



In an era of increasing global interconnectedness, preparing students for their future means providing them with an educational experience that cultivates knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to become globally competent adults. In *Educating for Global Competence*, Veronica Boix-Mansilla and Anthony Jackson define global competence as “the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance.”

A globally focused school provides students with opportunities to develop global competence across the curriculum. Students learn to understand the world through the disciplines of art, English language arts, history/social studies, mathematics, science, and world languages, and at the same time, strengthen their understanding of the core subjects in a global context.

The skills required for successful participation in the world—such as responsible citizenship, innovative entrepreneurship, and active leadership, among others—are not specific to any one subject. A globally focused school fosters the development of these skills through service learning, internships, field trips and other experiential projects, both during the school day and via afterschool and summer programs.

In order to be globally competent, students must not only learn about the world but also learn to embody global citizenship. A well-rounded global curriculum not only opens students’ eyes, but sets the stage for them to act in ways that are inspired by their course of study and driven by a desire to make a difference locally, regionally, and globally.

As students develop global competence they investigate the world, learn more about where people come from and how they live, and come back to reflect on their own lives with more honesty. Students learn to recognize different perspectives and communicate and defend ideas while realizing how and why others may think differently than they do.

Students then take what they’ve learned about themselves and the world and use it to take a leadership role in their own communities. This may involve starting local service projects, creating student clubs to raise funds or awareness, or educating others, through writing letters, volunteering time, creating artwork, using technology, and so on.

The various dimensions of global competence, including leadership skills and taking action, can and should be developed throughout the disciplines and through interdisciplinary projects rather than as a separate course of study. The seeds of action—identifying a local, regional or global issue, researching questions about its causes and possible solutions, and taking responsibility for personal action in response—may begin in one class, or in an afterschool program, and cross over into other aspects of student, school, or community life.

Students need to know they can have an impact, especially when studying large, complex, and often seemingly intractable global issues. Grounding the action in disciplinary and interdisciplinary study allows them to demonstrate their knowledge of the world and teaches them how to be part of a global community.