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**Opportunities and challenges for global education in Social Education
curriculum**

By Julie Dyer

Deakin University, Melbourne

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This paper will explore understandings about global education as expressed in national and local curriculum statements. Despite curriculum statements in Studies of Society and Environment area including ‘global’ in their rationale, slippage occurs between policy documents and the translation to standards statements. The curriculum area - Studies of Society and Environment is - changing as new titles describe the field and a more integrated approach is being developed in some states – Tasmania and Victoria, this presents challenges for global education.

My work in global education is a result of many years as a Geography teacher, nine years at the Asia Education Foundation, a leader of teacher study tours to Asia and pre-service teacher education students to Canada and Northern Territory. I am a passionate believer in the power of travel to unsettle, to educate, and to be reminded of all I have, and to be thankful.

Teaching global education is important in schools today. Students live in a global, interconnected and interdependent world characterised by change. Economic, environmental, political, and social forces are prompting education to become increasingly global in focus and outlook. New times, knowledge economy, and globalisation are the new language to embrace and describe some of these forces. There is now an imperative to understand and view the world through a series of complex and interrelated lenses – environmental, political, social, economic, historical, religious, spiritual, geographical, and linguistic. No global issue can be seen in isolation or through a single perspective. The complexity of global issues

offer challenges to teachers to construct a global education for students that critically reflects and analyses inter-relationships in a rapidly changing world.

Understanding global education

For the purposes of this paper, it is important to distinguish between globalisation and global education, as the terms are often used interchangeably. Below are a number of author's definitions of global education.

Waters, (1995) describes globalisation as “a social process in which the constraints of geography on social and cultural arrangements receded and in which people become increasingly aware that it is receding” (p. 3).

Giddens (2002), defined globalisation as, “a decoupling of space and time, emphasising that with instantaneous communications, knowledge and culture can be shared around the world simultaneously” (p.30).

The links between global education and globalisation were explained by Buchanan, (2004) where he stated “global education is the process designed to assist students to understand the process of globalisation. It should provide students with economic, environmental and social causes and effects, a deeper and more critical understanding of themselves and empathy with others”(p.2)

Hicks (2003) also noted the importance of global education and globalisation and defines global education with links to the process of globalisation “the term used

internationally to designate the academic field concerned with teaching and learning about global issue, events and perspectives”.(p.274)

Kirkwood (2001) describes globally educated people as “those who possess high-tech skills, broad interdisciplinary knowledge about the contemporary world, and adaptability, flexibility, and world mindedness to participate effectively in the global world” (p.11).

Selby and Pike, (2000) noted the importance of transformation as an outcome of global education. Selby and Pike state that the aim of global education is to “empower learners and involve them in transformative social action, at the local, regional and world levels, and to build a world based on human dignity, justice equity and freedom. A global education can be included in the curriculum to transform, to change and alter the way in which the world is seen” (p.77).

Global education introduces students to a new way of viewing the world, fosters intercultural understanding, and takes students beyond their own worlds. Teachers who have developed global education programs report that students learned to look critically and creatively into issues (Calder and Smith, 1993). In understanding others’ ways of life and believing, students can reflect on their own world and be more critical of assumptions about patterns of behaviour.

The importance and implementation of global education in the curriculum is argued by Le Roux (2000) “global education is not some alien or foreign form, perspective

theory or curriculum of formal education. Nor is it an additional subject to be dumped into an already crowded curriculum. Global education is common sense and should focus on practical value and logical interrelatedness of things learned. It is argued that global perspectives should prevail and be taught in every classroom and every subject.”(p.74)

These varied definitions of global education are attempts at capturing this field which is characterised by definitional ambiguities (Kirkwood, 2001). Global education in 2005, I would suggest needs to move beyond knowledge, skills and action to a greater emphasis on understanding across perspectives, values and participation. This means in teaching global education a number of dimensions can operate at the one time – teaching multiple perspectives, acknowledging values of self and society, alongside a focus for action and participation towards an improved world. It is for these reasons that I offer the following definition of global education.

Global education is teaching for understanding the world through multiple perspectives – social, economic, historical, spiritual, cultural, environmental and political - to promote positive values that will enable students to reflect critically on their own value systems in order to contribute towards being global citizens who contribute locally to a more peaceful, just and sustainable world.

This definition builds on previous definitions and includes a ‘spiritual’ perspective – 86% of the world’s people acknowledge a religion as part of their lives –many people see the world through such a spiritual perspective; values are an significant determinant of behaviour as well as developing understanding of the world. The

transformative power of global education is acknowledged, i.e. the opportunity to make a difference into local contexts about global issues.

Global Warming

Global warming is a powerful example of a global issue with contested evidence to support its claims. The impact that global warming could have or is having on our planet provokes a response from education about potential impact as well as ways of reducing this impact. The translation of this into the curriculum, means teaching global warming from a range of perspectives - political, social, spiritual, economic, environmental and cultural. Global warming offers the potential for students to contribute locally through their own lives through a reduction in use of energy which leads to reduction in greenhouse gases to impact on global warming. Global education can provide a framework for this teaching.

Teaching global education which embraces multiple perspectives is critical to the well-being of the planet and all people. Students today are more “connected to the world stage and their future will be shaped by global events. They will influence the world through their substantial purchasing power and their political and environmental decisions” (Merryfield, 2005, p. 5)

The importance of global education content in the curriculum is noted by (Clarke, 2004,) “curriculum for the future society must possess multicultural and international content, in order to promote in students cognitive, affective and participatory outcomes”. (p.54)

Is global education apparent in current curriculum documents? Does Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE) curriculum offer the potential to develop robust global education programs and approaches?

I will now address these issues in the rest of this paper. I will argue that whilst there has been inclusion of 'global' in curriculum documents across national and local levels, it is not extensive enough to accommodate the demands of the 21st century for greater understanding of world issues and global events. If schools and teachers can make a difference for students entering the 21st century, then global education for schools is necessary. Global education will prepare students to face and meaningfully participate to make a difference in a global society. (Le Roux, 2000)

National Curriculum Policies and Global Education

If curriculum policy and statements indicate and reflect current social, economic political, and cultural aspects of the society to which the curriculum is designed to serve, (Lovat and Smith, 2003) then these statements give insight into the way in which curriculum writers and political forces see the world at a particular point in time and choose appropriate content.

In 1999, the Adelaide Declaration (MCEETYA, 1999) was developed and included these goals relevant to global education.

“These national goals provide a basis for investment in schooling to enable all young people to engage effectively with an increasingly complex world. This world will be characterised by advances in information and communication

technologies, population diversity arising from international mobility and migration, and complex environmental and social challenges.

The achievement of the national goals for schooling will assist young people to contribute to Australia's social, cultural and economic development in local and global contexts. Their achievement will also assist young people to develop a disposition towards learning throughout their lives so that they can exercise their rights and responsibilities as citizens of Australia.”

The Adelaide Declaration has a strengthened role and rationale for global education compared to the Hobart Declaration ten years earlier. This is evident through the use of terms –‘increasingly complex world’, ‘challenges’ and ‘diversity’. There is not however a sense of sustainable world or one that there are issues around citizenship and globalisation. This rationale is driven from an economic argument rather than a sustainable active citizenship basis evidenced by use of terms and the purposes of schooling. Whilst the Adelaide Declaration has a strengthened emphasis and acknowledgement of the global community and the importance of links to it, it falls short of noting the interdependence of peoples or futures education (Calder, 2000).

The *Global Perspectives* (Curriculum Corporation, 2002) statement produced for Australian schools included a rationale, learning emphases, aims, and an checklist for a globally engaged school and examples of practice. It is designed as a handbook for teachers in schools to embed global perspectives in their school curriculum. This document includes multiple statements about global education, shown below:

Global education complements and extends students understandings of their local and national communities by placing these in wider context of global society.

Global education can help students develop understanding of Australia's international environment

Global education seeks to prepare students to live in an increasingly globalised world and to be active, participating citizens who contribute to shaping a better future. It operates from two assumptions that people and communities are becoming increasingly interdependent, and that as a global community it is possible to shape the world for a better place.

Global education is transformative. Global education aims to enable and equip young people for global citizenship. (Curriculum Corporation, 2002, p. 6)

Global Education and Studies of Society and Environment

In Australia, SOSE/ Social Education is an area in the curriculum where a close fit exists with teaching a global education, due to the overlap between subjects such as Geography, Environmental Studies, Development Studies, Peace Studies and Global Education studies.

This synergy is seen in USA where the National Council for Social Studies teachers in the USA has recently produced *Social Studies and the World: Teaching Global perspectives* (Merryfield & Wilson, 2005). The title of this booklet noted is indicative of the overlap between social studies and global education. This booklet is designed to address the multiple changes in the world which pose challenges for teachers in schools.

In Australia, currently there is a challenge of the changing conceptual structure of the SOSE key learning area (Marsh, 2004). During the 1990s the term Studies of Society and Environment was created to describe the field that included subjects such as Geography, History, Social Studies, Economy, Environmental Studies, Civics and Citizenship. No longer is there a nationally agreed title for this curriculum area. In 2005, the term SOSE is used in Queensland, ACT, Northern Territory and South Australia. This creates challenges in a place for global education to reside.

Tasmania is an example of this changing structure with introduction of the Essential Learning Framework with a focus on higher order thinking and the curriculum organisers relate to thinking, communicating, personal futures, world futures and social responsibility. The themes include ethical action, the nature of interdependence and the concept of futures.

State and Territory SOSE statements

The inclusion of 'global' in the introductory sections of Australia's SOSE curriculum statements give insight into the knowledge curriculum makers are including in curriculum. Whilst the use of a word does not signify the translation of teaching, the occurrence of a word notes an emphasis that curriculum writers are giving to being in a global world. Analyses of introductory paragraphs of three SOSE curriculum areas highlight the inclusion of the word 'global'.

In South Australia, SOSE curriculum statement, the use of the word 'global' is associated with interdependence and associated challenges in terms of complexities and contradictions, the problematic nature of understanding society. The subsequent

SOSE curriculum could be problem-issue focussed through inquiry as the pedagogy to understanding and would promote an active engagement with students. The SACSA (2000) document stated that:

The complexities and contradictions arising from rapidly changing technologies; unequal distribution of wealth and power; **global interdependence**; the dynamic nature of social, economic, political and ecological systems; the changing nature of work, and social practices around paid and unpaid work; and the need for increasingly sustainable social and environmental management practices bring challenges to people in all societies.

Western Australia's, Society and Environment statement includes 'global' stating what students will gain from learning SOSE - how individuals live together – there is no sense of how they do not live together with exclusion of complexity or interdependence or multiple perspectives. The use of 'global' is along a continuum of local, national, regional and global with skills needed to develop knowledge. There is emphasis on knowledge to gain understanding not participation or action. Implications for global education is developing knowledge about global contexts, there is little inquiry and engagement with global perspective, nor seeing the complexity of issues nor active participation.

Western Australia Curriculum Framework,(2002) stated that:

Students actively explore local, national, regional and **global contexts** using skills of social inquiry, to develop knowledge that is relevant to them. They also explore the values of democratic process, social justice and ecological sustainability to make judgements on moral and ethical issues and to develop a commitment to the core values shared by most Australians.

The Northern Territory statement focused on what the area includes and then presents ‘global’ along the continuum from local to global within a problem based setting. A global perspective is required, to move beyond the local and national to see a global perspective. As a result of inquiry across local to global, critique and problem solving is developed and solutions proposed. Northern Territory Curriculum Framework, 2003 stated that:

SOSE explores a range of regional, national and **global** contexts, providing opportunities to constructively critique and propose solutions to a range of social and environmental issues. Learners use social inquiry to investigate the past and present and to explore future possibilities.

In summary, whilst these three curriculum statements in SOSE acknowledge the importance of ‘global’ as a context for study and comparison across scales, they do not actively promote the importance and imperative to understand the world as interdependent and interconnected. There is little recognition of the importance of values dimension, or action through student participation.

However, it is not merely the inclusion of a word in a curriculum document that will translate to rigorous teaching in this area. There is much slippage between curriculum policy, school curriculum, teaching in classroom to student learning and the proposed action. It is the teacher who will ultimately determine the content, approach, skills, and knowledge that will be in the classroom.

A study on the transferability of professional development in global education to the classroom undertaken by Buchanan and Harris, (2004) noted that “while some schools

are engaged in exciting and creative work in global education, many schools do not seem to have taken up related activities". (p. 210)

Victorian Curriculum 2006

In Victoria from 2006 onwards the state wide curriculum will be the Victorian Essential Learning Standards. (VELS) The key learning areas will be replaced with an interdisciplinary approach to curriculum organised around three strands. – see (Appendix 1)

The preamble to the VELS (2005) stated:

The Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) propose that students need to develop a set of knowledge, skills and behaviours which will prepare them for success in a world which is complex, rapidly changing, rich in information and communications technology, demanding high order knowledge and understanding and increasingly global in its outlook and influences.

To succeed in that world, all students need to develop capacities to:

- manage themselves in the world
- understand the world in which they live
- act effectively in that world.

Students will need to create a future which:

- Is sustainable – developing an understanding of the interaction between social, economic and environmental systems and how to manage them
- Is innovative – developing these skills to solve new problems using a range of different approaches to create unique solutions

- Builds strong communities by building common purposes and values and by promoting mutual responsibility and trust in a diverse socio-cultural community. (p.4)

The content, pedagogy, and inquiry which characterised SOSE teaching is now spread across a number of domains and strands. Appendix 1 shows these domains and standards. The inclusion of 'global' is included in domains - Civics and Citizenship and Humanities where strong links can be made to SOSE/Social Education. Does this adequately address the global world that students are now entering? A more thorough and detailed analysis of all of domains and standards could show this. However if SOSE/Social Education is the area where there is the greatest fit with global education then Humanities and Civics and Citizenship would be the domains where global education is identified.

VELS stated the world that students are now entering characterised by complexity and global in outlook, it is disappointing that the importance of global is not translated more fully into the domains and standards. There are few standards that include the word 'global', nor acknowledge the importance of interdependence and sustainability.

Sustainability Example

The practice of sustainability is important for the future and is noted in the preamble to VELS within the preferred futures for students in Victoria. Locating sustainability in the standards is minimal. It is noted in Geography where it is used in the context of resource use rather than a philosophy, way of life, and practice. The alignment of rhetoric of the preamble and the translation of this into the curriculum highlights the

disjunction between the preamble in VELS and the translation of this into the dimensions and standards.

In VELS,2005 Geography domain, level 6 students are asked to:

“describe global patterns of development from a range of perspectives and identify and describe the factors that determine these patterns. They analyse development issues. They formulate and evaluate comprehensive policies, including those for sustainable use and management of resources, o alter development patterns at a range of scales.”

A revised standard that notes the importance of sustainability could be:

At level 6 Geography students re asked to:

‘describe **current** global patterns of development from a range of perspectives and identify and describe the factors that determine these patterns and **predict future patterns using a number of scenarios..** They analyse development issues **from social, spiritual and cultural viewpoints.** They formulate and evaluate comprehensive policies, including those for sustainable use and management of resources, **with the view to developing a more just, fair and sustainable world.** **Students are to participate in opportunities for action at a local and global scale** to alter development patterns at a range of scales.’

This revised standard adds a futures dimension, provides a pedagogy through scenario planning, focuses analysis of the issue through different perspectives, provides a reason for the analysis towards a better world and offers a mandate for action at the local scale.

I would argue that despite the rhetoric of a new curriculum that the standards and the descriptions of the domains make it difficult to develop a global education program that prepares students for the world that students are now entering. There is considerable gap between the rhetoric expressed in the preamble to VELs and the standards linked to dimensions.

Conclusion

The challenge for schools regardless of curriculum structure is to prepare young people who can not only survive in a global world, but who can constantly transform it so that it is locally viable, personally meaningful and socially beneficial. Social Education has a crucial role to play in our schools curriculum. It provides one of the major vehicles to both maintain and transform society (Prior, 2003).

If the world is becoming more global in outlook and purposes then education needs to respond to this global outlook. Global education becomes one such vehicle to carry this imperative in schools for the 21st century. Despite the rhetoric of preparing students for a global changing world and the complexities associated with this there is a gap between this rhetoric and the translation of this into policy documents.

Social education curriculum in 2000s is changing structurally the need for learning about local communities and practices alongside issues of global importance remains. Whilst there is 'global' in curriculum policy there is much slippage to the subsequent, school based development, teacher pedagogy and student outcomes.

It is important as social educators to keep the potential to ‘make a difference’ to ‘change the world’. Without this as a goal, then why teach about global warming, recycling, or the importance of human rights, if there are not opportunities to enact in practice this learning. Global education offers such opportunities.

Appendix 1 – Possibilities for SOSE-global education in the VELS

Strand	Domain	Dimension	Standards At level.....
Physical, Personal and Social Learning	Interpersonal Development	Building Social Relationships Working in teams	5 and 6 students demonstrate respect for individuality and emphasise awareness of complex social conventions and behave appropriately when interacting with others. They describe how local and global values and beliefs determine their own and others social relationships.
	Personal Learning	The individual Learner Managing personal Learning	
	Civics and Citizenship	Civic knowledge and understanding	Students take a global perspective when analysing an issue and describe the role of global organisations in responding to international issues.
		Community engagement	They draw on a range of resources to, including mass media, in relation to social environmental and economic issues in personal and global contexts. They participate in a range of citizenship activities and in the local community, and with a national or global

			perspective.
Discipline Based Learning	Humanities Geography	Geographical knowledge and understanding Geospatial skills	5 – describe characteristics of Asia Pacific region 6 Students describe global patterns of development from a range of perspectives and identify and describe the factors that determine these patterns.
	Humanities Economy	Economic knowledge and understanding Economic reasoning and interpretation	6 – interpret reports on current economic conditions both national and global
	Humanities History	Historical knowledge and understanding Historical reasoning and interpretation	6 an understanding of globalisation and understand aspects of Australia’s role in international sphere and in global issues.
Interdiscipl inary Learning	Communication	Listening, viewing and responding Presenting	
	ICT	ICT for visualising thinking ICT for creating ICT for communicating	
	Thinking	Reasoning, processing and inquiry Creativity Reflection, evaluation and meta-cognition	

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