A World of Difference: Teaching Global Citizenship through Inquiry in a Rural Junior High School

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Abstract: Today's students need to be both globally and digitally literate as they use technology to work and interact with culturally and geographically diverse people. In addition, students need to understand critical literacy in order to counter hegemony in the world and interact with others in socially responsible ways. The mission of the chapter is (a.) to explain the logistics of how a rural junior high team learned critical, digital and global citizenship while conducting project-based learning on global hunger and (b.) to explain the successes and challenges teachers perceived when conducting the project-based learning on a global social justice topic in their rural context. The framework for this chapter builds upon cosmopolitan theory, Kerkhoff's (2017) Global Teaching Model, and Spires, Kerkhoff, & Paul's (2019) Project-Based Inquiry model to describe glocal teaching practices. Glocal combines the words local and global to signify that social justice education includes both local and global issues. The Global Teaching Model is made up of four dimensions: locally situated practice, integrated global inquiry, critical literacy instruction, and intercultural learning experiences. This model describes an array of teaching practices that promote critical, digital, and global citizenship.

Key Words: middle grades, global citizenship, global learning, global literacy, critical literacy, project-based learning

Technology-driven globalization has increased the connections people have with the world. Technology allows us to work and interact with culturally and geographically diverse people faster and easier than ever before. In the workplace, for example, multinational corporations increased 2633.3% from 1990 to 2009 (Gabel & Bruner, 2003; UNCTAD, 2009). But being career ready is only one part of the need for students to be digitally and globally literate. Our world is also interconnected environmentally, socially, and politically. Students need to understand that what they do affects people in other countries, and vice versa.   They need to be able to make positive decisions and fight injustices around the world.

In response, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE; 2018) has called for more global education, especially for students from under-resourced areas as many rural areas are, so that all students graduate globally competent. The U.S. DOE (2018) considers global competence as 21st century skills applied to the world, competence in at least two languages, and intercultural competence. This is not the only definition of global competence. The Asia Society and the OECD have the most widely used definition. Their definition of global competence includes being able to (a) communicate cross-culturally , which means being sensitive to cultural differences and knowing how to use synonyms and body language in conversations; (b) investigate socially significant local and global issues by using the affordances of technology; (c) appreciate diverse worldviews and be able to understand different perspectives; and (d) utilize knowledge of global systems to take sustainable action (Asia Society & OECD, 2018). See Figure 1 for their four dimensions of global competence.

Figure 1. Dimensions of global competence. Adapted from Asia Society & OECD. (2018).

In addition to the need for global competence because of increasing global interconnectedness, increased global migration has led to more diversity in local schools throughout the U.S. Based on the lasts census, the U.S. is home to a near record 12.9% foreign-born residents (US Census, 2011). Students need to be able to understand diverse perspectives and empathize with people who are fleeing their home countries looking for better lives in the U.S.

Increased global migration is impacting rural areas (Lavelly, 2018), even though rural schools traditionally enrolled fewer students for whom English is an additional language (EAL). For example, in Indiana where our research took place, the number of EAL students grew from 49,654 in 2010 to 60,793 in 2015 (McInerny, 2016), with the Hispanic ethnicity being the fastest growing in rural counties (Justis, 2011). These families bring with them their home culture while trying to integrate into American schools.

Two of the authors, Shea and Sharon, are sisters from rural Indiana, not far from the research site. The elementary school we attended was 100% white at the time; it was only when our school joined three other elementary schools to form the only junior/senior high in the county that we were able to go to school with students who identified as Hispanic. Our father was a seed corn farmer and employed migrant workers from Texas who would live on our farm in the summer. One family decided to stay in our community permanently, which was a typical story for our area and one reason our Hispanic population began to grow in the 1990s.

Our county is full of cornfields as far as the eye can see interspersed with century-old farmhouses and newer vinyl-sided homes spaced miles apart. While there is an amusement park nearby on a lake whose jingle is "there's more than corn in Indiana," the only thing that makes this claim accurate is that some corn farmers also raise cattle or hogs. Our high school was literally in the middle of a cornfield. Kids from other schools called us "hicks," and some of us took offense while others wore it as a badge of honor. There was poverty, and simultaneously there were families who passed down farmland from generation to generation and were very comfortable financially. In our school's parking lot, where we had to drive or take the bus because no one lived within walking distance, we would see Camaros, Mustangs, and shiny new

F-150 trucks parked alongside rusty farm trucks and a Volkswagen Beetle missing the floorboard. Our school's parking lot was full most of the time, with basketball fans or FFA events, both of which garnered the community's support.

Basketball and farming are the hallmarks of Indiana's rural communities; the other hallmark is church. Typically, churches in the rural communities are socially conservative, which means that the Bible is interpreted literally and that the laws of the country should be aligned with the teachings in the Bible. For example, excessive drinking of alcohol is considered a sin. Our county was primarily Catholic, and our school cafeteria and all fast food restaurants "in town" served fish sandwiches during Lent. In town refers to the nearest place that has a stop light and fast food restaurant, a 20-minute drive for most folks. However, our communities also have smaller towns with a post office, local bar, and several churches.

The research site includes two small towns four miles apart that create a rural community in Indiana. One town has the elementary school, bank, post office, library, funeral home, grocery store, gas station, a couple churches, and a few small stores and restaurants. The other town is home to the junior/senior high school with a community park, a gas station with convenience store, a bar, and three churches. Shea, the first author, was visiting the research site the day Trump was elected president and it was just another day, no tension, no tears, and no celebrations either. When Shea asked about the lack of discussion over the results, she was told that the community expected that Trump would win, so there was no surprise to them.

Every year, the school takes a field trip to Indianapolis to go to the zoo, a museum or theater performance, and for some students these trips are their only experiences outside of their home community. These trips provide a chance for students to be outside of their comfort

zones and observe different cultures than their own, for example past cultures through play performance and art from China. These experiences of art, music, and other presentations of intellectual pursuits are not always easily found in their hometowns. In addition to support of cultural experiences through field trips, a teacher on the junior high team began a Japanese culture club to share her experiences traveling to Japan and her love of Japanese culture with her students. While the other teachers in the team wondered whether the club would attract any student members, the club has been successful for several years. This club was the first instance outside of world language or social studies classes where students were able to explore global cultures.

On a broader scale, Indiana is one of several states that adopted policies to advance students' global readiness. Indiana University and the Indiana DOE collaborated to internationalize the Indiana state standards with global-themed lesson plans, enrichment for high ability, and adaptations for special education. Indiana also formed the Global Learning Advisory Council to encourage and empower teacher leaders throughout the state. Indiana University also implemented the Principals Academy to support administrators as they internationalize their K-12 schools through global teaching and learning.

Social Justice Theories Supporting Global Teaching

Global teaching theory can be based on social justice or neoliberalism (Andreotti, 2009). Theories that value diverse cultures and promote peace through dismantling oppressive systems and building more just futures are those that believe in global teaching as a way to promote social justice locally, nationally, and globally. Neoliberal theories may promote global teaching in order to produce globally competitive workers and to ensure national security. Since

neoliberalism is not in alignment with social justice, teachers need to be aware of inadvertently adopting the language of neoliberal theories and perpetuating dehumanizing rhetoric.

This chapter is informed by a specific social justice theory, the theory of critical cosmopolitanism. Critical cosmopolitanism is a theory from the field of philosophy whose aim is ethical and equal relationships across all cultures promoting the local and global not as binary but relational. Specifically, we use Kerkhoff's (2017a) Glocal Teaching Model for the project, which draws from critical cosmopolitanism.

Critical Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism may seem like a strange idea to use for rural work. Sometimes cosmopolitan is thought to mean metropolitan and the opposite of provincial. It's true that the word has different connotations and even the theory of *cosmopolitanism* is contested as it is used differently in various fields. As it stands, different definitions emphasize different aspects (i.e., political, ethical, moral, critical). But what all the definitions have in common is that cosmopolitanism means identifying as a global citizen. For the purpose of this chapter, Delanty's (2006) *critical cosmopolitanism* and Hansen's (2008) *educational cosmopolitanism* provided the theoretical foundation. Building on Delanty's and Hansen's work, Wahlström (2014) conceptualized critical educational cosmopolitanism. Teachers grounded in critical educational cosmopolitanism teach critical global citizenship, which uses inquiry to deconstruct systems of inequality (Andreotti, 2007; Delanty, 2012; Wright & Andreotti, 2012) and embraces ethics whereby people care for human lives whether those lives are local, national, or global in relation (Appiah, 2006; Nussbaum, 1996, Wahlström, 2014).

Critical educational cosmopolitanism helps students clarify who they are and who they want to become in relation to the world and helps them develop self-reflexivity – investigating oneself as affecting and being affected by society. Students critically inquire about their beliefs and values in order to develop cultural identities.

Today's students are growing up in a time marked by globalization, where culture is becoming increasingly homogenized. Cosmopolitanism promotes the continuation of local community structures and cultural traditions while also questioning, in a reflexive cycle, traditional ways of thinking that might inhibit positive new attitudes and identities useful to the contemporary life (Hansen, 2010). Appiah (2006) reconciles the tension of old and new by scrutinizing change for signs of coercion or hegemony. Economic or political coercion is not accepted in critical educational cosmopolitanism; however, communities are free to change as part of the normal progression of life. In this way, culture and identity are not viewed as static and museumified, but as dynamic and constantly renegotiated.

Hospitality refers to being open to new people and new ideas. Supporting students to develop hospitable outlooks is not easy. Gough (2014) describes the challenge for teachers: "The practical challenge is how to *perform* an ethics of inclusion rather than a politics of exclusion" (p. 90, emphasis original). Teachers have the challenge of balancing connections through common human experiences and cultural differences that make us special. At the same time, teachers must teach students about difference in a way that does not fetishize the exotic or oversimplify difference to stereotypes (Hansen, 2010; Gough, 2014; Merryfield, 2002). Especially during this time of increased nationalistic rhetoric, teachers can discuss with students the tensions in

loyalties to the local, the regional, the national, and the global but also the interconnectedness of the globe (Delanty, 2006; Gough, 2014; Hawkins, 2014).

The tension described earlier between resisting and accepting change can be viewed as an ethical question in education because blanket tolerance does not work in a classroom. Critical educational cosmopolitanism provides a normative ethical theoretical lens (Wahlström, 2014). In other words, the theory provides criteria for deciding what is right and wrong. While tolerance for differing beliefs is encouraged in cosmopolitanism, universal normative values are also encouraged (Appiah, 2006). Teachers do not have to tolerate all behaviors, but must look at behaviors through the lens of those practicing a specific custom before judging. Dialogue, listening, articulating, and respecting are valued in "critical tolerance" (Hanson, 2010a, p. 7). Intercultural dialogue gives students the opportunity to learn from first-hand accounts. These first-hand accounts can help students develop deep and complex understanding of different cultures, rather than superficial knowledge. Apple (2011) relates this idea to studying immigration:

> Superficial knowledge [of students' cultures] may not be much better than no knowledge at all. It may also paint a picture of parents and youth as passive 'victims' of global forces, rather than as people who are active agents continually struggling both in their original nations and regions and here in the United States to build a better life for themselves, their communities, and their children. (p. 223)

Teachers can help students engage in intercultural dialogue that moves them beyond U.S.-centric thinking and beyond stereotypes so that students can diplomatically interact with people

from all over the world. Intercultural dialogue can also help students listen to multiple perspectives and interrogate social inequities (Lantz & Davies, 2015).

As students engage in intercultural dialogue, they can learn from each other's perspectives. Through interactions with others, people hear new ways of thinking or new ways of doing. Hansen (2011) explains that teachers can give students experiences of "reflective openness to the new fused with reflective loyalty to the known" (p. 86). Cultures progress, but engaged citizens do not adopt change blindly. As students consider different perspectives and practices, they engage in critical analysis and reflexivity of their own culture as well as other cultures. Learning about different cultures gives students a place of critical distance from which to view culture from a meta-level and to construct new knowledge through interactional learning experiences (Wahlström, 2014).

With a critical cosmopolitan frame, teachers support students' perspective-taking, empathy, reflexivity, collaboration, problem-solving, and global citizenship. In summary, a critical global citizen utilizes critical inquiry into self and society, reflective loyalty to tradition and openness to the new, and intercultural dialogue for transactions of perspectives to create a more just social future.

Glocal Teaching

Glocal is a word formed by combining both local and global. Building on the idea in critical educational cosmopolitanism that identities are local and global, *glocal teaching* is locally situated and globally connected. The Global Teaching Model that frames this chapter is made up of four dimensions: locally situated practice, integrated global inquiry, critical literacy instruction, and intercultural learning experiences (Kerkhoff, 2017a; 2017b; Kerkhoff & Cloud, 2020).

Situated practice is the first dimension of the Global Teaching Model. Situated practice means that teachers make learning relevant to the local place and current time of instruction, and more importantly, to the students in the classroom and the surrounding community. Integrated global learning describes teaching for global readiness as integral to the curriculum. Rather than an add-on or one-off, teachers connect global learning with the standard course of study by using texts from all over the world. Third is the critical literacy instruction dimension. Freire and Macedo (1987) considers critical literacy reading the word and the world. Morrell (2005) describes critical literacy instruction as being "explicit about the role of language and literacy in conveying meaning and in promoting or disrupting existing power relations" (p. 313). The last dimension is intercultural experiences where students participate in intercultural dialogue steeped in equality. In intercultural learning experiences, students interact with others, sharing ideas and perspectives in a way that requires an equal give and take from both parties. Glocal teaching promotes equality in partnerships and engagement in collaborations that will be mutually beneficial. See Figure 2 for descriptions of specific teacher practices for each dimension.
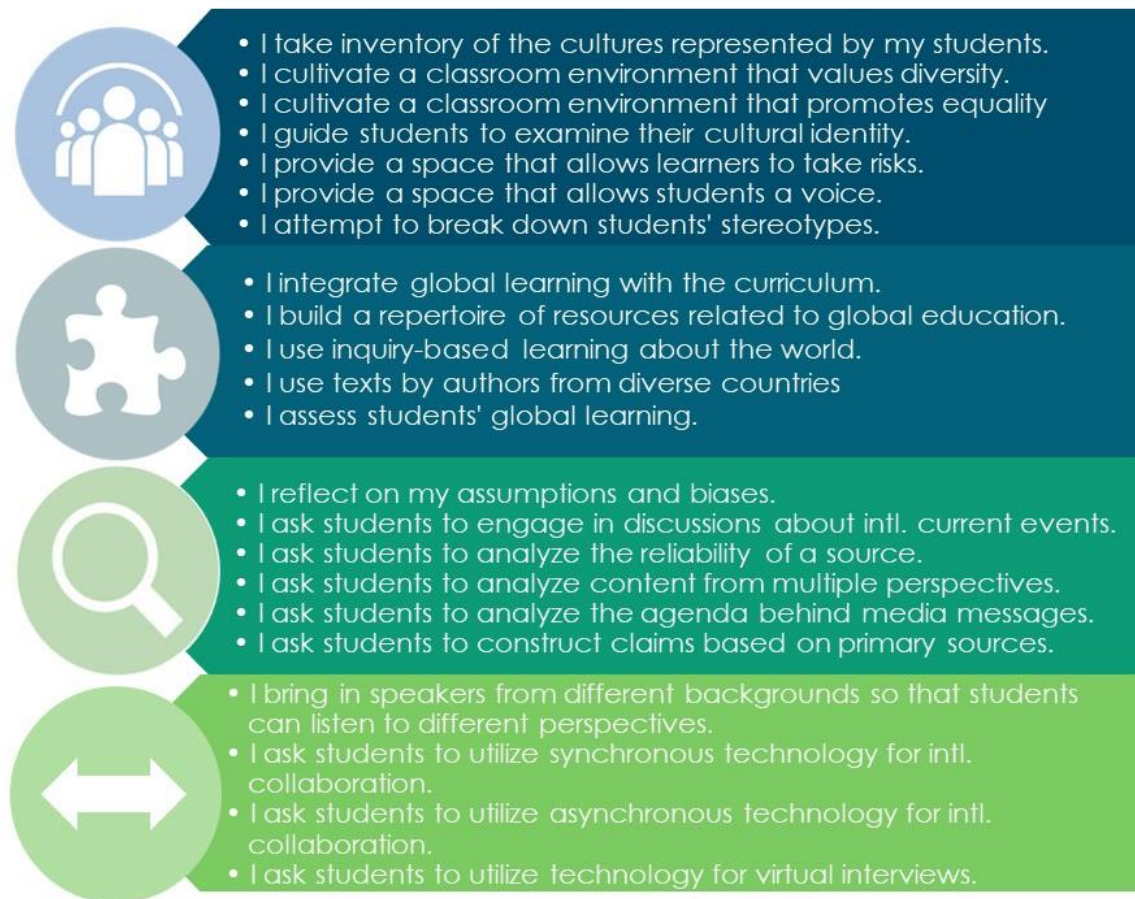
Figure 2. Situated, Integrated, Critical, and Intercultural teaching practices.

In addition, when diversity is valued, people can learn from each other and grow intellectually as well as possibly help the town to grow financially. For example, when Subaru opened a plant in a nearby town, the fact that the company was foreign caused a lot of anxiety and tension. However, the plant has proven to be a valuable job provider and a generous supporter of the community. If local people leave when people from other cultures move in, the communities may not grow because the total number of residents remains stagnate. If communities and the schools within those communities are going to grow, they need to be accepting of new cultures because the national trend is that the Hispanic population is going to

continue to increase in rural areas (Lavelly, 2018). Intercultural competence is not dependent on knowledge of a specific different culture, but a set of skills and dispositions that transfer from interactions with any culture that is different. So, while learning the Spanish language and Latino culture may be helpful to students in rural Indiana, it is not enough. Students also need to develop a cosmopolitan outlook and be hospitable to new people and new ideas as well as look critically at their own beliefs that may be based on assumptions or biases and not based on truth. They need to develop the attitudes and skills as well as the knowledge. In fact, according to intercultural development theory, the attitudes and skills are more important than knowledge of a particular culture because the attitude of hospitality and the skill of connecting across differences can transfer across cultures (Hammer, Bennet, & Wiseman, 2003).

Or if the rural population trend continues but rather than staying, the students who currently live in rural areas move to urban areas for jobs, they will need global competence to investigate their new locale and understand perspectives of people from backgrounds different from their own. For example, if a student decides to join the military or marries a spouse who is in the military, the student will have to live where stationed, which could include a different state or a different country.

Working on acceptance of difference across cultures might even help students in rural communities accept the differences within their culture and help them identify as a united community. When students study social justice issues on a global scale, such as global hunger, it positions their first world problems within the perspective of these global challenges. While all people rich and poor have struggles, some problems are minor in comparison to the poverty experienced by the majority of the world every day. Becoming aware of global issues can

broaden students' horizons and make students think beyond their immediate circumstances and surroundings, hopefully inspiring them into positive action for the benefit of others.

Without a global perspective our own problems can take over our thoughts, but when we see the resiliency of human beings we can be inspired. And we can gain a new perspective that focuses on significant life issues—happiness, love, family, laughter, joy—rather than materialistic pursuits. Focusing on what matters, and not on arbitrary differences such as what brand of jeans another student is wearing, can help instill a stronger sense of community in rural schools. A sense of belonging to a community is one of the strengths of living in Claremont, and this community can become even stronger by developing global competence. Although it may seem counterintuitive, learning about other cultures helps us develop a stronger sense of identity with our home cultures.

Sense of belonging to a rural community is not only important for rural students in the U.S. but also important for the social justice aspect of glocal teaching. Helping students develop their own cultural identity as a rural community can potentially foster development of solidarity with those around the world in rural communities who struggle to access resources. Based on solidarity, rather than based on getting a grade in school or based on pity for those with less resources than oneself, students can work with students in other countries to address global challenges of today, many of which are directly related to living in rural areas. Access to healthcare, internet, and transportation are common issues for rural communities around the world.

Methods

Research Context and Participants

This collective case study (Yin, 2009) included the teachers and students of Claremont Junior/Senior High, a small rural school in the Midwestern U.S. state of Indiana. The school was chosen as a research site because the administrators and teachers had prioritized inquiry-based learning and the junior high team self-selected to integrate social justice and global literacy with their project during the year of the research study.

Claremont Junior/Senior High is comprised of students from two small towns that consolidated to form the school district with one elementary and one secondary school. The population of one town is 1500 and the other is 500, with an additional 3,500 people living in the townships (in other words, in the country). Since admissions have been falling, there is talk of further consolidation with the county at large, which has created some anxiety within the community. The school population is 315 students, 115 of whom are junior high, 18 percent free and reduced-price lunch, 18 percent special education, and 0 English language learners. One student identified as Asian, 9 students identified as Hispanic, and 4 as multiracial. The community is primarily white, Christian, and politically conservative. Around half of the students' families are farmers, and agriculture is an important foundation of the community culture.

The junior high team of teachers in this study consisted of English, Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, and Special Education along with two paraprofessionals. The teachers team-taught both 7th and 8th grades. This was the junior high's second time doing large-scale, interdisciplinary project-based learning. All 115 students in the junior high classes were

randomly assigned to small groups of six, and then teachers modified groups as needed before informing students of their group members.

The Process of Glocal Teaching through PBI Global Design Features

The principal of Claremont Junior/Senior High was an advocate of project-based learning. He supported project-based learning because the student is the main focus rather than the teacher. The teacher helps to guide the students through their learning rather than dispensing information to students. His hope was that by incorporating more student-based learning, the students' would gain critical academic skills, such as organization, independently accessing information, and time management, while at the same time gaining citizenship skills, such as personal accountability, teamwork, and respect for others.

The junior high teachers hoped to broaden the horizons of their students by choosing a global theme for their first semester project. The teachers agreed to use a specific approach of project-based learning called Project-Based Inquiry (PBI) Global (Spires, Kerkhoff, & Paul, 2020; Spires, Paul, Himes, & Yuan, 2018). PBI Global provided a way for students to learn academic and citizenship skills applied to the world. In PBI Global students work in small groups to investigate global challenges and create original products showcasing their knowledge creation. PBI Global consists of five phases as displayed in Figure 3. Key characteristics of PBI Global include alignment to academic standards, topics of global significance, and communication of projects to a global audience (Spires, Kerkhoff, & Graham, 2016). In addition, the teachers took into consideration key design features of PBI Global that included: a) curriculum alignment, b) student autonomy, c) nature of collaboration, d) student products, and e) instructional supports

(Spires, Himes, Paul, & Kerkhoff, 2019). This section will describe the process teachers enacted

for each of the design features.

Figure 3. PBI Global process. Adapted from Spires, H. A, Kerkhoff, S. N., & Paul, C. M. (2020).
Read, write, inquire: Disciplinary literacy in grades 6-12. New York: Teachers College Press.

Curriculum Alignment. The Claremont junior high teachers wanted to find a topic that was

related to social justice, would increase students' global awareness, and aligned with the

standard course of study in the four academic disciplines their team was responsible for teaching

(i.e., English, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies). One teacher had recently returned from

a mission trip to Kenya and was excited to bring her experience into the classroom through the

project. She searched iEarn US (http://www.us.iearn.org/projects#global-projects) for ideas that

would allow the teachers in all four disciplines the opportunity to teach standards in conjunction

with the project. Global hunger was agreed upon by all five teachers as a topic that would align with standards.

The English standards chosen as learning targets included identifying reliable sources, backing up claims with relevant evidence, using technology to collaborate on and publish writing, and avoiding plagiarism by citing sources. Math standards included analyzing bias in statistics and perseverance in problem-solving. Science standards included posing and refining questions, synthesizing to make a judgment based on research, identifying possible solutions considering how people or the natural environment may limit solutions, and researching how humans have impacted their country's environment. Social studies standards included comparing international organizations that worked on hunger in their chosen country, describing how resource distribution can affect a country, and hypothesizing how globalization affects standard of living as they made connections about how their actions affected people in other countries (Indiana Department of Education, 2018).

Student Autonomy. To assign the PBI Global groups, the teachers utilized an online random generator tool. They then assessed the groups and made changes as they saw fit. The teachers chose the overarching topic of Global Hunger and then gave the groups the autonomy to choose which country they would research. Groups were assigned a country based on first come first served so that each group had a different country. Groups also wrote their own compelling questions to narrow their research in a way that interested them. For the final product, students were shown how to use Animoto and given Animoto accounts for their group, but were given autonomy to use a different software program if they desired.

Nature of Collaboration. The teachers were adamant that a major learning goal for the PBI Global was for students to become better collaborators and citizens. Throughout the PBI Global, teachers worked with students on diplomatic discussion. As part of their instruction on collaboration, teachers encouraged students to "compromise" and the rubric included "handles disagreements diplomatically." The full rubric can be found in Appendix A.

In order to scaffold the social and academic growth of the students, each group was assigned a coach. The coaches were the five team teachers, the team paraprofessionals, parents, and university students from Shea's education methods course. In addition to holding the groups accountable for the learning products (to be described in the next section), the coaches also helped the groups work as a team, set goals, and resolve conflicts. The coaches also collected self and peer evaluations on contributions to group discussions and helped keep the group on task.

Collaboration with communities outside of the classroom setting is also an integral part of PBI Global. After students presented, they were able to visit a local soup kitchen and a food pantry. At the soup kitchen hosted by a church, the director discussed how volunteers made homemade soup in large quantities and distributed the soup in plastic containers for local people in need to take home. The director of the local homeless shelter came to the school to share with the students statistics about their surrounding area, the cyclical nature of homelessness, and what the shelter's greatest need at the moment was, socks. The students also visited a food pantry and were taught what food stamps could and could not buy. This helped students to see how money can be helpful to organizations, sometimes more than in-kind donations, so that the organization could provide for people what food stamps couldn't

buy, such as laundry detergent. Students were given various tasks within the pantry. The tasks included sorting apples, organizing the refrigerator, making laundry detergent, and organizing a mass mailing. The students were also given various actions that they could take to help others. Each group of students created their own action plan to help local families in need, such as collecting sock donations for the shelter and collecting empty water bottles for laundry detergent distribution at the pantry. The water bottle collection became an ongoing service project because of this PBI Global.

   Student Products. Students created three learning products for PBI Global: annotated bibliographies, claims and evidence graphic organizers, and videos. For the annotated bibliography, teachers worked with students on critical and digital literacy skills, such as finding reputable sources by looking at .edu, .org, and .gov sites. The international nature of the topic meant that students had to learn how to find reputable sources outside of the US, by using .int and other indicators. Students began to read organization's mission statements on their websites to determine reliability and bias. Reading three to five sources for the bibliography provided the opportunity for students to look across texts, avoiding the singular text approach to global learning criticized by critical cosmopolitan scholars because one book cannot embody the lived experiences of a whole culture (Choo, 2014). The claims and evidence graphic organizer scaffolded students' construction of logical arguments, showing how each claim had to be backed up with evidence and at least one source. A student example can be found in Appendix B. For the culminating project, students created videos explaining their claims related to their compelling question and their suggestions for action to address the issues they researched. Students presented their videos during a Showcase, where they invited the administrators,

family, and community members to attend. In addition to showing the videos, students reflected on what they learned during the process about collaboration and global citizenship.

Instructional Supports. Teaching about social justice, global citizenship, and academic content from four disciplines increases the complexity of the project design in a way that requires greater supports embedded in the process for students. We think of instructional supports in three categories: pedagogical, technological, and evaluative. For pedagogical supports, the teachers created templates of student products and provided examples of previous products from the PBI Global website (pbi-global.com). The teachers also created Google Folders for each of their coaches and then Google Folders within each coach's folder to provide collaborative spaces for student research and writing. Teachers had presented mini-lessons on Google Suite earlier in the year and presented a tutorial on Animoto at the beginning of the project. For evaluative supports, students received rubrics for collaboration, for presentations, and for their video products at the beginning of the project, a calendar of end-products expected each week, and check-ins with their project coaches weekly, all of which helped set expectations and give feedback to students throughout the PBI Global process.

Findings

Three themes emerged from the data analysis: (a) creating student engagement requires intention and time, (b) revision encourages complexity of thought, and (c) social action is empowering.

Creating Student Engagement Requires Intention and Time

Previous research has demonstrated that project-based learning approaches typically increase student engagement (e.g., Boss & Krauss, 2007; Larmer, Ross, & Mergendoller, 2009).

We were surprised, however, that a major challenge within this project was lack of initial motivation and engagement on the part of the students. Teachers believed that the topic was "too global" and there was a lack of personal connection. They felt that students didn't see injustice in their lives and didn't see their lives as being globally connected now or in the future. Students did not begin the project being socially or globally conscious, and assigning the project didn't automatically make them so. As one teacher articulated:

> I think it [the topic of global hunger] was too far removed for that [engagement]. If it's not right in their local area, they have no concept of it. They're very sheltered in their little rural county box, and they just don't understand cultural differences.

She believed that PBI Global was an opportunity for students to get out of their culturally homogenous box and access cultural differences and therefore worth doing even though students were not immediately engaged. She continued, "It was completely outside their comfort zone, but then that's where learning occurs when you're outside your comfort zone."

A teacher trained in social studies stated that she would give the students experiences within their local community to help them connect what they were learning with the real world. When Shea had taught about social justice issues in urban schools, she didn't have to connect the issues to her students' world because her students saw injustice every day. They may not have had the language of social or global consciousness, but they had the real-world experience to draw from and found researching social justice issues highly motivating.

It's not that there wasn't hunger in Claremont, there was, but not for most students. After the PBI Global on world hunger, the teachers planned a field trip to the local food shelter where students spoke with volunteers about hunger in their community and helped stock the

warehouse with food donations. Upon reflection, teachers said that they should have done the local field trip first and then related the personal experience to the larger global issues. During discussions with the community leaders around local issues, the students learned about actions that they could take to make a difference. Teachers saw firsthand students who weren't always engaged in academic work become super engaged at the food pantry, especially students for whom hunger was an issue close to home. The topic may not have been "too global" in terms of geography, but rather too abstract in that the students weren't able to envision a way to make a difference. Because of that, it felt like any other school project rather than about enacting social justice.

The social studies teacher said she often used biographies to help students connect with others through universal human experiences: "I did a lot of teaching through personal experiences, biographies, things that make it personal, that gives you that human connection." She added that personal narratives or even fictional accounts in addition to researching nonfiction would help the students make the child-to-child connection in the future. In other instances of PBI Global, students have begun with a common read of a novel related to the topic and have been able to collaborate with students in other countries to help establish those human connections. Examples of these collaborations are available at pbi-global.com. While there may not always be organizations in rural communities that can be part of a school's project-based learning, there is always literature to act as a window that allows students to peek into other worlds and to see similarities across difference in a way that leads to building empathy. Empathy then provides the foundation for social justice.

During the interviews, three of the teachers wondered whether the duration of the project was part of the reason for a lack of engagement. Once a week over nine weeks may not have the intensity that students in middle grades need. The special education teacher believed that once a week caused the students to spend half of their work time trying to remember what they had finished last week, where they had saved it, and what their Animoto password was, which obviously caused a reduction in productivity but also resulted in frustration and lack of momentum. In addition, the teachers believed that nine weeks was too long of a duration for their students. The special education teacher said, "Nine weeks, that's a long time to stick with one thing." The English teacher stated:

> Going into it they were very excited but as time went on they got less invested. Part of that is their attention span. In junior high it's really hard to keep them focused on a long project for nine week, so I think if it were shorter and more intense, then they would have brought a lot more to it.

At other schools, we have worked on the PBI Global every day for two to three weeks, and that seems to be a better intensity and duration for middle school students. We also kept a master list of Google folders and Animoto usernames and passwords to help manage the project.

Teachers also reflected on student autonomy and wondered if increasing student autonomy throughout the process would help engagement with global issues of social justice in the future. The math teacher stated, "Having students create compelling questions helped make it their question, their choice, their project." She continued by saying that since this first PBI, they have used the grouping method of letting students choose one partner and then randomizing the partners to create groups of three dyads. Allowing students to choose one

partner gave the students more autonomy while still providing the opportunity to work with new people. Allowing students to use the software of choice worked well for autonomy purposes, however, we did run into a problem when a group chose to use a different software. The person whose account they were using was absent for two weeks and didn't want to share her personal account password with her team members, understandably, so the group couldn't work on the video for those two weeks. This could be avoided by having the team create a group account and sharing the password with everyone if using a different software program.

Revision Encourages Complexity of Thought

One of the greatest times for learning in the PBI Global process was during revision. As the special education teacher stated, "There was growth, especially by having them go back and fix it and redo it." While critically evaluate and revise is the fourth phase of the process, the phases are iterative, meaning that revision can happen during or after any phase. For example, after students drafted a compelling question, they received feedback from their peers. Each group posted their question on a Padlet shown in Figure 4. In a whole group session, groups read their question aloud and others provided feedback as to whether or not the question met the criteria of being compelling. Groups then revised their questions based on the feedback. The Fiji group originally posted this as their question: *What causes hunger in Fiji and what can they do about it?* One student responded that the question needed to be more specific so that it would be more researchable, and a teacher added that the word "they" in the question was one place the group could begin to be more specific. They revised their question to *What can Fiji's government do about children's hunger in their country?*
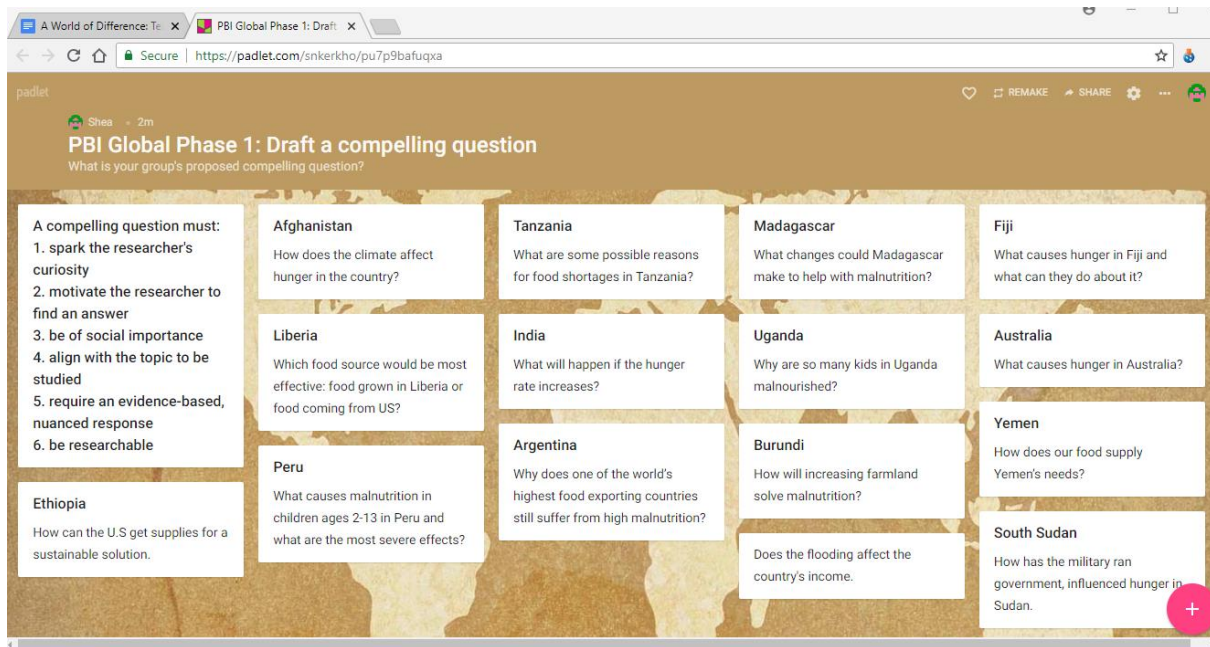
Figure 4. Screenshot of groups' initial compelling questions for peer feedback.

The requirement to revise also provided an opportunity for groups to consider more perspectives. Within one of the groups, a coach perceived that one student was doing the majority of the work. The coach asked the students to revise the claims by not only synthesizing multiple sources but also synthesizing the multiple perspectives of the students in the group. This added an extra layer of complexity for the group. One teacher reported "I had some kids who definitely improved their communication skills and compromised, I really watched them grow. Working with groups was a great learning experience for them."

During the interviews, teachers said that since this first PBI Global, the team has focused even more on students' reflections on learning during the presentations. The science teacher commented that the presentations were a place where students could think about their citizenship growth. She felt that the PBI Global process helped students learn to "think about all

sides of the story to make informed decisions and use that to guide their reasoning and their opinions." She perceived the presentations as a time for students to explicitly relate what they learned in the school setting to the real world. One teacher believed that using the PBI Global process gave students "a chance to actually think about their own thinking instead of just giving them information." Overall, the teachers felt that the PBI Global pedagogical supports of revision, self-evaluation, peer-evaluation, and reflection gave the students a more complex learning experience by integrating social justice, citizenship, global awareness, and interdisciplinary content learning.

Social Action is Empowering

After learning about sustainability in social studies class, students were able to add a layer of complexity to their projects by critically evaluating the solutions they had come up with and realizing that there is no simple answer to questions of social justice, such as hunger. Rather than presenting "solutions" that another country should implement, many groups decided to present "suggestions" for how their peers could contribute to addressing the problem of hunger in their chosen country. Presenting solutions as an outsider can go against social justice aims, and rather than being supportive can be perceived as patronizing, reinforce global political hierarchies. Supporting students to see that global systems are complex and that no easy answers exist helps them develop empathy rather than pity for people in developing countries. In addition, finding international organizations that are already doing culturally sustaining social justice and supporting those organizations is something that students could do and enact immediately. For example, the Peru group had originally decided that to solve the problem of hunger in Peru, farmers in the U.S. should be forced to give 10 percent of their corn to Peru.

Their coach asked a probing question: "How would that help the communities in Peru suffering from hunger become sustainable communities?" The students had discovered during research that Peru raises corn themselves, so they realized, among other issues, that the U.S. giving corn does not help the community become more sustainable, since the corn is only for consumption not for seed. Giving more corn also does not address the specific challenge of Peru's context, since quantity of food is not the issue in their country. The coach encouraged the team to go back to their research and talk through the specific challenges in Peru.

As the group dug deeper, they remembered that the issue in Peru wasn't hunger per se but malnutrition because people did not have enough protein to eat. One student's family had chickens, and he had been in charge of the laying hens that summer. He eventually came to the conclusion that eggs are the cheapest and easiest form of protein to produce. Providing chickens would address the issue of protein and also would be a more sustainable form of agriculture than corn; the hens would provide eggs for immediate protein as well as eggs that could turn into chickens for future protein sources. Their coach prompted them to research international organizations that provided laying hens to under-resourced communities and research criticisms of the organization to determine if they felt the organization was credible and if there were any unintended consequences of providing laying hens to a community.

The best part of their new thinking was that they discovered that through Heifer International, a well-respected international organization, they could provide laying hens to a family for $20, an amount each of the team members felt they could raise or had earned during the summer. By the end of the nine weeks, the group had completed each of the phases of PBI Global, including "act," arguably the most important word on the diagram. One teacher

observed, "When teaching social justice, if we can get students to open their minds to a different perspective, that's great, but when we can get students to do something based on their new knowledge, that's empowering." In the Peru group case it was empowering for the middle school students from a rural school, one of whom had worked on a chicken farm to earn the money, and the families across the globe that received chickens. Once the group saw that there was something that they could do that would make a difference in another country, their eyes lit up and that aha moment that we all hope for as teachers happened for these students. They saw that they were global citizens, that they could make a difference in someone's life across the world, and that they were part of something bigger than they had conceived of previously.

At the very end of the project, a special visitor from an African country added to the richness of the learning experience. A pastor and farmer from Kenya, who provides clean water and food for schools in his community, was visiting the teacher who had traveled to Kenya the year before and came to Claremont to speak with the students. One point that stood out to the students was the difference in the materials that he has in his school. "I can't believe they do not have school supplies like we do," one student stated. The students were shocked that his 10 computers for 600 students was more advanced than the surrounding schools, even though they had read about poverty through internet research. After personally hearing his story, the students were eager to raise funds to purchase chickens to help provide a source of protein for the students at his schools. The English teacher said it best, "We want them to act. That is what makes PBI truly meaningful, that last stage."

Conclusion

Educating for social justice in rural communities comes with its own challenges, as the teachers at Claremont Junior/Senior High acknowledged. However, over time and with a team of committed educators, challenges give way to breakthroughs as teachers provide students experiences of "reflective openness to the new fused with reflective loyalty to the known" (Hansen, 2011, p. 86). Since the time of this project, students have also completed a PBI Global on homelessness, conducted service projects in their local communities, and raised money for chickens in other countries. The students have asked to continue these service projects this school year, showing a commitment to the social justice aspect that is above and beyond an academic grade. In the end, to see students becoming agents of change as they take social action within their own communities as well as communities around the world is worth the time and intention teachers must devote to a successful instructional process.

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Appendix A: Collaboration Rubric

	6	7	8	9-10
Personal Accountability	• Does not always take responsibility for own actions; often blames others instead of owning up to mistakes and missed work. Stays on task with many reminders. • Comes to class unprepared, needs direction and prodding to get help; does not follow up on work that is not completed. • Resists constructive feedback, makes few or minor adjustments. • Refuses to complete work not specifically assigned.	• Takes responsibility for actions and work, but sometimes can blame others for mistakes and missed work. Needs some reminding to complete tasks. • Comes to class ready to work most of the time; follows up on work from absences with prompting. • Makes some adjustments based on feedback. Accepts feedback when offered. • With prompting completes work within his/her responsibilities to benefit team.	• Takes responsibility for one's self and actions; is accountable for work produced. Completes tasks without reminders. • Comes to class ready to work and follows through on tasks; including completing work while absent. • Asks group members for constructive feedback and makes adjustment based on feedback. • Seeks opportunities within his/her responsibilities to benefit the team.	•Takes responsibility for one's self and actions, is accountable for work produced AND fosters a sense of responsibility in group members •Comes to class ready to work and ensures group members are as well. When absent, completes work and communicates with group members. •Seeks multiple sources of constructive feedback, uses it to make adjustments, and encourages others while giving feedback. •Seeks out challenging or innovative opportunities outside his/her responsibilities to benefit team.
Team Operations	• Gives limited feedback without suggestions for improvement. May mistake criticism for feedback. • Group communication often negative and/or off topic. Or group members are not sharing progress or concerns regularly. • Group contract is incomplete or does not address how to resolve issues. Or contract is not used.	• Gives superficial or opinion based feedback with limited suggestions for improvement. • Group communication is fair, but not always on topic; often are polite and respectful. • Group contract may not adequately address how to resolve issues; some attempt is made to manage disagreements.	• Gives meaningful feedback (specific, feasible, supportive, factual); offers suggestions for improvement. • Group communication is positive, appropriate, on topic, polite, and respectful of each other. • Group contract is used to resolve issues; disagreements are handled appropriately.	•Gives consistent and meaningful feedback and shares knowledge without talking down to group. •Group communicates seamlessly and focuses on what has to be done over who is responsible for it. •Uses group contract to resolve issues without teacher involvement; disagreements are handled diplomatically.
Time and Task Management	• One or two students do most of the work, with other students engaged. • Information is not easily accessed. Group needs constant intervention from teacher to find information. • Technology use is distracting or not well thought out. • Daily task lists not utilized. Group needs reminders to stay on task.	• Group work is slightly imbalanced. • Struggles to access information quickly and/or accurately. • Technology choices may be too limited or detract from goals. • Daily task list is vague or missing parts and students may need reminders to stay on task.	• Divides work evenly among team members. • Accesses info in a timely manner. • Uses technology in an efficient manner. • Creates and uses a daily prioritized task list including approximate times, who's responsible etc.	•Divides work evenly and engages throughout the project without being reminded. •Accesses information independently and efficiently. •Chooses technology that streamlines project workflow. •Uses and adapts prioritized daily task list.

Respect for Self, Others, and School	● May interrupt others or be reluctant to engage in conversations. Makes others feel uncomfortable or excluded. ● Puts down others ideas or refuses to let others speak. ● Leaves work areas messy. Common materials are not returned, chairs not pushed in.	● Is mostly polite and kind, but struggles to keep cool during disagreements or jokes around too much during work time. ● Listens to the ideas of others, but does not incorporate them into the work. ● Cleans up own messes, but does not help to ensure care is taken of all group space and materials.	● Is polite and kind to others even when disagreeing. Addresses team members by name. ● Listens thoughtfully to ideas from others and incorporates them into the work. ● Takes responsibility for materials and space used and cleans up at the end of class even if not directly responsible.	●Goes above and beyond to make sure everyone feels welcome and valued in the group. ●Elicits new ideas, incorporates them and encourages others who are less outspoken. ●After cleaning own workspace, helps others ensure other spaces and materials are left clean and orderly.

Appendix B: Claims and Evidences Graphic Organizer

PBI Global Claims and Evidences Graphic Organizer

Team Members: Miles, Harper, May, Steven, and Toni
Country: Sudan
PBI Global Coach: Ms. Babcock

Compelling Question:
How has the military run government influenced hunger in Sudan?

Claim #1:	Claim #2:	Claim #3:
Political conflict has caused massive displacement, raging violence, and food shortages.	They have put martial law into effect, where the military runs nearly everything. Thus creating a more violent punishment and more fear. If people fear and the government is fierce, then the government can lead to poverty in the country.	The government has put farmers in a no-win situation.

Supporting Evidence:	Supporting Evidence:	Supporting Evidence:
According to the Mercy Corps website, Sudan gained independence, but the military ran government is fighting to make themselves the government again. This has caused raging violence. Also, according to the Mercy Corps, political conflict has caused 1 in 5 people living in Sudan to be homeless or living on the streets. Political conflicts have caused damaged markets and have disrupted planting, causing families to not have food to survive.	In Sudan martial law was put into place on December 17, 2004. Martial law is when the military runs the government, and military roams the streets and not the police. The military is more brutal than the police, which was needed in Sudan. In Sudan there is crime, like drugs and murder, and the government feared along with the president (Omar al-Bashir) so they put the military in control. This information was all on Sudan Tribune.	The government has shielded farmers from supply and demand. One reason is cultural. Farmers thought the "Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1996" would give them freedom but it really just gave them the same to produce but less profit. The Freedom of Farm Act was supposed revise and simplify direct payment programs for crops. Several farmers said that planting modified plants increased their income because and fewer losses to pests and diseases. The farmers are in a no-win situation because they aren't getting paid enough for the amount of crops they are producing.

Explanatory Reasoning:	Explanatory Reasoning:	Explanatory Reasoning:
The explanatory reasoning of the evidence above is, the government is ran by the military which many people didn't like and are fighting against. Due to the fighting and many violent outbursts it has caused many people to be homeless, poor, and has left the country in devastating stages of poverty. An example of this is 1 in 5 people in Sudan have been left homeless, or displaced from their family. The war between the people and the government has head to the land to get destroyed which has also lead to farmland getting destroyed, which has left many people hungry, which leads to poverty because of less country	The explanatory reasoning is the military ran government has caused many issues. When martial law is put into place the government owns the streets not thugs or cops. The military is worse than police. The military is fearless, the military will give more severe punishment instead of giving out normal punishment. For example if you get caught with a crime like murder, the military will most likely beat you to death, or just shoot you where you are.	The government affects hunger in Sudan in many ways. One way is that if farmers can't produce the food they need, they won't have enough to feed everybody because the government doesn't pay them enough for the crops they produce. Also, farmers income is decreasing and to get the money they need they need to plant a lot more crops which takes up a lot more room. Now, arrangements are being made for both the land and resources to be split between the federal and state government.

Citation/s:	Citation/s:	Citation/s:
https://www.mercycorps.org/articles/south-sudan/quick-facts-what-you-need-know-about-south-sudan-crisis http://archive.unu.edu/unupress/unupbooks/uu22we/uu22we0j.htm http://www.enoughproject.org/conflicts/sudans/conflicts-south-sudan	http://www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article7062 https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Sudan/Government-and-society http://www.matthewaid.com/post/70285032347/south-sudan-under-martial-law-as-army-hunts-for	http://bioscience.oxfordjournals.org/content/52/6/523.short http://www.fao.org/ag/agp/agpc/doc/counprof/sudan/sudan.htm