SCHOOL-UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS FOR
GLOBAL EDUCATION; TOWARD A MODEL
FOR EDUCATIONAL REFORM

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This study focuses on the vision of global education shared and implemented by a team of educators from the Ryazan State Pedagogical University (RSPU) and their Russian Center for Global Education. The university serves mainly preservice students, but also offers inservice programs. Global education is offered to both categories of students in two forms: through a special integrated course, “Global Education” (forty credit hours), and through the global orientation of the major academic courses in different departments. Within the framework of inservice education, RSPU also convenes global workshops and conferences; provides on-site teacher training and expertise; develops, translates and publishes global teaching resources; and collaborates with educators from other countries (i.e., this article is the result of a joint effort made by one American and two Russian scholars).

Defining Global Education

The concept of global education has entered the public discourse, and, as with many concepts that become popular, it is very often misunderstood and misinterpreted. In some cases, it is treated as a synonym for “multicultural” and “cross-cultural” education. In other instances the term “global studies” is reduced to the study of the global environment. Global education is also treated as an antidote to ethnic, religious, and other manifestations of chauvinism or nationalism. It is an educational response to the turmoil created by ecological, social, demographic, and other troubles that “flesh is heir to.” In some cases it appears more like preaching than teaching. In fact, global education is all these and much more. It is education for the future that we are striving for, and education reform for the coming century requires a new type of mentality, which has succinctly been called “holistic.” In this respect global education should be seen as an approach that offers the learner a holistic picture of the world, the ability to see the world from different perspectives. So, the
words holistic and perspective are terms that have come to be associated with global education.

A holistic learner establishes numerous logical and associative ties, and is able to notice and examine a variety of ways in which the same phenomenon can be investigated. A holistic worldview helps to bring together things that at first sight seem to have no visible relationship to each other by employing integration, which is the bringing together of parts in a way that contributes to a better understanding of every constituent element and to a clear picture of the unity. This integrated perception of the world (in contrast to sharp division into isolated school subjects) teaches the schoolchild to see the world "holistically," where each phenomenon is a link in the chain of causes and effects, and from a fragment it is possible to restore the whole picture of the reality. Therefore, every course of the school curriculum must be designed on the principle of a "holistic image," where the whole is reflected in each part.

But this explanation does not present the whole truth about global education. A global education approach looks at the ever-changing, interrelated world as a kind of metasystem that consists of a number of overlapping systems. Knowledge is growing rapidly. Therefore its acquisition ought to be as efficient as possible, and efficiency also means integration, which is intrinsically systemic. To develop systemic thinking, which is essential to becoming an educated person, education itself should be presented as a system of goals, outcomes, and standards, and every task given to the student should reflect the characteristic features of the system.

To summarize the above, global education, which treats the world as a complex, ever-changing entity with its intensified problems and crises, can be defined as education, systemic by its nature, holistic in approach and structure, using integration as a strategic basis and modern pedagogical technology as a tool for imparting knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The aim is to create a person who:

- possesses a multiperspective and multidimensional vision of the world as a unity composed of interdependent factors, phenomena, and processes;
- applies critical and creative thinking in everyday life;
- is committed to and has the necessary skills for lifelong self-propelled learning;
- has a capacity for self-knowledge and self-adjustment;
- has a capacity for empathy and altruism, and tolerance and an appreciation for diversity in human viewpoints, beliefs, and customs;
- is prepared to challenge chauvinism in all its forms;
- has a sense of responsible citizenship, extending from his or her immediate community to the whole world; and
- is ready to make decisions and take actions after considering long-term consequences.
The above definition of global education has a multiperspective world vision for its pivot, and thus relies heavily on integration. But what kind of integrity do we mean? Is it integrity of vision of nature, society, and human personality? Is it integrity of education as a process of teaching, learning, and socialization? Is it integrity of school and university as social institutions? Or, is it the student's personal integrity as a criterion of and chief value of education? These questions lead us to acknowledge the diversity of integrity, which suggests how the principle of integration can achieve universal application.  

School-University Connections

Though this paper is devoted chiefly to school-university cooperation, we have reminded the reader of the key notions and principles operating in global education to outline the background against which the issue of school-university collaboration can be treated. We will address the social and academic aspects of integration in education, which sometimes blend into a functioning or unified whole.

Regarding the social aspect, it seems logical to assume that both the university and the school must be integrated into the life of the community as special institutions that carry out the functions prescribed by national and local needs and at the same time exercise an indirect influence on the formation of those needs. If global education is to be implemented, the efforts of the university and the school must be integrated since our educational systems still fall short of the ideals articulated in our definition above, and neither our school graduates nor our teachers are ready to meet the challenges of the ever-changing and interdependent world.

Too often, school graduates do not know how to learn on their own, cannot view the world from various perspectives, and do not know how to apply their knowledge to everyday problems. On the other hand, school teachers (and sometimes university instructors) fail to relate their academic disciplines to other spheres of human experience. They typically concentrate on isolated facts rather than on cause-effect connections. They impose rigid pedagogical forms in their teaching and promote an obsolete notion of "discipline" as unquestioned obedience. Knowledge that is not made personally relevant is soon forgotten. For example, when a controversial issue is being discussed, a social studies teacher will often say to his or her class: "You know the right answer, don't you? Come up with it!" rather than engage students in a constructive dialogue. Sometimes a teacher may have noble intentions but, instead of developing a global vision, imposes ready-made truths upon the learners by exhorting students with phrases like, "We must take care of nature," or "Friendship can't be bought." Students then learn to rattle off statements like these.
without being personally involved in the issues or fully comprehending their implications. In cases like this, the teacher means well but is constrained by the common problem that “one teaches the way one has been taught.” That is why university-school partnerships are so important.

In our school-university partnerships, we collaborate with schools in numerous activities that have been identified as essential to global education—developing integrated curricula and syllabi, teaching schoolchildren how to learn, infusing various academic subjects with global content, employing cooperative classroom strategies, and developing social skills. Furthermore, we continue to create teaching resources with strong global content for schoolchildren and staff development; to provide expertise (on-site teaching, lesson assessment, assessment of developed resources); to conduct research, publish and disseminate resources; and to help global educational institutions share experiences on a daily basis. Thus, the goals of our collaboration are varied and complex and require a serious commitment on the part of our school-based colleagues as well as ourselves.

**Integrating the Curriculum**

The mechanisms for curriculum integration work at any academic level. A preschool child might find similarities between folk tales of different nations or think up his or her own tale to explain how a rainbow or the Milky Way came to be called just so. A university undergraduate might infer subtle analogies between a chapter from William Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* and the structure of a fugue. What is more, these mechanisms may encourage different learning styles. For example, in a biology class, an analytically minded learner can have ample chances to discover the structural kinship between the classification of species and those of languages or chemical elements. A learner whose mind works in images and associations may be asked to draw a “family tree” of *homo sapiens* (portraits and all), proceeding from some primeval fish as a great-great-great-grandfather to species of apes as “cousins twice removed.” The underlying principle is basically the same through these examples: look for diversities in the similar and for similarities in the diverse; look for the strange in the familiar and for the familiar in the strange; view the world from different perspectives.

Naturally, this kind of integration does not happen spontaneously. It can be achieved in various ways by developing associative thinking, when a study of one phenomenon is facilitated by offering a task from a seemingly unrelated sphere. For instance, within the framework of the natural sciences, a student could be asked to correlate the laws of micro and macro worlds, of animate and inanimate nature, by explaining the following poetic images by Arseniy Tarkovsky:

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I am the man.
I am in the middle of the world.
Behind me are myriad infusoria, in front of me are myriad stars.
Between them I lay down full length—the sea connecting two shores,
A bridge uniting two cosmoses.

Another way to develop a holistic vision of the world is to rely on the
so-called “metaconcepts” that appear in various branches of knowledge in
equal measure without their essence being changed. On the contrary, they
are enriched by interdisciplinary connections. For instance, the metacon-
cept of “symmetry” is introduced to first graders in an art class. The stu-
dents discover the principle of symmetry by painting, at the teacher’s
suggestion, half a butterfly, folding the paper in two and pressing the wet
part of the sheet against the other. Then the teacher asks them to prove if
a human being has a symmetrical shape. Later on they will deal with the
metaconcept of symmetry in mathematics and chemistry, in biology and
social studies.

So how does a school-university partnership contribute to the devel-
opment of a more integrated or integrative curriculum? The answer to
this question lies in the forms in which our collaborative work occurs. It is
natural to assume that a teacher can best learn to employ the strategies of
developing holistic thinking if he or she has experienced integrative
instruction during preservice education. On the other hand, a preservice
teacher with no previous teaching experience may be less motivated to
infuse a global perspective into his or her subject than a school teacher.
The latter is aware of schoolchildren’s mental development, background
experience, and range of interests and needs, and can rely on support
from colleagues in a joint interdisciplinary global effort. The practicing
teacher can envision both the need for a global approach and the means to
achieve it. Therefore, another source of global-minded educators can be
found in inservice teacher training. In Russia this function is performed,
for the most part, by regional centers for the development of education
and, less frequently, by pedagogical universities. However, at RSPU, we
contribute to inservice global education in a number of ways that we will
describe here.

Inservice education has a more immediate effect than preservice edu-
cation because the instruction provided by experts can be applied imme-
diately to the school classroom. Moreover, inservice teacher training
ramifies through on-site workshops and training trainers. As a part of our
school collaboration efforts, prospective trainers, among the best and
most enthusiastic school teachers, are invited for week-long sessions four
times a year. When they return to their school sites, they convene semi-
nars and practical workshops for their colleagues and also give demon-
stration classes. During the four week-long sessions, the inservice students
(prospective trainers) have access to reference libraries, the Internet, and audio and video resources. They learn the methodology of distance education and learn how to use video materials, which include video-taped demonstration classes. All the necessary resources are disseminated for further use, as well as for analysis through e-mail, which provides needed feedback to participating teachers. This opportunity is of utmost importance for reaching remote rural areas. A rural teacher who has received this training can share his or her experience with less knowledgeable colleagues, who often find it difficult to leave their homes and their schools. The continued sharing of experience can be assisted by distance education technologies, which are slow in coming because of economic restrictions, but, nevertheless, are becoming increasingly popular among teachers and local administrators.

Preservice education has a more deferred pay-off by comparison, but it may have a deeper effect on the formation of the future teacher’s personality and professional development. Inservice courses are necessarily shorter, frequently provide little beyond basic necessities, and are less systematic than a well-thought-out university curriculum. They focus, for the most part, on instructional strategies rather than on academic proficiency or subject-matter knowledge. A preservice program ensures better equilibrium between the profession (teaching) and specialty (major academic discipline). The great advantage of preservice education, at least as we have it in Russia, is that a student is exposed from the very start to extensive, globally oriented instruction in the major discipline. This structure offers a unique opportunity to infuse daily training with a holistic perspective and give students a sense of initiation into the teaching profession. Pragmatic, discipline-centered skills are being formed in close association with interdisciplinary insights and an awareness of how to develop similar skills within a primary or secondary school classroom. Under these circumstances there is room for ample, unhurried, and thorough self-reflection and peer observation of how learning occurs.

Thus, globally focused education emerges as a result of a joint effort by the university and the center for teacher development, provided that there are mechanisms to insure feedback and cooperation. In Ryazan, we have developed a special agreement between the university and the local institute for teacher development, where university faculty are invited to give regular classes and to convene workshops for inservice teachers. This arrangement provides feedback to all participants, which is very meticulously analyzed and discussed in terms of teachers’ needs and problems. Similarly, university curricula for preservice students are also updated to suit the dynamic needs of teachers in the contemporary world.

This arrangement by no means places schools in the position of eager consumers of the crumbs of global wisdom. The relationship between schools and the above mentioned institutions is a give and take process. In
fact, holistic tendencies in Russian education are developing because scholarly research at universities and a grass-roots movement in schools are meeting half way. No doubt, our Russian pilot schools have benefited a great deal by their participation in international conferences and workshops for foreign and Russian experts in global education, and by attending seminars offered during the visits of experts to global schools across Russia. All these activities have made it possible to accumulate and disseminate the unique experience of each pilot school. Also, there has been a lot of sharing among schools. For example, the Center for Global Education is currently preparing for publication a collection of printed lesson plans developed by the pilot schools across Russia. Some of these schools, for example School 631 (St. Petersburg) and Schools 14 and 44 (Ryazan), have already published their own handbooks with global materials, curricula, and lesson plans. Additionally, schools offer videotaped lesson plans for dissemination and, when the opportunity arises, teachers visit other schools within the global network. Meanwhile, the efforts of the best school teams have stimulated educational research at universities. Many of the books we have published on global education owe a lot to classroom observation.7

Our observations of classrooms have helped us and our colleagues shape our vision of curriculum integration. They have confirmed the importance of interdisciplinary teams. They have demonstrated that global education was, among other things, a skill, that it could be practiced at some remove from the urgent problems of mankind in, for example, a class dealing with diminutive suffixes, one studying the structure of the molecule, or another dealing with the anatomy of an insect. Such an attitude toward integration was, actually, defined by William Blake when he spoke of “seeing the world in a grain of sand and eternity in an hour.” Classroom observations have also illustrated the danger of taking “global recipes” for granted. They prompted the idea of metaconcepts as one of the underlying principles of integration across content areas.

Our observations also suggested that teaching techniques stigmatized as “traditional” and “outdated” need not necessarily be hurriedly dispensed with. Tradition ceases to be stale if a hackneyed type of task can be filled with relevant meaning. For instance, in a language-teaching class, students are often asked to read a text (i.e., “An English Clerk Describes His Working Day”) and answer questions about it. This kind of exercise can be drab and monotonous if the questions are highly formal or formulaic (i.e., When does he get up? How does he get to the office?), but such an activity can be intellectually satisfying if the answers require reading “between the lines,” (i.e., Is the clerk happy or depressed by the monotony of his life? What values are of primary importance to him? Which of his values would you also subscribe to?). A similar task
(answering questions on a text) is often given in history classes. In this context teachers can create a holistic, discipline-oriented picture of the world if the questions make the students compare several historical events as causes and effects, draw analogies between events occurring in different historical periods, create a synchronous picture of events happening in one historical period in different countries, or imagine the mentality of the inhabitants of different regions during a specific historical period.

Russia's Global Network

The experience of Russian global schools has demonstrated that the transition to global education is a gradual process that can be successful only if a country-wide network of "global" institutions is established to take care of developing and disseminating the achievements in global education both in Russia and abroad. The global network that we have created is kept together by the Russian Center for Global Education, which was established in 1992 at Ryazan Pedagogical University. In the same year twelve schools from different regions of Russia expressed their commitment to embark on the path toward global education as pilot schools.

In 1996, more schools and higher educational institutions applied for admission to the network and were put on a waiting list. The demand necessitated a restructuring of the network and the organization of ten regional centers: St. Petersburg, North-Western region; Vladimir, Central Russia; Ryazan, Central Russia; Cheboksary, the Chuvash Republic; Rostov, the Southern Region; Sochi, North Caucasian Region; Volzhsk, the Volga Region; Barnaul, the Altai Region; Krasnoyarsk, Siberia; and Irkutsk, Siberia. The regional centers function as integrated partnerships and coordinate the endeavors of three or four educational institutions: the pedagogical university, pilot schools, and the center for inservice education. Each center has its own research priorities, proceeding from the strength of the pedagogical university and the needs of the region. The functions and responsibilities of each of the partners are very well summarized by Willard Kniep:

The National Center for Global Education

- provides the leadership in the development of global education in Russia;
- provides technical assistance to the regional centers;
- coordinates the activities and networking of the partnerships;
- organizes consultations and workshops for regional centers;
- publishes various materials on global education;
- maintains relationships with foreign partners; and
- acquaints the population of Russia with the philosophy and achievements of global education so as to win public support.
The Regional Centers:

A. Pedagogical universities
   • prepare global educators;
   • provide the site for the regional centers and coordinate activities within their region;
   • conduct research;
   • develop and translate globally infused teaching resources for university students, schoolchildren, and staff development;
   • provide expertise;
   • publish and disseminate the resources developed and translated;
   • help global institutions share experience on a daily basis; and
   • find funding sources to support the center.

B. Pilot schools
   • continue commitment to the principles of global education and the basic strategies underlying the Russian Global School Initiative;
   • serve as laboratories for further research, as demonstration centers, and as sites for practical training of inservice and preservice teachers; and
   • participate actively in a network for sharing materials, resources, and information.

C. Inservice education institutions:
   • organize and deliver inservice training courses;
   • promote global education throughout the region; and
   • cooperate with other partners in research, setting standards, assessment, publication, and dissemination.

Each center has its own research priorities proceeding from its respective needs and strengths (i.e., Chuvashia, Altai, and Dagestan focus on interethnic cultural contacts, Ryazan on teaching foreign languages with a global perspective, Vladimir on social studies). This kind of “specialization” makes it easier to form combined teams of university professors, teachers, and administrators, and also effectively channel international cooperation to global educators in Russia, the United States, and other countries. For instance, this year the Ryazan center is working with a local group of foreign language teachers on the methods of infusing foreign language classes with a global perspective. An on-site interactive workshop on curriculum integration in a foreign language class was convened by an assistant professor of RSPU at a global school in Volzhski, Volgograd Region. Last year we offered workshops to teachers of Russian on developing a linguistic picture of the world, and a team of professors has written a globally focused textbook of English for beginners.

The united efforts of partner institutions in meeting a common goal has resulted in integrating the preservice and inservice teacher education experience and specifying strategies for disseminating it across the country and abroad. Some of the strategies in preservice and inservice teacher education based on current practices in Russia are listed below.
A. Preservice Education Strategies

- Put together cross-departmental committees to develop content-based syllabi and interdisciplinary curricula to implement a global education program at the university (i.e., for an integrated course of astronomy and world culture, which relates astronomy to Greek and Roman mythology, to the history of research in the field since ancient times, to poetry of different epochs, etc.).

- Hold regular cross-departmental meetings of faculty to discuss the changes in curricula and syllabi. (For instance, student teachers from different departments who come to pilot school #44 benefit from observing a junior lecturer from the Division of Education teach an integrated course “Citizenship” and then use some of the teaching strategies in their respective disciplines.)

- Arrange student teaching and on-site teaching by university professors at pilot schools.

- Suggest special projects related to polling the community and assessing their needs and views on education.

- Teach preservice teachers how to integrate global education into standards, assessments, school syllabi and curricula, lesson assessment, and assessment of developed resources.

- Suggest topics for student research papers related to the problems of global schools.

- Give university students an opportunity to take distance education courses from other universities in Russia and abroad. (For example, two years ago ten graduate students in RSPU’s English Department took a psychology course from a professor at Indiana University - Bloomington).

- Give university students an opportunity to establish e-mail partnerships with students from other global schools and universities in Russia and abroad.

B. Inservice Education (Staff Development)

- Organize four-month university-based full-time courses for teachers to update their academic proficiency, teaching strategies, and overall vision of education. (These courses are taken by teachers approximately every five to six years. Their syllabi are reviewed and updated every two years. Thematically, they cover most of the urgent global issues—from protection of the environment to family planning, and strategically, they rely on teacher-learner cooperation and teaching how to learn.)

- Arrange four week-long sessions a year (lectures, seminars, practical workshops, simulation activities, access to reference libraries, the Internet, and audio and video resources) to provide input for non-stop implementation of global education in schools.

- Provide printed resources and video materials for session use.
• Develop criteria for preliminary assessment and polling to discover the learners’ needs.
• Develop criteria for step-by-step assessment to evaluate progress and to suggest individualized assignments.
• Develop criteria for the learners’ self-assessment.
• Develop a system of assignments for individuals between sessions to account for individual information gaps.
• Provide demonstration lessons by university professors at schools (on-site teaching).
• Visit global schools in teams comprising representatives of different centers to share experience, assess their progress, and offer workshops and technical assistance.
• Have school faculty participate in a class with lesson analysis as a follow up.
• Hold conferences (on the international, federal, or local level) with experts from different educational institutions (schools, universities, etc.).
• Organize combined teams to investigate educational issues, such as integrated syllabi and curricula, and student outcomes.

Conclusions

We are convinced that global education can serve as much more than a set of teaching strategies and can provide a mechanism for promoting comprehensive change in education. As noted by Anatoly Liferov, directly addressing problems of the organization and administration of the educational process, global education can come forward as a component of innovative management in education. With its help, we can resolve such important problems as:

• organizing strategies in education for the twenty-first century on various levels, i.e., on the levels of curricula and syllabi, which can either be globally infused or totally restructured; on the level of planning global and globally oriented classes; on the level of devising teaching materials to meet the needs of the twenty-first century. Some of these strategies are: using metaconcepts (conflict, algorithm, harmony, interdependence, economy, etc.) as cross-curricular tools of cognition; integration through universal intellectual skills (classification, generalization, analogy, etc.) and through communicative and collaborative skills (respectful argumentation, working together in a team, etc.), and bringing global issues into a discipline-focused classroom as a means of ensuring the student’s adaptability to the ever changing world.
• establishing new models for the pedagogue and the participant: mutual respect, encouragement of individual learning styles, project team work with an accent on personal responsibility, self-evaluation and peer evaluation, and authentic assessment.
...working out and applying new pedagogical relationships between the people involved in the educational process—teachers, learners, parents, scholars, administrators, and other responsible members of the community—and encouraging community participation in developing the mission and vision of the school, student participation in running the school, and school development as the result of shared decision making.

We believe that the above problems can be solved more effectively if modern pedagogical technologies such as distance education are viewed not as mere aids but as conceptual models based on the ideas of global education, which would make the transition toward education for the twenty-first century both practical and possible.

NOTES

1. By "course" here the authors are referring to what is commonly called a "program" in the United States.

2. Roland Case, "Integration in the Global Education Curriculum" (paper presented at the conference on Setting Educational Standards as a Basis for Curriculum Development, Ryazan, Russia, 1994).


6. Arseniy Alexandrovich Tarkovsky, Posrednie Mira [In the Middle of the World] (Moscow: Sovetsky Platon, 1969), 135.


