

PREPARING A

GLOBALLY

COMPETENT WORKFORCE AND CITIZENRY

By Heather Singmaster and Jennifer Manise

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top and think for a minute about the following:¹

- Ninety-five percent of consumers live outside the United States.
- Eighty percent of purchasing power (the money available to buy products and services) is also found beyond U.S. borders.

What this means is that for companies of any size to expand, they need to look to international markets. Doing so will both grow the U.S. economy and create new jobs here at home.

For many, this is a sensitive subject, as international markets can be seen as excuses for outsourcing. But the fact is, \$1 billion in exports supported 5,600 jobs in 2013.² Not only are more than 38 million U.S. jobs dependent on trade, but even more are supported as part of the supply chain connected to companies trading internationally.³

To take advantage and prepare for careers in these markets, we must give students the opportunity to develop the right skills, including global and cultural competence.

Changing Demographics

There may be certain career clusters that seem more “global” than others, like Transportation and Logistics or Hospitality. However, even those that may seem “domestically” focused, such as Human Services or Architecture and Construction, will require workers with a more global outlook. Again, consider these statistics:

- The United States has 40 million people who are foreign-born, more than at any other time in its history.⁴
- Twenty percent of the population (older than five years) speaks a language other than English at home.⁵
- It is estimated that by 2060, the Hispanic population in the U.S. will double to one in three of all Americans.⁶

This means that not only will the population of students in our career and technical education (CTE) classrooms change, bringing vast cultural resources with them, but also within their own communities these students will be working with people whose backgrounds may be vastly different from their own.



Ruth Caplinger, director for career and technical education at Mason County Schools in West Virginia, is a former registered nurse who used her high school Spanish on the job. For example, one day a patient in labor with her first child came in alone, frightened and unable to communicate in English. Ruth was able to relieve the woman's anxiety and explain what was happening. "One never knows when or how in the workforce you will need to be able to communicate in a second language to do your job and/or just to help another human being," she said.

Global Competence Defined

So what are the skills and dispositions required of students in this interconnected world? Asia Society has worked with the Council of Chief State School Officers to define global competence⁷—a definition also adopted by the U.S. Department of Education:

- **Investigate the world.** Global competence starts by being interested in learning about the world and how it works. Students ask and explore questions that are globally significant. They can respond to these questions by identifying, collecting and analyzing credible information from a variety of local, national and international sources, including those in multiple languages. They can connect the local to the global.
- **Weigh perspectives.** Globally competent students recognize that they have a particular perspective, and that others may or may not share it. When needed, they can compare and contrast their perspective with others and integrate various viewpoints to construct a new one.
- **Communicate ideas.** Globally competent students understand that audiences differ on the basis of culture, geography, faith, ideology, wealth and other factors. They can effectively communicate, verbally and non-verbally, with wide-ranging audiences and

collaborate on diverse teams. Because it is increasingly the world's common language for commerce and communication, globally competent students are proficient in English, as well as in at least one other world language. They are technologically and media-literate within a global communications environment.

- **Take action.** Globally competent students see themselves as capable of making a difference. Alone or with others, ethically and creatively, globally competent students can envision and weigh options for action based on evidence and insight; they can assess their potential impact, taking into account varied perspectives and potential consequences for others; and they show courage to act and reflect on their actions.

This definition does not call for a separate global CTE class. The more effective, sustainable approach is to integrate a global perspective into all existing coursework.

It's What Business Wants

Global competence skills align with what business is calling for in workers. A study done for the Association of American Colleges and Universities found that 96 percent of business executives surveyed identified intercultural skills, that is, being "comfortable working with colleagues, customers and/or clients from diverse cultural backgrounds," as important, including 63 percent who believe these skills are very important. Furthermore, 91 percent agree that "all students should have educational experiences that teach them how to solve problems with people whose views are different from their own," including 57 percent who strongly agree.⁸

Separately, the 2014 U.S. Business Needs Survey of over 800 U.S. executives in international business, sales, marketing and finance found that 80 percent believe they could increase their overall business if they had employees with "international expertise." The survey also found that

international skills are important not just for management, but also for entry-level employees.⁹

Making CTE Education Attractive and Relevant

Across the country and around the world, CTE programs are struggling with a perception issue: how to make parents and students see that CTE is a viable, lucrative alternative to a traditional college BA path. By providing relevant and engaging global content and connections, embedded within rigorous coursework and engaging teaching, CTE programs can demonstrate their place and importance in providing the skills needed for the knowledge-driven global economy.

A globally focused curriculum is also more engaging to students. For instance, Asia Society's International Studies Schools Network, a national network of secondary schools in low-income and minority areas with the mission of developing globally competent graduates, has shown that in comparison to schools with similar demographic profiles in the same districts, these schools have higher test scores. These schools within the network realize the opportunity to make instruction more effective by infusing global perspectives into the curriculum and school culture.

Yet, it is not common to find global competence as a focus in U.S. classrooms. Most students are not studying world languages, and if they are, it is not to proficiency. Less than one percent of K-12 students study abroad to interact with people from other cultures and widen their perspective.¹⁰ Teachers are struggling to integrate global competencies into their professional development and curriculum.

We turn now to examples of CTE classrooms that are finding success in integrating a global perspective into their curriculum.

Agriculture

When Tara Berescik, an agriculture teacher at Tri-Valley Central School District and the 2014 ACTE Teacher of

the Year, began her career as an agriculture educator in upstate New York, she knew she wanted to expose her students to the world. Berescik came to Tri-Valley with a vision and passion for bringing broader experiences to kids, only to find that other priorities threatened to crowd out her commitment. So, initially, she began with small projects.

Here's one that may sound familiar: Students examine each ingredient of a cheeseburger and map that ingredient back to its local source. Berescik then took the project a step further, instructing them as to when each component would be in season where they lived, as well as around the world. She followed up this exercise with a dialogue on food sourcing and security issues. As a result, students began an initiative to encourage people in their communities to support local agriculture and reduce their carbon footprint.

The next project was "Trout in the Classroom," which led to a connection with elementary students in Ireland who were also raising trout. First virtually, and then through a trip to Ireland, students compared the species they were

raising and talked about environmental issues related to clean water and fish populations in their areas.

Berescik continues to integrate global perspectives into all of her courses using UN resources and others related to environmental issues. This approach is paying off. She finds that her students are more interested and engaged with real-world topics related to their coursework. They develop a much deeper understanding of the complexities of global food production and issues of food safety and security, both at home and abroad.

Health

When should global health issues be introduced into the curriculum and how can they spark student interest and understanding? Health Sciences and Human Services High School in the High Line School District, in Seattle, Washington, has found the answer is the semester-long class, Global Health, for freshmen. The teacher, Alicia Emsley, uses a project-based learning approach to cover topics such as communicable and non-communicable diseases, poli-

cies of the World Health Organization (WHO), major global health problems, as well as awareness and advocacy for issues.

Students are given case studies and real-world problems, and work together to evaluate the case, solve problems and advocate for many issues. They then present their findings to classmates and hone their work to present to other classes. Emsley contends the early exposure to global issues broadens not only their understanding of the intricacies of the field, but also builds their understanding of career paths. She said, "I think that the course opens up their ideas of what a job in medicine really means; that there are a lot of options outside of nursing or becoming a doctor. They realize the full potential of having a health career."

Emsley uses the WHO and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) websites heavily to modify the course and relies upon additional resources, such as "Rx for Survival" from PBS, to round out her research. But this global focus does not end freshman year—seniors have the opportunity to more deeply connect and learn about a global-health topic in their

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capstone course experience. Coursework like this, designed to connect students through research, projects and presentations, is how a global outlook can be integrated to support CTE curriculum goals.

STEM

Marshall Academy in Fairfax County's George C. Marshall High School (Falls Church, Virginia) is a Governor's STEM Academy and home to the largest Mandarin program in the county. Students from area high schools come to study both AP and International Baccalaureate (IB) Mandarin courses, as well as specialized and technical courses, such as network administration, language programming and aerospace science. Academy Administrator Jeff McFarland believes that the CTE programs must be cutting-edge and include real-world problem solving to attract AP and IB students. At the heart of their project-based learning is the National Academy of Engineering's Grand Challenges program, which

focuses on global societal issues. Keeping students grounded in global problems, such as solar energy affordability, restoring urban infrastructure and securing cyberspace, allows investigation of the world, building of perspectives, communicating ideas and taking action.

Getting Started

There are many ways to start engaging students through global competence. Remember to start small; it is most practical to begin by adding a single international dimension to an existing piece of curriculum. Find an internationally themed activity of particular interest to parents, students or the wider community and then find time to evaluate and perfect it. Taking these steps can build confidence in the work and allow time for the necessary research, training and professional development.

Some additional strategies include:

- Use international exchanges to promote curricular change. Tara Berescik connected her class to

one in Ireland for their trout project. At Bergen County Academics in New Jersey, students partnered virtually with Kokutaiji High School in Hiroshima, Japan, to work on joint research projects.

- Reach out to local industries, non-profits and colleges with global links and resources. Global speakers are one way to begin to engage students and help them see the value of a global perspective. Start by checking with the local World Affairs Council, Rotary Club, Kiwanis club, or chamber of commerce. Or flip this and take your students to business. Ruth Caplinger took students to a board meeting of the Mason County Career Center. Students spoke on the importance of the global economy and West Virginia's place in it. It was an eye-opening event for both the students and the advisors.
- Use international issues and provide access to critical language

study to prepare for the global economy. Jeff McFarland encourages students to take Mandarin and a course in entrepreneurship in addition to their information technology and engineering courses to give them more options for college and beyond, and also to build an enthusiasm and aptitude for life-long learning.

Conclusion

Integrating global competence into coursework is a natural way to engage students more deeply in their field and to keep professional learning current. As you consider the opportunities, start small and integrate into existing units and build from there. In doing so, you will be preparing your students more fully for their future. **Tech**

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ENDNOTES

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Global CTE

General:

- *Educating for Global Competence*, by Veronica Boix-Mansilla and Tony Jackson <http://asiasociety.org/globalcompetence>

Virtual Connections/Projects:

- iEARN <http://collaborate.iearn.org>

Higher education:

- Centers for International Business Education and Research (CIBERs): <http://ciberweb.msu.edu/institutions/>
- National Resource Centers: www.nrcweb.org

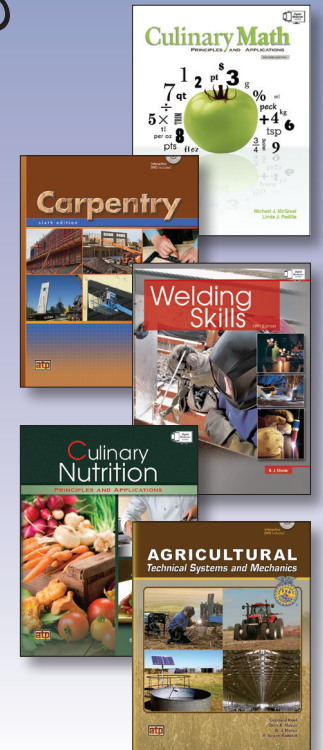
Curriculum:

- Council for Economic Education: www.councilforeconed.org/
- Junior Achievement Global Marketplace: <https://www.juniorachievement.org/web/ja-usa/home>

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