

Internationalizing K-12 Education

Tony Jackson, Asia Society

April 12th, 2014

College of William & Mary/Coalition for International Education

Conference on

“Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century”

Slide 1: Cover Slide

Thanks very much, and good afternoon to you all. I am delighted to be able to spend some time today talking with you about internationalizing education at the K-12 level, and particularly the way we've approached that task at Asia Society. This is a very timely and important conference and I'm glad to be able to participate.

Slide 2: Shanghai

About 10 years ago, I found myself in the city of Shanghai, looking out across the Huang Pu River from an old section of the city called the Bund. And across the river is the new section of the city called Pu Dong.

And I mean really new – 30 years ago this was a vast open field. Now it is this amazing collection of fantastic and futuristic buildings, each one of them designed by one of the world's greatest architects.

I realized then that I was quite literally looking from the past into the future. Staring me in the face was an incredible example of how the world has changed in just a couple of generations, specifically the rise and power of Asia, and China in particular.

And I remember I had two reactions. The first was “we are toast”. How in the world are we going to compete with a country that can invent a new city in 10 years time? That's it, game over, China is going to eat our lunch.

But then I thought, well now wait a minute. Get a grip! You're an educator, there must be something we can do to prepare our kids to compete at this level. And maybe more importantly, to cooperate with the Chinese and people in other parts of Asia and throughout the world.

Of course there is. What I'd like to talk to you about this morning is what we at the Asia Society, in partnership with a range of other institutions, have tried to do over the past 10 years about preparing students for this very different, much more interconnected world of the 21st century -- to redesign elementary and secondary education to meet the challenges and the demands of a world changed by globalization.

SLIDE 3: Asia Society

By way background, Asia Society is an educational organization dedicated to promoting mutual understanding among peoples and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context. Founded in 1956, Asia Society is a nonpartisan, nonprofit global institution with offices across the United States and throughout the Asia Pacific Region.

What brings me to this conference, as it is for all of us, is a recognition that our world had changed forever, and pre- and post-secondary education systems must respond to this new world. We need to produce graduates able to live, work and lead in a world characterized by global interaction and interdependencies. Globalization requires the preparation of youth for a world that is qualitatively different from the industrial world in which our education systems were created. Put simply, success in this interconnected global economic and civic environment increasingly requires *global competence*.

I don't think I need to convince anyone in this room that the development of global competence, which I will define in a minute but absolutely includes fluency in the world's languages, is a defining characteristic of an effective 21st century education. But as you also know, it isn't the case that everyone in education, in business and policymaking communities, or the public at large, is equally understanding of the need for global competence among our youth.

Part of our responsibility is to make the case for global competence. So I want to bring to your attention a powerful tool for doing that, that you may find valuable in developing understanding of the need for global competence in the communities in which you work.

Slide 4: Mapping the Nation

This resource, called Mapping the Nation, is a new online, interactive resource that Asia Society created in partnership with the data analytics company SAS and the Longview Foundation. It was launched during international education week at the US Department of Education by Secretary Duncan. It is a national map containing economic, demographic and education indicators showing how globally connected every state and county in the U.S. is. In addition to the map itself, there is an info graphic for each state to highlight some key statistics as well as graphics covering the key themes of the map overall - I will show you those in a bit.

There were many of reasons to take this project on. We work with states and districts who are constantly trying to make the case for why a global education is important. And in the policy world, we talk all the time about making data-driven decisions – but we didn't have data to back up our case. We also hear a constant drum beat from the business community –that there is a mismatch between what they need in high school and college graduates and what they are getting in new hires.

The map and the data essentially make a supply and demand argument – on the demand side, the economic and demographic data show the myriad ways this country is globally connected at the county and state level and therefore the demand for globally competent workers and citizens.

The education data then looks at the supply side – are we giving our students the skills they need to succeed in this interconnected environment?

Slide 5 Demographic Indicators

Here we can see the Demographics section.

This section contains data on:

- the number and percentage of a state or county's population that is speaking a language other than English at home, and which languages they are speaking;
- The Ancestry of the population;
- And the number and percentage of people who are foreign-born.

Slide 6

Here you can see that here in the county of James City, where we are right now, 33% of the foreign-born population is from Asia.

Slide 7: Economic Indicators

Consider that 95 % of consumers and three-quarters of the world's purchasing power is found outside U.S. borders - that is a huge opportunity for growth. And Americans are increasingly taking advantage of those facts, but not to the fullest extent possible.

So in looking at the Economics Indicators, we can ask: Is our workforce attracting companies that are globally connected?

Slide 8: Data on Virginia

The indicators in Economics area allow you to explore how many jobs are tied to international trade and how many dollars from trade are flowing through your state and county. Here you can see that Virginia trades over \$50billion in goods alone. We could also look at the map and see which specific sectors are most tied to trade and how many people are working in them.

The last indicator in this section is International Student Economic Value – how many dollars are brought into the community from international students coming to study there. In some cases, that is billions of dollars!

So Economics shows a clear need for international skills. With the majority of consumers and markets outside of the U.S., a state or county's ability to trade internationally can create jobs and bring more money into the local economy.

The demographics data also shows a clear demand – students need to be globally competent not only for jobs tied to international trade, but to work and live in their local communities which are rapidly changing and very global.

So then the supply side – are we giving our students the tools to be globally competent?

Slide 9: Education Indicators

Here we have the education statistics – of course a global education is a bit more difficult to quantify. We have included in this section:

- World language enrollment figures for K- 12 and at the post-secondary level
- Study abroad data –for both K-12 and post-secondary.
- And AP Exams taken that are internally focused, so foreign languages, world history, geography, etc.

Slide 10

Here you can see that in VA, about 48,000 post-secondary students are studying a world language. We could also look and see that about 1,500 of them are studying Chinese.

Slide 11: Info Graphic on Virginia

As I mentioned earlier, we included many info graphics to help people interpret the data more easily – this is very important when you consider that we have almost a million data points in the map! There is an info graphic for every state. .

Slide 12:

Here is a closer view of the top – you can see we pulled out 3 key statistics that really show how globally connected VA is. You can note the top trade partners of Canada, China and the United Kingdom.

Slide 13:

Then we looked at whether or not students are being prepared for this interconnected world by including some of the education statistics for the state. For each state we also have a page with a narrative description of what is happening in the state in global education as well as a local contact person and local organizations and resources so people can find ways to get involved locally.

Slide 14:

We also looked at some of the key themes of the map and created info graphics on those larger national issues - here is one on jobs tied to international trade. All the data is from the map.

Slide 15:

Another that we did together with NAFSA on the importance of study abroad and a global education at the postsecondary level.

If we can, I'd like to show you a very short video that summarized Mapping the Nation.

[Roll Video]

You can access map at MappingtheNation.net, or through the Asia Society website within the Education section.

So Mapping the Nation is a powerful tool for making the case for internationalizing education because it shows that the US, in urban and rural communities alike, has truly become internationalized. The global economy, and diversity in ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds – these are the new normal that demands rethinking of our K-12 education system.

The outcome we seek from this reinvention of elementary and secondary education is global competence. But what, exactly, does it mean to be globally competent?

Slide 16: Global Competence Task Force

In my time today, I want to describe a definition of global competence, and how that definition has been operationalized for teaching and assessment in K-12 education. The definition of global competence was developed by the Global Competence Task Force, a group of education decision makers, scholars and practitioners jointly convened by Asia Society and the Council of Chief School Officers, which I'm sure you know is the organization of the heads of state education agencies in the United States.

The Task Force's work was further supported by Harvard Project Zero, within the Harvard University Graduate School of Education.

Slide 17: Definition of Global competence

The Task Force defines global competence *as the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance.*

What's critical to realize from the very start is that students both develop and demonstrate global competence through rigorous study within academic disciplines. Students develop global competence not as an extracurricular activity, but in the way they study the core curriculum.

So in educating for global competence, **content knowledge and the understanding it brings matter.** To be successful, in helping students know how to understand their complex, diverse world students need to know the seminal constructs that are contained in the academic disciplines. And they need to know how to think in the particular ways called for in the different disciplines.

They need to think like historians or scientists or artists. And they need to think within the disciplines from a global perspective.

For example, we believe American students certainly need to know about the U.S. civil rights movement in the 1950's and 60's. And, they need to be able to understand it even more deeply by comparing it to the Truth and Reconciliation movements in Chile or South Africa, or the struggle for nationhood in India.

They need to be able to do Chemistry experiments to determine the caloric value of various foods. And they need to be able to apply what they learn to help understand world hunger.

The need to learn about logarithms and exponential growth. And be able to use this knowledge to explain the dynamics of population growth worldwide.

So knowledge and understanding of the world developed through disciplinary and interdisciplinary study is the foundation for our definition of global competence.

What also matters is the development of a range of cognitive and emotional capacities that enable students to access and act upon that knowledge and understanding. We've grouped these capacities in four areas, the first of which is called the capacity to **Investigate the World**.

Slide 18: Investigating the World (click through)

Global competence starts with paying attention to what's going on in the world and identifying important issues worth examining closely. Globally competent students can frame "essential" questions – ones that do not necessarily have one right answer, but can be systematically engaged intellectually and emotionally.

They ask questions that are globally significant, questions that address important phenomena and events that are relevant world wide

Now, that can be as simple as primary school students' inquiries about how to recycle plant debris to fertilize the school garden, to high school students' impassioned debate on how to create sustainable cities in the midst of arid deserts.

Importantly, globally competent students can explain how a local issue like their school recycling exemplifies a global process far beyond their back yards – how the local relates to the global and vice versa.

They can respond to these questions by identifying, collecting and weighing the credibility of information from a variety of sources, including international resources available through digital technology.

And they can analyze that information and then put it together in a compelling, evidence-based argument that considers multiple perspectives and draws defensible conclusions. So if the issue is world migration and what to do about it, their response will reflect a reasoned weighing of evidence about what causes people to cross geographic and cultural boundaries and what are fair and just ways of addressing the issue.

Slide 19: Recognizing Perspectives (click through)

A second group of capacities we put under the title **Recognizing Perspectives**. And a big part of recognizing perspective is for a young person to recognize that they *have* a particular perspective that others may or may not share, and can understand some of the reasons why perspectives differ.

What's really critical, globally competent students are able to enter into an authentic negotiation of perspectives. They are able to go from the first step of recognizing that someone holds a different view, to a second step of engaging in a real discourse between perspectives in which they are open to broadening their own view.

It's what we mean, or should mean by critical thinking. The capacity not just to critique a set of ideas, but to weigh the value of those ideas in relation to one's own and to be open to a deeper understanding because of it.

So, investigate the world, recognize perspectives –

Slide 20: Communicating Ideas (click through)

The third pillar of our definition of global competence is **Communicating and Collaborating Around Ideas**.

Globally competent students understand that audiences differ on the basis of culture, geography, faith, ideology, wealth and other factors and that they may perceive different meanings from the same information.

They can effectively communicate, verbally and non-verbally, with diverse audiences and that includes speaking more than one language.

And globally competent youth are media savvy as well; they know how to choose and effectively use appropriate technology and media with diverse audiences.

Communicating ideas occurs in a variety of culturally diverse settings, and especially within collaborative teams. Global competent students are able to situate themselves in a variety of cultural contexts, organize and participate in diverse groups, and work effectively toward a common goal.

Slide 21: Take Action (click through)

Finally, being globally competent means having the disposition to **Take Action**. Here we're talking about going beyond learning *about* the world to making a difference *in* the world.

Taking action to improve conditions in the world first requires seeing oneself as capable of making a difference. Globally competent students see themselves as actors, not bystanders. This is important for all students but it is especially important, in my view, for immigrant or ethnic minority students, and students from poor families.

You well know that many students do not travel beyond their neighborhood, much less the world. Yet, to know that they have the power to change the world, starting in their neighborhood, is absolutely essential.

A big part of leveling the playing field is opening up the horizons of possibility for all students, and inculcating a belief that, even though they may be poor, and even if their communities have fewer resources, that they have a right and responsibility to try to compete and collaborate on the global stage.

Globally competent kids are also able to recognize opportunities for making a difference, to be entrepreneurial and perhaps create the next out-of-the-box, must-have business product we didn't know we needed.

Slide 22: Global Competence Graphic

That's how we define success; what it means to be globally competent: Disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge learned and applied through a global lens, coupled with the capacity to investigate the world, recognize and negotiate perspectives, communicate and collaborate around ideas and take action.

So, if we understand the need for globally competent students and have tools like Mapping the Nation to make that case, and we have an emerging consensus on what it means to be globally competent, clearly, the next order question is, how do we educate students to become globally competent?

Slide 23: ISSN

That's a question we have been wrestling with for most of this decade at Asia Society. And it brings us to our work over the past decade to develop Asia Society's International Studies Schools Network. This is a network of now over 30 globally focused schools we've worked with school districts and charter authorities to create over the past decade.

In effect, our approach is an attempt to bring together within one school model, on the one hand, the best of what we know from research and practice to improve teaching and learning, especially for disadvantaged students, and on the other, the emerging body of experience, distilled from the craft wisdom of schools across the country, on how education can become a vehicle for developing students global competence.

Slide 24: ISSN Matrix

What we've tried to do is to integrate those best practices into an overall school design that pushes our mantra of creating college ready, globally competent graduates across all the key dimensions of schooling.

Slide 25. ISSN Data

Across the network, about 63% of the kids come from low income families and 80% are students of color. If you compare the results of our schools with schools with similar demographic profiles in the same school districts, our schools outperform these other schools on the various states tests of accountability 70% of the time. Our schools have about a 90% graduation rate which is better than the national average high school graduation rate of 75% on-time graduation, and a whole lot better than a rate of just over 50% in the most underserved communities.

I say that only to point out that the ISSN school model is not an untested model, rather a model that has proven effective in not only promoting students' global competence but in closing achievement gaps and raising graduation rates.

I want to describe to you some of the core characteristics of our ISSN schools, and especially our thinking about language learning, which is a key part of each and every one of these schools. But before I do, let me show you a brief video that I think captures well the purpose and culture of these schools.

[Roll Video]

Hopefully, the video gives you a good sense of what the culture of ISSN schools feels like.

Slide 26: Mission, Vision and Culture

In the area of the school's vision, mission and culture, for example,

if you went into one of our schools, what you would see is different ways that dedication to global competence gets actualized throughout the school culture, including in the actual mission statement. In one of our three schools in Denver, the mission statement reads "The Denver

Center for International Studies prepares students for college by developing multilingual, interculturally competent students who are actively involved in a rapidly changing world.”

And the Denver Center for International Studies lives out that mission in many ways, not the least of which is a tradition of morning assemblies called Point-Counterpoint. In the one I observed, a representative of the Israeli government from the local consulate was responding to the remarks of a representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization who spoken the week before. What’s said in these assemblies reverberates through the school throughout the day and the week, proving opportunities for critical reflection from the classroom to the lunchroom.

What’s really at work here is the development of a *school culture* of global competence. What DCIS does, and all of our schools, is to create an environment in which students are *enculturated* into ways of thinking and acting where engagement with matters of global significance becomes “The way we do things at our school,” “The things we care about here.”

Slide 27: Curriculum and Instruction

In terms of curriculum and instruction, a hallmark of these schools is the systematic integration of the study of world cultures and the bringing-in of international perspectives across the entire curriculum.

So in American History, for example, rather than the standard litany of dates, places and events, the course is reorganized to focus on a series of enduring understandings and essential questions such as, “How has American history shaped and been shaped by global forces?” And “What does it mean to be an American.”

In biology, students examine issues like the spread of disease and how prevention and cure have to take into account global differences in resources, worldview and belief systems.

In English/Language arts, we’ve broadened the traditional cannon to include many more works by authors from outside the U.S. or American authors writing knowledgably about people and issues outside our borders.

In mathematics, we ask high school students to use rates, ratios, percentages, and decimals, and one- and two-variable graphs to analyze global population growth, demographic information, and resource distribution related to our changing population. They begin by analyzing the relationships between the world's population and its growth rate, and between wealth and resource distribution.

So hopefully you get the picture, a consistent effort to consider the global perspective within each subject area and across subject areas.

Our instructional model calls for students to be engaged in project-based learning as much as possible that focuses learning within core subject areas through examination of issues of global significance. This includes opportunities for students to learn through simulations like the Model UN.

And a particularly important common feature of our schools is that every student is expected to study one or more world languages, or English as a second language throughout their tenure at the school. Across the network, all of our schools are offering Chinese and Spanish, and some are also offering Arabic, Japanese, German, French, Italian and at DCIS – the Native American Lakota language.

We also have a few elementary schools within our network, and if you came to the Ambassador Global Academy in Los Angeles, you'd see first and second grade African American, Latino and Korean-American children together in immersion Korean language classes.

Slide 28 Language Learning Lags

Why do we believe studying world languages is so critically important? Clearly this audience knows the value of language learning in its own right. But, again, with an eye toward those not already in our choir, learning the world's languages is critical simply to keep up with the world's nations in the ability to fully participate in the global economic and civic environment.

This slide shows how we compare with Europe and many of the top performing Asian countries that begin the study of a second language in elementary grades. Meanwhile, only twenty-five percent of elementary schools in the United States offered any world languages, and only half of all U.S. high school students take even one year of a world language and those enrollments are almost entirely in Spanish.

If we truly believe that no child should be left behind, then we need to vastly increase language learning in K-12 education. We are being left way behind those with whom we hope to cooperate, but with whom we must very definitely compete.

That's why, as well as being a requirement within our schools, we've tried over the past several years to work collaboratively with other organizations, to strengthen education policy to support language learning.

Together, we were founding members of a coalition of world language and other organizations formed to educate Members of Congress on the need to expand world language learning opportunities for K-12 students in the United States, specifically in support of the Excellence and Innovation in Language Learning Act" which references a pervasive lack of foreign language capacity and the threat this poses to the security and economic well-being of the United States.

In the current climate in Washington, this legislation has not been reintroduced. However when and if the Congress gets around to consideration of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, I think that this kind of legislation embedded within ESEA could be a focal point for strengthening federal policy in support of language learning going forward. It is very much needed.

Slide 29: Confucius Classroom Network

Some of you may also know that Asia Society has, since 2005, developed a broad based Chinese Language Initiative that has worked to promote successful Chinese language programs in American schools K-12, and that now focuses on a national network of 100 US schools in 30 states and their partner schools in 23 provinces across China. This network, called the Confucius Classroom Network, is a separate network from the International Studies Schools Network although there is overlap between them.

In Virginia and in the Washington DC metropolitan area, for example we have 4 Confucius Classrooms. They are:

In Washington DC, the Washington International School, and in Virginia the Tallwood High School, George Mason High School, and the Collegiate School

Slide 30: Partnerships

And finally, in our ISSN schools, and in the Confucius Classroom Network as well, we strive for all of our schools to be embedded in a web of supportive partnerships with families, universities, businesses, cultural organizations and individuals that can support internationally themed education and language learning.

We consider our students' varied ethnic background to be a huge asset to our schools and we try to find ways to help them mine that asset continuously. And organizational partnerships provide lots of important resources and learning opportunities, as well as opportunities for internationally focused-internships and service learning.

For example, every student at the International School of the Americas in San Antonio, Texas, which is both an ISSN school and part of the Confucius Classroom Network, interns at a globally focused organization, from Doctors Without Borders to the Mexican Consulate in San Antonio to the Volkswagen manufacturing plant in Pueblo, Mexico, just across the border.

So that's a thumbnail sketch of our approach to answering the question, how K-12 schools can bring global knowledge and skills to students to develop their global competence.

I want to end with a few words about assessment. Global competence can be defined, and global competence can be taught – but can it be measured? And importantly, can global competence be assessed in a way that actually drives and deepens students’ development of global competence?

Slide 31: GPS overview

There are undoubtedly many ways that global competence can be measured – what I want to briefly describe to you is the way we’ve done it in our ISSN schools. We assess global competence through a performance based assessment process called the Graduation Performance System.

In essence, The Graduation Performance System (or GPS) is a school based performance assessment system designed to transform curriculum, instruction and assessment in schools.

Slide 32: Performance Outcomes

The foundation of the GPS are a set of performance outcomes that spell out what demonstration of global competence looks like in the core academic disciplines. By that I mean Science, Mathematics, Social Studies and History, English Language Arts, the Arts, and, of course, World Languages.

There are also a set of interdisciplinary performance outcomes that we call global leadership performance outcomes that are useful in assessing student work that cuts across disciplines, including student learning that occurs in afterschool and other out of school settings.

Slide 33: GPS Cycle

So anchoring the work in our performance outcomes, what we try to do is build teachers' capacity to implement a performance-based instruction and assessment cycle.

- Teachers learn to design and implement curriculum units that include authentic learning experiences and formative and summative performance-based assessment tasks.
- They learn to rate student work produced in response to these curriculum modules based on evidence of proficiency in meeting our performance outcomes delineated within 4 point scoring rubrics.

- And they learn to provide nuanced feedback to students, and refine their own work based on its effectiveness in promoting students deep learning -- all within a 2 - 5 week instruction, assessment and data cycle.

So from this you hopefully see that assessment of global competence involves the expert, calibrated judgment of teachers about the quality of student work against clearly defined benchmarks of proficiency. The GPS performance cycle is, in effect, a continuous improvement process for students and for teachers that repeats across the curriculum.

If I may be so bold, I'd like to end my remarks at this conference before we open it up to any questions or comments you may have by inviting you to two other conferences that provide opportunities to extend this conversation.

Slide 34: NCLC

The first is the annual National Chinese Language Conference that will occur May 7-8th in Los Angeles. In partnership with the College board, this is Asia Society's annual meeting of over 1300 people from the US and other nations from K-12 and higher education who are working to make high quality teaching and learning in Mandarin Chinese accessible to all students.

Slide 35: PGL

The other conference I'd like to invite you to comes on June 27-28th, which is Asia Society's Partnership for Global Learning 7th Annual Conference which this year will be again held in Brooklyn, New York.

This is the annual gathering of educators from around the country who are diligently trying to integrate a global perspective in their classrooms, including in language learning programs. It is the "big tent" under which all who believe that to be well educated today requires global competence, language learning and the knowledge, competencies and disposition to understand and act on matters of global significance.

I hope you will consider joining us, you will indeed be among like minds and good company. And with that, I want to again thank you for the honor of speaking with you this afternoon and look forward to any questions or comments you may have.