

IEPS Conference: February 22, 2008

Why are schools going global?

Educators understand that the world is a very different place than just 20 years ago, and students need different knowledge and skills to be successful.

- Get notion that the advantage within a global economy will be to those students that have the language skills and cultural knowledge that will enable communication
- Understand that work has changed and advantage to those students have experience and disposition to work with others from other cultures, face and virtual
- Understand that given advances in technology and trends like outsourcing, advantage to students who have nimbleness of mind, ability to frame novel problems, synthesize different perspectives as well as analyze into parts – these kind thinking skills are definitely part of what mean “global knowledge and skills”

Realize what doing now is not working, students not learning as much or as well – especially in light of accountability pressures – not getting test scores needed, so looking for another approach.

- This instance, international education may be one of several themes that district folk look at to add coherence and interest to the curriculum – to hopefully garner greater engagement of students.
- “School is boring” - especially in light of very interesting other ways of engaging information and conversation via technology outside of school.
- If can develop some kind of meaningful, exciting hook, can motivate students to put more effort into school work in general.

Market share. In districts where students and families have choice, international education becomes a way of attracting students to one school over another.

- Our schools in Manhattan, for example, kids citywide have choice and means to get there, so global focus is definitely a draw.
- MLC in Bloomfield, CT. Started in early 90’s as regional response to desegregation order, so founders believed in international but also saw it as way of drawing a highly diverse group of students together in compliance with court order.

Last two mentioned may or may not lead to really deep integration of international because may not have burning interest in international, rather something different to initially engage kids and keep them in the game over time. Other reasons that push toward deeper integration, quicker.

Pedagogical value. Understand how international studies can be a platform for teaching methods that are more engaging and ultimately more productive than didactic “sit and get” learning that dominates.

- Example, biochemistry. If want students to know something about nutritional and caloric value of foods, worse way is to lecture about it or have read in book. Better way is to have students do experiments where actually burn up different foods to understand caloric value. Even better way is to start with a different question, like why is there hunger in the world? And where in the world is hunger most prevalent and how is that related to the kinds and availability of foods in a region? In this example, there’s a reason for learning the science because it helps to comprehend a major world problem or a world problem they see in their own neighborhoods.
- Likewise American history. How much more interesting would it be to demonstrate what they know about the causes of American revolution if rather than filling in a bubble on a scan sheet in response to questions about facts, instead engaged in a real debate with students from England using Skype real time phone hook and where had to use function of Google that searches from British academic resources.
- Or using a world issue, historical or contemporary, to do interdisciplinary instruction -- tie science, social studies, literature together.
- More than a hook – an enabler of deeper content learning as well as learning about the world

Value as way of students gaining understanding of their own culture, its place and value in the world, way of empowering students to feel they have a rightful place on a global stage.

- Very interesting charter school on Indian reservation in New Mexico that uses students tribal culture and language as foundation for learning – who they are as product of past; uses as platform to examine how they are similar or different to other world cultures.
- School in Little Village community of Chicago that serves Mexican migrant community. Builds on awareness, appreciation of Mexican culture as platform for global studies.
- These kids and families really get why they need to be part of city’s effort to have students learn Mandarin because they understand from own experience power of having or not having the language skills needed to communicate.

Because of the kind and caliber of teachers and school leaders a global focus brings. When educators who’ve had international experience themselves hear about, come out of wood work to join.

- Mathis, TX. Chinese? 3 applicants
- NY: principal is refugee from Viet Nam
- Denver, Houston: principal in Peace Corps,

What prevents integration

Lack of know how

- Teachers lack of content knowledge. Usually means, can't teach what don't know. So solution is finding lots more ways especially in partnership with Universities to help teachers upgrade content knowledge.
- But another solution is for teachers to believe and to be allowed to at on belief that they don't need to know everything to be able to teach it, rather they can be co-learners with students, co-investigators into really interesting world cultures and world issues.
- Also, lack of knowing how to integrate international knowledge and skills within curriculum, especially when faced with need to address specific content standards. Need to be shown how to reframe a course, how to plan lessons and units that integrate international with content standards, and how to create assessments that enable to demonstrate standards knowledge and international knowledge. **Our work in ISSN and How to book**

Perception of the demands of state accountability tests

- Not on the test, don't have time nor support for anything else. More fear than reality. High stakes – have to give more and more of what we know how to do (even if hasn't worked) rather than change.
- Have to be able to see how international studies can be catalyst to more engaging teaching of very content and skills that will be on the test. Need very clear guidance on how to do that, over the shoulder coaching when try, and proof points with kids like theirs that the risk is worth taking. Evidence of success.

Standardization of education as response to standardized tests.

- View, enforced by uniformity in acceptable resources to use (e.g. textbooks), and pacing guides and periodic assessments that require everyone literally to be on same page at same time.
- Limitations on discretion to address problems. Literacy – read 180

Resources

- Would contend that there is huge amount can do within existing resource parameters, and resource constraints for international education are same as for good education in general.
- But are real needs, eg in offering language instruction for all, 24/7. Staff positions not always available – some Chinese teacher also teaches science.
- Travel
- Time for teachers, leaders to do the outreach, planning, etc.

Policy support and sanction

- **Note Conference**

Why make sense for university partner with individual school. How make the case that deep impact is more important

- Workshop theory simply falls short on several levels. First, teachers are looking for help they can use right away. If have to figure out how to use info in their classrooms, disincentive to something else use time on where that's more obvious.
- As noted, only handful of educators that are motivated by deep interest in international. More are in finding ways to get students deeply engaged in school. So international knowledge has to be part of the solution to their problems; has to be a force for better, stronger teaching. Doesn't happen from brief exposure to content, comes from deep work of collaboration.
- Partnering with individual schools provides opportunity to do the work of co-constructing the curriculum with teachers. On that, individual partnerships are ideal, but even "en mass", if focus was equally on content knowledge and how to integrate, would be of greater value.
- Requires view of teachers as bringing equal value to partnership, equally valuable skill in thinking about how to use info within their world.
- Make the case – ultimately have to show differential impact on student learning. Point to where universities have taken that approach, outcomes have been demonstrably better on accountability measures that matter to K-12 and on those that matter to colleges and universities.
- Own work, means developing a performance based assessment systems that allows students to show capacity to do college level work and to do work that shows global competence. Means thinking about what are the knowledge and skills that really matter in global environment and what does demonstration of competence in those areas look like?