

What Does Globalization Mean for Education?



People around the world are more connected to each other than ever before. Goods, services, information, communications, and money all flow quickly from one part of the world to another. For many areas of life, it is as if national borders do not exist. We are increasingly interconnected and interdependent. But what does this mean for education?

It means increased opportunities to learn with and from the global community. Globalization means we communicate with educators and their work worldwide through personal contact, virtual contact, or print information. Teachers also have opportunities to share their learning materials online with teachers all over the world. Two new interesting projects are Curriki and CurriculumWiki. Curriki is a project started by Sun Microsystems to develop and share curricula worldwide to help eliminate the digital divide. All of the lessons, assessments, resources, and textbooks there are free and open source. CurriculumWiki is a project of the Digital Generation Education Exchange and uses the copyright license from the Creative Commons, whereby teachers retain copyright but agree to allow others to use and modify their contributions under certain restrictions.

It means wonderful collaborative projects for students and teachers. In a connected world, students need a global perspective. They need to engage in meaningful content and interpersonal exchanges with people worldwide for the purpose of improving literacy and communication skills and increasing multicultural understanding.

There are wonderful projects that demonstrate how people and information resources

on the Internet are used as a classroom tool for research and as a medium for interactive collaborative learning. These projects, including Global Schoolnet, iEARN, Thinkquest, and Global Nomads, also provide an online training and support system for teachers, so they can use technology for interactive collaborative learning and building cultural understanding.

It means wonderful opportunities for students to be involved in global projects on their own. Technology empowers students to solve real-world problems and make a difference in the world. Teachers can encourage proactive leadership on the part of students by providing ideas and direction specific to student interest.

Opportunities continue to grow for students to reach a wider audience with their work. Youth Radio on the Web encourages storytelling and investigative journalism for a variety of media outlets, including NPR, PRI, and Wiretap, and through streaming media or podcasts directly from their Web site.

As ISTE CEO Don Knezek has noted, it means the globalization of education. The opportunities for students, educators, and other learners to engage in learning experiences continue to expand. In a knowledge-based economy, you can work from anywhere. Educators need to be sensitive to workforce demands all over the world in addition to providing opportunities for students to work in dynamic, multicultural teams.

We continue to live in interesting times where being prepared and flexible is key! Please share your ideas and resources for encouraging global connectivity and preparing for increasing globalization at letters@iste.org. ■

ISSUE ORIENTED

By Anita McAnear

Anita McAnear is L&L's acquisitions editor and national program chair for NECC. A former middle school math and language arts teacher, McAnear has been with ISTE since 1983.