe's call for "intercultural dialogue" (COE, 2017).

### ***Teacher Training***

If we want language teachers to effectively promote global awareness, social responsibility and democratic citizenship in their classrooms, then fields such as global education need to be explicitly included in teacher training programs. A number of initiatives indicate the kind of steps that could be taken.

One initiative is a graduate-level teacher training course entitled "Global Issues and Cooperative Learning" that was offered by Teachers College, Columbia University as part of its MA in TESOL program in Tokyo. This course, which I taught for 17 years, gave participants the chance to explore fields such as global education, peace education, human rights education and

environmental education. During the course, MA students were introduced to the history of these fields, studied their aims and objectives, read key texts, then experimented with the teaching approaches, activities and materials that each field offered. They then went on to practice designing and teaching model EFL lessons on global themes for use in their classes and schools. If we want to effectively promote democratic citizenship through language teaching, then more such courses need to be introduced in teacher training programs around the world.

National and international language teaching organizations can also play an important role in global education teacher training. One example is the *Japan Association for Language Teaching* (JALT) which has invited international experts in conflict resolution, peace education and environmental education to give workshops to language teachers in Japan. Another is the TESOL International Association (*Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*) which arranges workshops that introduce English teachers to experts, resources and ideas from global education and related fields. These have included a “TESOL Day at the United Nations” at which UN personnel explained how to integrate global issues into ESL classrooms, a “TESOL Day at the Carter Center” featuring conflict resolution workshops led by US experts and a “Summer Institute on Peace Education” that introduced approaches for promoting peace through English language teaching (Cates, 2010b).

### ***Professional Development***

It takes study, effort and practice to become an effective content teacher who feels comfortable designing and teaching language lessons that promote global awareness, social responsibility and democratic citizenship. Global education teacher training books that can help include Hicks and Holden (2007), Merryfield (1997), Steiner (1996), Pike and Selby (1988) and Fisher and Hicks (1985).

Language teachers who are new to global education may worry about teaching controversial issues and avoid these as a result. This is a mistake. Global educators have a long track record of addressing controversial themes and have devised principled pedagogical approaches that language educators can draw from. Good books that can help include *Teaching Controversial Issues* (Noddings & Brooks, 2016), *The Challenge of Teaching Controversial Issues* (Clair & Holden, 2007), *Controversial Issues in the Curriculum* (Wellington, 1986) and *Teaching Controversial Issues* (Stradling, Noctor & Baines, 1984).

For those wishing to deepen their understanding of global education, there are three basic steps to take.

#### **(1) Global Education Books for Language Teachers**

A good first step is to study some of the key books written for language teachers in this area. These include:

- *Integrating Global Issues in the Creative English Language Classroom* (Maley & Peachey, 2017) – this online book features creative ways to integrate global content into EFL classrooms by addressing UN *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) linked to poverty, gender, equality, peace, social justice and climate change.
- *A – Z of Global Issues* (Pratten, Ruas & Waldron, 2017) – this UK teacher’s guide features 26 activities, discussions and role plays designed to bring real-world issues into English language classrooms in creative ways.

- *Social Justice in English Language Teaching* (Hastings & Jacob, 2016) – this book outlines the rationale for integrating social justice themes into English classes and features case studies of language teachers engaged with themes ranging from peace, prejudice and the environment to gender, race and immigration.
- *Global Issues (Resource Books for Teachers)* (Sampedro & Hillyard, 2004) – this outlines a global education approach to EFL, then lists 80 classroom ideas for engaging students with real-world issues.
- *Global Issues in the ELT Classroom* (Thomas, 2008) – this online resource features 30 EFL lessons in PDF format on topics ranging from poverty, slums and child soldiers to refugees, climate change and social action heroes.

## (2) “Global Issues” Special Interest Groups

A second step is to learn about the range of global education special interest groups (SIGs) that have been set up within key language teaching organizations. Three of the most important are:

- the *Global Issues in Language Education* Special Interest Group (GILE SIG) of the *Japan Association for Language Teaching* (JALT). This SIG, set up in 1990, was the world’s first “global issues” interest group for language teachers and has been promoting global education in the profession for over 30 years. Its website and online newsletter offer a rich variety of teaching materials and classroom resources.
- the *Global Issues* Special Interest Group (GI-SIG) of IATEFL (*International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language*). This British group, set up in 1995, runs an active series of events and offers a wealth of teaching materials, ideas and resources through its website, newsletter and publications.
- the *Social Responsibility* Interest Section (SR-IS) of TESOL (*Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages*). This group, formed in 2009, has a newsletter, issues publications and runs a website that features English teaching materials designed to promote peace, human rights, social justice and social responsibility.

## (3) Exploring Global Education and Related Fields

A third step is to explore the field of *global education* and its related disciplines. Each of these fields can provide language teachers with stimulating ideas, materials and resources for enriching their language classrooms.

- **Global education** aims to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed by responsible world citizens. It can provide language educators with teaching ideas, resources and materials on global issues, international themes and world regions. Classic texts include *World Studies 8-13* (Fisher & Hicks, 1985), *Global Teacher, Global Learner* (Pike & Selby, 1988) and *Hands Around the World* (Milord, 1992). More recent books include *Applying Multicultural and Global Concepts in the Classroom* (Brown, 2002) and *Educating Global Citizens in Colleges and Universities* (Stearns, 2009). Online sources include *Global Dimension* (UK) and *Global Education* (Australia).

- **Peace education** deals with the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to build a peaceful future. Peace education can provide language teachers with ideas, techniques and resources for designing materials on topics such as war, peace, non-violence, conflict resolution and the Nobel Peace Prize. Key books include *Peace Education* (Harris & Morrison, 2012), *Learning the Skills of Peacemaking* (Drew, 1995) and *Educating for Peace and Human Rights* (Hantzopoulos & Bajaj, 2021). Good online sources include the *Peace Education Foundation* and *Global Campaign for Peace Education*.
- **Human rights education** aims to inspire students with the knowledge, skills and commitment required to promote human rights. This field can provide language teachers with ideas, techniques and resources for teaching about prejudice, racism, sexism, minorities and organizations such as Amnesty International. Key books include *Teaching Tolerance* (Bullard, 1996), *The Challenge of Human Rights Education* (Starkey, 1991) and *Human Rights and Schooling* (Osler, 2016). A good overview of issues is *The Atlas of Human Rights* (Fagan, 2010). Online sources include *Youth for Human Rights*, *AFT Human Rights* and the *Human Rights Commission* (Australia).
- **Environmental education** aims to develop the knowledge, skills and commitment needed to solve environmental problems. Environmental education can provide language educators with ideas and resources for teaching about climate change, pollution, endangered species, solar energy, plastic garbage and recycling. Classic books in this area include *The Handbook of Environmental Education* (Palmer & Neal, 1994), *Greening the College Curriculum* (Collett & Karakashian, 1995) and *Earthrights: Education As If the Planet Really Mattered* (Greig et al., 1987). Online sources of teaching materials include *Green Teacher* (Canada), *ELT Footprint* and *ELT Sustainable*.

Exploring these specialized fields can be done in a number of ways:

- reading key books is one easy option for learning about the aims, approaches and activities in each field. The titles listed above can provide a starting point for this.
- attending conferences is another option – much of my growth as a global teacher has come from trips to attend global education conferences, peace education seminars, human rights events and environmental education workshops
- experimenting with teaching resources from each field is a further option – the sources listed above can provide a variety of books, posters, powerpoints, videos and computer software to help teachers globalize their classrooms
- taking academic courses in these fields is a further option – summer courses for teachers (many accessible online) in fields such as global education, peace education and human rights education are offered annually in various countries, and are a great way to spend an educational spring break or summer vacation.

## Conclusion

The field of *global education* provides us with a chance to rethink our approaches to language teaching methods, classroom materials, curriculum design and teacher training. Adopting ideas from this field can help us to promote world awareness, international understanding and democratic citizenship in our classrooms, communities and countries. What Iran – and every country – needs is young people with language skills, global awareness and a sense of social responsibility who can join with others in our global village to work for a future free of war, poverty, prejudice and pollution. Foreign language teachers have a special role to play in this

important task. I hope this paper stimulates interest in global education as a cross-curricular approach relevant to our profession and warmly invite language teachers in Iran and elsewhere to explore this field further.

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### **Global Education Interest Groups in ELT**

- Global Issues in Language Education GILE SIG* (JALT, Japan) <[www.gilesig.org](http://www.gilesig.org)>
- Global Issues GI-SIG* (IATEFL, UK) <<https://gisig.iatefl.org>>
- Social Responsibility Interest Section SR-IS* (TESOL, USA) <[www.tesol.org](http://www.tesol.org)>

### **Global Education Organizations and NGOs**

- AFT Human Rights Resources <<https://teachhumanrights.com>>
- ELT Footprint <<https://eltfootprint.org>>
- ELT Sustainable <<https://eltsustainable.org>>
- Global Campaign for Peace Education <<https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org>>
- Global Dimension (UK) <<https://globaldimension.org.uk/>>
- Global Education (Australia) <<https://www.globaleducation.edu.au/>>

- Green Teacher <<https://greenteacher.com>>
- Human Rights Commission (Australia) <[www.humanrights.gov.au](http://www.humanrights.gov.au)>
- National Geographic (USA) <[www.nationalgeographic.com](http://www.nationalgeographic.com)>
- Peace Education Foundation (US) <[www.peaceeducation.org](http://www.peaceeducation.org)>
- Youth for Human Rights <[www.youthforhumanrights.org](http://www.youthforhumanrights.org)>

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