

# Teachers' Knowledge, Awareness and Pedagogy of Global Education in Secondary Schools

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**Abstract:** For the last fifty years, social studies teachers have been prepared to teach from a global perspective, but since September 11, 2001 have faced a difficult challenge teaching from a global perspective. This study examines ninety secondary school teachers' global knowledge and their disposition toward teaching from a global perspective.

One of the central goals of global education is developing and promoting global perspectives. Even after the transformation of the world economy and the establishment of global political institutions and systems, the end of the Cold War, and the September 11 event, the development, promotion and teaching of global perspectives in American public schools continue to pose a challenge to social studies teachers (Kirkwood, 2001; Merryfield, 2001). Since the attacks on September 11, we now know how interconnected and interdependent the world has truly become. Yet our public schools are not taking adequate and appropriate steps to teach and prepare students to understand the nature and complexity of global issues and problems (Merryfield, 2001).

What global knowledge do secondary social studies teachers have? There were two underlying assumptions behind the study. First, secondary social studies teachers play a critical role in shaping, guiding, and preparing students to be critical and reflective thinkers. Second, the study of global knowledge, attitudes, and pedagogy offers some practical lessons in how secondary level teachers can gauge the level of global knowledge, instructional methods, and disposition toward global mindedness. The current global realities require social studies teachers to have (a) content knowledge, (b) pedagogical content knowledge, and (c) knowledge of students characteristics and differences (Shulman, 1978).

Furthermore, the global realities require social studies teachers to use a variety of instructional strategies such as (a) open-ended discussion, (b) reflective journals entry, (c) role-playing, (d) visual discovery, (e) global skills builders, (f) global reading for writing and understanding, (g) problem-solving/decision-making skills, (h) conflict resolution skills, (i) experiential/cooperative learning activity, and (j) simulations to help students identify the causes, reasons and factors that gave rise to global problems and conflicts. Within this context, social studies teachers should develop the necessary knowledge and understanding of issues, problems, and solutions as well as pedagogical knowledge.

## Statement of the Problem

The problem to be investigated in this study is the identification and analysis of teachers' global knowledge and their attitudes toward teaching from a global perspective. There is a growing awareness that the world has not only become interdependent and interconnected, but also increasingly hostile and violent. The resulting consequences of this hostility and violence have become core concerns at the local, national and international levels. Social studies teachers and their students must be responsive to these global issues and problems. Teachers must have the knowledge and pedagogical training needed to help students to perceive, analyze and address

emerging global, social, economic, environmental and political problems (Florida Department of Education, 1987).

### **Objectives of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to identify social studies teachers' global knowledge and their attitudes toward global education.

### **Literature Review**

In a study of exemplary teacher education programs that emphasize preparing teachers to teach from a global perspective, Merryfield (1992) found that there is a consensus that secondary social studies teachers must have (a) knowledge and appreciation of cultural differences both within the U.S. and around the world, (b) knowledge of the world as an interdependent system, and (c) an understanding of contemporary global issues, conflicts, and change.

In this study, global education is defined as the study of the nature, peoples, cultures, systems, institutions, and conflicts etc. beyond national boundaries. The study of the world and the changes in politics, economics, environments, cultures, peoples, and technology offer social studies teachers the opportunity to teach students to critically examine their role as students and as citizens of the world (Apple, 2002; Giroux, 2002).

According to Kirkwood (1995), global education is designed to expand an individual's perception of the world. Students with a global perspective are sensitive to the multicultural, bilingual, multilingual and transnational nature of the human condition. She further argues that students exhibit an intellectual curiosity about the world that transcends local and national boundaries.

According to Jackson (2003), global knowledge should be organized around the following themes and concepts: (a) population growth, (b) political economy, (c) global environment, (d) conflict and cooperation, and (e) values and visions. In 1987, the Commission on Global Education released a report recommending that emphasis be placed in four curriculum areas: (a) a better understanding of the world as a series of interrelated systems: physical, biological, economic, political and informational- evaluative; (b) more attention to the development of civilizations as they relate to American history; (c) greater attention to the diversity of cultural patterns both around the world and within the United States; and (d) more training in policy analysis of domestic and international issues (Study Commission on Global Education, 1987).

### **Robert Hanvey Global Education Model**

Hanvey (1976) has identified five dimensions of global education: perspective consciousness, state of the planet awareness, awareness of the global dynamics, cross-cultural awareness and awareness of human choices, within which the teaching of global education could be organized. There are other global education models such as Becker (1979), Anderson (1979), Merryfield (1991), and Case (1993). Here, an examination of the Hanvey Model will provide the reader with options for organizing global content, scope and sequence in global education.

Perspective consciousness refers to the recognition that one's own view of the world is not shared universally and that it is often shaped unconsciously; that others have a view of the world that is different from one's own. In this dimension, teachers need an understanding of the multiple and different perspectives held by people and nations around the world (Kirkwood, 2001).

The state-of-the planet awareness refers to an awareness of the state of the planet that requires a knowledge of prevailing world conditions and development; emerging trends such as population growth; migration; economic conditions; resources and health; inter-nation and intra-nation conflicts; a knowledge of geography and its relationship between space, human settlement and movement. In this dimension, teachers need to understanding of the causes of events and their effects on nations and people around the world (Kirkwood, 2001).

The cross-cultural awareness focuses on an understanding of the diversity of ideas and practices to be found in human societies around the world, how such ideas and practices compare. In this dimension, teachers need an understanding of some recognition of how the ideas and ways of one's own society and culture are perceived or viewed from other vantage point (Kirkwood, 2001).

The awareness of global dynamics refers to key traits and mechanisms of the world systems, theories and concepts that increase intelligent understanding of global interconnectedness and global change and the awareness of unanticipated consequences of events. In this dimension, teachers need to understand the world as an interconnected system of complex traits and mechanisms (Kirkwood, 2001).

The awareness of human choices refers to the understanding of the problems of choice that confronts individuals, nations and humankind as knowledge of global systems expands and of the future becomes critical to the survival of humanity. In this dimension, teachers are challenged to transcend personal bias and beliefs (Kirkwood, 2001).

The Hanvey (1976) global education conceptual framework continues to provide the guidance for teaching about the causation of events around the world, as well as for the organizing and structuring of global knowledge, content and instructional methods and techniques in the classrooms. The framework provides the theoretical base for this study.

### **Method**

One-Way Analysis-of-Variance (ANOVA), t-test, and correlation techniques were used to analyze differences and relationships between groups on the scores of global knowledge and global mindedness. Simple frequencies, percentages, and demographic information were used to analyze the observational data.

90 participants were randomly selected to determine whether their classroom practices differ according to their level of global knowledge and global mindedness. The participants were divided into three groups of 30 individuals. Group 1 are FIU social studies/global education graduates, who have had extensive training in infusing global perspectives in the classroom. Group 2 are those social studies teachers who are have not gone through the FIU social studies/global education program. Group 3 are secondary school teachers who teach related social studies/social science subjects. Six participants from Group 1 and Group 2 were observed to determine to what extent their global perspectives and global pedagogy are reflected in their classroom practice.

### Research Questions

This study was designed to answer the following research questions: (a) Is the mean score on global knowledge and global mindedness different between groups? (b) Is the mean score on global knowledge different between female teachers and male teachers? (c) Is teachers' global knowledge correlated with years of teaching?

### Results

Table 1

#### *Analysis of Variance for Global Knowledge*

Source	SS	df	F	Sig
Between Groups	596.022	2	7.146	.001
Within Groups	3628.033	87	41.702	
Total	4224.056	89		

\*  $p < .05$

Table 2

#### *Analysis of Variance for Global Mindedness*

Source	SS	df	F	Sig
Between Groups	210.156	2	.638	.531
Within Groups	14337.800	87	41.702	
Total	14547.956	89		

$p > .05$

Table 3

#### *T-test for Global Knowledge for Gender*

Sex	n	Mean	SD	SD Error
Female	48	27.23	6.553	.946
Male	42	26.14	7.290	1.125

### Discussion

ANOVA table 1 shows a significant difference between groups:  $F(2, 87) = 7.15, p < .001$ . I reject the null hypothesis that there is no difference among the groups in their level of global knowledge. Since a difference exists for global knowledge, a post-hoc was conducted to determine where the difference lies. The post-hoc reveals that group 1 differs from group 2 in the level of global knowledge. I conclude that social studies teachers who graduated from the FIU social studies/global education program differ significantly in their level of global knowledge

from the other two groups. Similarly, group 2 differs in the level of global mindedness that the other two groups. I conclude that social studies teachers who have not gone through the FIU social studies/global education program differ significantly in their attitudes and disposition about global education.

ANOVA table 2 for global mindedness shows no significant difference:  $F, (2, 87) = 0.64, p < 0.53$ . I fail to reject the null hypothesis and therefore concluded that the attitudes toward global mindedness for three groups are relatively the same.

T-test table 3 for global knowledge shows that the mean difference is small (means 27.23, 26.14). I fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is a significant difference between female teachers and male teachers in the level of global knowledge. I therefore conclude that female teachers global knowledge is no different than male global knowledge.

Correlation, using the crosstab (Eta) for gender and years of teaching, shows a low correlation for gender .079 and years of teaching .073. I fail to reject the null hypothesis that there is a relationship between female teachers and male teachers in their global mindedness, and no relationship in the years of teaching. I conclude that gender does not affect teachers' global knowledge and global mindedness. Similarly, the years of teaching (experience) does not affect teachers' global knowledge and global mindedness.

### **Conclusion**

Granted, no program with a different mission, goals, and objectives will be evaluated the same. It is desirable to conduct another study, similar to Merryfield's 1992 study on exemplary global education programs. In that study, she compared programs that prepare teachers to teach with a global perspective. She found the FIU social studies program to be highly effective in preparing teachers to teach from a global perspective. There has been past research conducted in Miami-Dade County Public Schools and at FIU over the years that support her findings. On the basis of the findings, it is safe to say that the social studies/global education program at the College of Education at Florida International University appears to be effective in helping in-service teachers gain global knowledge, awareness, and disposition as well as preparing them to teach from a global perspective. More importantly, the school district should welcome the conclusion that secondary social studies and non-social studies teachers appear to have global knowledge, skills, and disposition to raise students' awareness of issues and problems that affect all humanity.

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