

BRINGING GLOBAL ISSUES IN ENGLISH CLASSROOM: Nurturing for a Better World

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Abstract: Global education is a new approach to language teaching that attempts to promote the knowledge, attitudes and skills relevant to living responsibly in a multicultural, interdependent world education. It aims to enable students to effectively acquire a foreign language while empowering them with the knowledge, skills, and commitment required by world citizens to solve global problems. This studies tries to share a perspectives from practitioners that involves to share global education pedagogical approach in the level of universities in Indonesia in order to better prepare students for citizenship in a global age.

Keywords: Global Issues, English Classroom, Nurturing

1. Introduction

Global education is a new pedagogical approach, designate peace, human rights, development, and the environment as the four content areas of global education. 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 [3]. Global educators emphasize that the goals of a "global" approach to education are generally divided into knowledge, skills, attitudes, and action:

- Knowledge about world problems is the first goal. If we want students to work for a better world, they must know the nature of world problems, their causes, and viable solutions.
- Acquiring skills communication, critical and creative thinking, cooperative problem-solving, nonviolent conflict resolution, informed decision making, and the ability to see issues from multiple perspectives --necessary to solve world problems is the second goal.
- Acquiring global attitudes--global awareness, curiosity, an appreciation of other cultures, respect for diversity, a commitment to justice, and empathy with others --is the third goal.
- The final goal of global education is action democratic participation in the local and global community to solve world problems.

2. Education: Think and act global with English.

The rationale for global education consists of four main points. The first concerns the fact that our planet faces serious "global issues" or world problems. As one educator notes, "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" [6]

Many of these issues are serious: 35,000 people in the world die every day from hunger, 24 every minute, with millions of children dead each year from preventable diseases. Meanwhile, world military spending continues at an astronomical rate despite the world's massive stockpile of nuclear weapons. Human rights are violated round the globe by regimes of all political persuasions. At the same time, the global environment is being damaged by irresponsible politicians, profit-hungry corporations and poverty stricken peasants as well as by "throwaway" lifestyles which consume irreplaceable resources, produce mountains of garbage and poison our air and water [3].

The second point concerns the interdependence of our modern world. Because of the interconnected nature of our global village, it is impossible to ignore the problems that our planet faces. As two British global educators point 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, the uranium requirement of French nuclear power stations is the desecration of aboriginal homelands in Australia [4].

The third point concerns the attitudes of apathy, selfishness, and ignorance of many modern young people. Opinion polls taken in various countries, for example, have found that American youth have little knowledge of other cultures and little interest in global issues, that two thirds of British people have stereotyped images, racial prejudices, and limited knowledge about underdeveloped countries, and that 38% of Japanese youth say their life goal is to get rich while 71% are defeatists who feel there

is nothing they can do to change society. While many young people around the globe, of course, do care about the world and its problems, these results for young people surface consistently enough in national surveys to indicate the extent of this problem.

The final rationale concerns current education systems. Many concerned educators feel young people in countries around the world are not being adequately prepared to cope with global problems. 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 international figures such as the late Asian expert and US ambassador to Japan, 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 [10].

What have all these problems got to do with those of us who are foreign-language educators? Isn't our job just to teach grammar, vocabulary, and communication skills? There are several good reasons why we should care about world problems. One is ethical and personal. Many language teachers find it morally wrong to just stick their heads into their textbooks and pretend these problems don't exist, another reason concerns our aspirations to be a language-teaching "profession."

The idea that the professions have a moral responsibility to society in the practice of their specialized skills goes back to the Hippocratic Oath in ancient Greece where doctors swore to use their professional skills for the good of society. The past 20 years have seen a rapid increase in the number of professional groups working to solve world problems through research in their field, education of the public, and political action. Physicians for Social Responsibility and the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize winner, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, are two such groups. Similar groups exist for scientists, lawyers, psychologists, and other fields. If language teachers truly aspire to be a "profession" in the real sense of the word, then they must consider this aspect of social responsibility.

For language teachers, the most significant attempt to deal with language teaching and world problems is UNESCO's Linguapax project. The name comes from the Latin words *lingua* (language) and *pax* (peace) and refers to a series of seminars dealing with language teaching for international

understanding. The first Linguapax conference, held in 1987 in Kiev, USSR, brought together such groups as the International Association of Applied Linguistics, International Association for the Development of Cross-cultural Communication, and World Federation of Modern Language Associations to discuss "Content and Methods of Teaching Foreign Languages and Literature for Peace and International Understanding." The resulting Linguapax Kiev Declaration made four recommendations to foreign-language teachers:

Be aware of their responsibility to further international understanding through their teaching.

- Increase language teaching effectiveness so as to enhance mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and cooperation among nations.
- Exploit extracurricular activities such as pen-pal programs, video exchanges, and overseas excursions to develop international understanding.
- Lay the basis for international cooperation through classroom cooperation using language-teaching approaches responsive to students' interests and needs.

Further recommendations called for UNESCO and its member nations

- to take steps to inform students and their families of the potential of foreign languages to promote better knowledge of world issues and concerns; and
- to organize workshops for foreign-language teachers and students on contemporary world issues of direct relevance and interest to young people, such as environmental protection and the struggle against poverty and hunger (UNESCO 1987).

3. Language Educators: The perspectives

Over the past decade, a number of leaders within the worldwide English-language teaching (ELT) profession have addressed the importance of global education for teachers of English as a second language (ESL) and English as a foreign language (EFL). Some stress how global issues can provide meaningful content for language classes. Others stress the mission language teachers have to teach for a better world. The following quotes from two well-known educators highlight the rationale for a global education approach to English-language teaching:

Global issues are real: the spoliation of the rainforests, the thinning of the ozone layer, acid rain, nuclear waste, population growth, the spread of AIDS, state violence and genocide in Kurdistan, Tibet and Bosnia, ecological disaster and war in Ethiopia and Somalia... the list is depressingly long. What has this to do with the teaching of EFL? English language teaching has been bedevilled with three perennial problems: the gulf

between classroom activities and real life; the separation of ELT from mainstream educational ideas; the lack of a content as its subject matter. By making Global Issues a central core of EFL, these problems [11].

Global, peace and environmental issues intrinsically affect every human being on earth. These issues provide content for your content-based humanized ESL teaching of the 90's. We teachers have a mission, a mission of helping everyone in this world communicate with each other to prevent the global disaster ahead. The 90's are in your hands. The idea that foreign-language teaching can contribute to creating a better world is not new, of course. Indeed, much traditional language teaching makes vague references to global education ideals. However, as one noted language educator points out, this has mostly remained wishful thinking: It may be well to ask ourselves whether international understanding, let alone world peace, can be said to have been promoted by the considerable amount of foreign language teaching in the world. Diligent learning of foreign words and phrases, laborious copying and recitation of irregular verb paradigms, and the earnest deciphering of texts in the foreign language can hardly be considered powerful devices for the development of international understanding and good will [2]. If our language students are truly to become socially responsible world citizens, then global issues and the four goals of global education (knowledge, skills, attitudes, and action) must appear explicitly in our language-teaching curriculum.

4. Global Issues in the Language Classroom

EFL instructors around the world integrate global issues and global education into their teaching in a variety of ways that involve language-teaching content, methods, materials, course design, teacher training, and extracurricular activities.

4.1 Global Education: The content

"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?

Global issues can be included in teaching content even when students are just starting to learn the sounds of the foreign language. Grammar, usually felt by students to be one of the duller areas of language study, can also be taught with a global perspective through a change of content. Starkey, for example, describes how teaching past, present, and future tenses becomes more meaningful when students study the past, present, and future of global. This could involve students studying the historical background of an issue such as environmental pollution, looking at pollution today in their community or country, and then doing future-oriented activities to solve this problem. Comparatives can similarly be practiced by comparing human rights in different countries or by contrasting global inequalities of First World wealth and Third World poverty. Some innovative teachers have designed exercises to teach students the conditional "if...then" while promoting environmental awareness. These efforts revolve around pattern practice based on model sentences such as "If we all recycled paper, we'd save more trees" or "If we all picked up the litter at our university, we'd have a clean and beautiful campus." [11].

Reading, writing, listening, and speaking can also be integrated with global issues content. One British English instructor, for example, has based a complete English four-skills lesson on the international human rights organization Amnesty International [11].

This begins with students listening to information about Amnesty international, speaking their opinions concerning human rights, reading about the work of Amnesty International in its English newsletter, and then writing English letters calling for the release of prisoners of conscience around the world.

4.2. Global Education: Teaching methods

Global education is as much a matter of how we teach as of what we teach. For many teachers, this involves a shift from passive to active learning, from teacher- to student-centered classes, from language as structure to language for communication about the world. This shift in teaching method often stimulates instructors to experiment with new approaches such as experiential learning. This can lead to trying out class simulations and role-plays that get students out of their seats and actively involved in exploring global issues in the foreign language.

This can result in language-teaching lessons in which students practice their foreign language skills while role-playing blacks and whites in apartheid South Africa, taking the parts of logging companies and tribal peoples in a tropical rainforest simulation, or acting as UN ambassadors in a model UN simulation. Other teachers try to bring the world into the classroom by inviting guest speakers such as visitors from Africa or representatives from groups such as Greenpeace to promote

communicative English skills as well as interest in world cultures and global issues. Yet other teachers attempt to develop global awareness and language skills through student projects such as social issue interview surveys or oral class presentations on global organizations such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Oxfam.

4.3. Global Education: Materials

A global education approach to language teaching requires that teaching materials impart the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to help language students become socially responsible world citizens. In many textbooks, however, world problems are conspicuous by their absence. Even when textbooks do touch upon global issues, they often tend to treat them trivially as an overlay on the linguistic syllabus. Starkey, among others, criticizes the "tourist-consumer" flavor of many language texts, with their focus on shopping, travel, and fashion, and concludes that "foreign language textbooks provide fertile grounds for discovering bias, racism and stereotype".

Happily, more foreign-language textbooks now include lessons dealing with global themes. A look at Asian textbooks of English as a foreign language will turn up language lessons ranging from topics such as Martin Luther King and tropical rainforests to Mother Teresa and world hunger. A growing number of commercially published English language textbooks are also appearing which deal specifically with global issue themes, including Making Peace (Brooks and Fox 1995), Global Views (Sokolik 1993), The Global Classroom (de Cou-Landberg 1995), Environmental Issues (Peaty 1995), Earthwatch (Stempleski 1994), Impact Issues (Day and Yamanaka 1998), and The World Around Us (Hoppenrath and Royal 1997).

Language teachers unable to find the global teaching materials they want often write their own language lessons on topics as diverse as refugees, recycling, and world religions. Yet others design their teaching materials around the many exciting global education textbooks, teaching packs, CD-ROMS, and videos used in the US and United Kingdom.

4.4. Global Education: Course design

Many language teachers in Asia and abroad are experimenting with global education course design. One English language course on Global Issues. In this course, students focus each week on a different world problem the environment, human rights, apartheid, world hunger--and explore in English the issue, its causes, and solutions through video, games, quizzes, discussions, role-plays, and simulations.

A number of teachers have devised similar courses on cultures of the world, in which students practice English skills while deepening their interest in foreign countries [2]. Others have built English courses around audio-visual resources such as films, for example, teaches English through Global Issue Movies where students practice language skills while studying films such as Mississippi Burning (civil rights), The Killing Fields (war and peace), and Dances with Wolves (intercultural understanding). Further, to improve students' English skills while time allowing them to explore themes such as apartheid, racism, colonialism, and nonviolence this article recommended the movie Gandhi [5].

Some teachers around the world are attempting to bring a global perspective into the teaching of English for special purposes through the design of courses such as English for Doctors or Business English. E.g Friel 1991 designed a 20-hour intensive English for Engineering course aimed at producing socially responsible, environmentally aware engineers. The course concerned the building of an imaginary dam and involved students in reading pro and anti-dam arguments, role-playing loggers and environmentalists, then presenting oral and written environmental assessments of the project [4].

4.5. Global Education: Extracurricular activities

Extracurricular activities also allow language teachers to combine global issues with the study of foreign languages, for example, an institution can hold conducted annual international awareness seminars as part of their fall school festivals, featuring English speech contests on global themes or English-speaking guest lecturers from groups such as UNESCO or Friends of the Earth.

Out-of-class volunteer activities comprise another area where language teachers can help to internationalize their students by sending them as a volunteer work with global issues, this can be a perfect context for teacher-student contact outside class or other activities can be made such as sending a peace postcard to the world leader/ famous people around the world. Etc.

Since English is international language students can improved their English skills as well as promoting their institution or beyond that to built a greater understanding among human in this world or between their country or other countries.

4.6. Global Education: Teacher training

Teacher training is another area of language education where interesting global education initiatives are taking place, such as the intensive workshop can be run by PGRI (Teachers Association) or Universities especially those under Faculty of Education. This brings together classroom among English teachers who study together to

improve their teaching methodology and language skills while using English to explore topics involving world cultures and social issues.

Many other Teachers initiative activities regarding global education showing that it can be through; graduate-level English teacher-training course, Global Issues and Cooperative Learning camp or others training. Through this training can gives teacher or students in the field of English language teaching the chance to explore teaching ideas, resources, and activities from fields such as global education, peace education, human rights education, and environmental education. These teachers then go on to practice designing and teaching model English language lessons on global education themes for use in their own schools.

4.7. Global Education: Beyond the classroom

Being a global teacher, of course, doesn't have to stop at the schoolyard gate. Language teachers can help to stimulate and inspire students through their daily lives by becoming active "world citizen" role models for students to emulate. One of the easiest things for language teachers is to support, with our money or time, global organizations working to solve world problems. Changing our lifestyles is another way to work for a better world.

Language teachers can have an even greater impact by persuading their schools, companies, or language-teaching organizations to similarly consider global issues and social responsibility. This might include discussing with your colleagues, school administrator, university dean, or office staff how your institution could contribute to a better world by reducing waste, by raising funds for worthwhile causes, and by working to change unjust or environmentally harmful school practices.

12. Conclusion

A growing number of language-teaching professionals are finding that global education presents an exciting approach to their work which can promote global awareness, international understanding, and a commitment to working for a better world. Language teachers in Asia who want to add a global perspective to their teaching may do so in many ways.

One way is to explore the field of global education through the many excellent books now in print. The resource shows a small sampling of the exciting materials now available.

A second way is to experiment in your classes with language teaching-lessons and activities designed

around global issues. Teachers who try this often discover a new excitement in the classroom which comes from a focus on student language-learning centered on communication in the foreign language about real world issues. A third way to get involved is to share with your colleagues, whether informally, in journal articles, or through conference presentations, your ideas about how language teaching can promote global awareness, international understanding, and action to solve world problems.

Finally, teachers (and others) in Asia were expected to learn more about how foreign-language teachers worldwide are dealing with global issues and global education nowadays. Hopefully, it can be an exciting variety of learning on how language educators around the globe are working to aware on the integrate global changes and world problems into their foreign-language teaching.

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