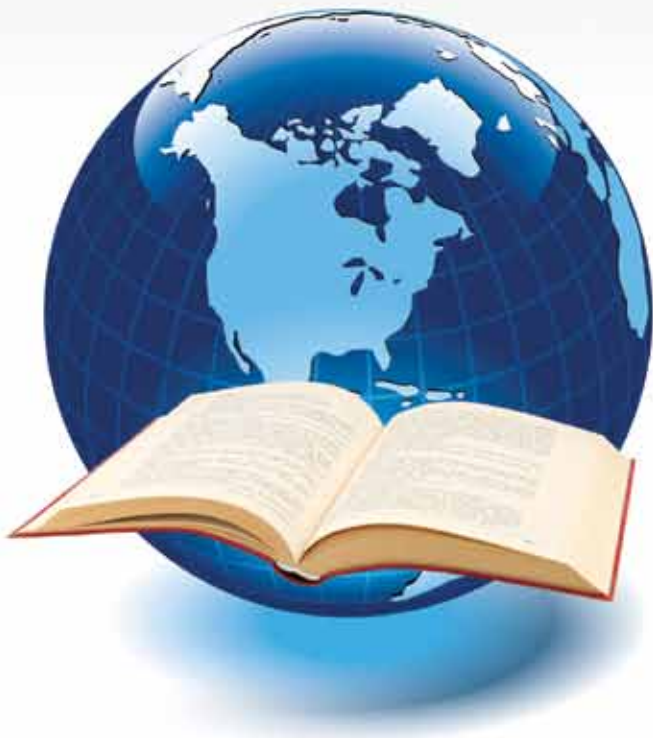


# THINKING GLOBALLY WHEN TEACHING LOCALLY

by Ruth E. Van Reken  
and Sally Rushmore

Global awareness and intercultural competence are “must-have” qualities for teachers in today’s classrooms.



Advances in science and technology, globalization of trade, international competition for markets, ethnic conflicts, and the limits of the planet’s ecosystem have brought global issues and the people of the world to our doorsteps and classrooms. With the increasing interaction among peoples of the world, skills in cross-cultural communication, intercultural competence, and the need for knowledge and understanding of people of other cultures have become critical to survival (Merryfield 1994). Global awareness and education based on global understanding are quickly becoming necessities for today’s educator.

Kappa Delta Pi has taken a major step in helping its members develop global awareness by partnering with EF Educational Tours to send teacher-education students to countries throughout the world. EF Tours generously awarded all-expense-paid scholarships exclusively to KDP members following a rigorous application process. Among the goals of the EF Tours Global Awareness Adventure Scholarship were to make an impact on the recipients’ lives and the lives of their future students, schools, and communities, and to promote global awareness and thinking. Scholarship recipient Jessica Delaney confirmed that these goals were met; she shared, “this experience also helps students understand and embrace cultural diversity present within the United States.” Kim-Thoa Nguyen concurred, “International travel promotes global awareness and encourages the exchange of ideas and knowledge between peoples and nations.”

By sending teacher-education students to Ireland, Italy, Spain, England, France, Egypt, Austria, Greece, Costa Rica, Peru, Japan, China, or Australia, EF Tours opened the eyes and minds of future teachers, enabling them to realize that each person sees the world through the lens of his or her history, culture, and experiences. As Kara Miller explained, “This trip allowed me to step outside of my own backyard and gain a new sense of the world in general. Not only did I learn about the Australian culture, but I also learned even more about the American culture from the views of others.” In the words of Ashley Savola, who traveled to London and Paris, “I realized that no matter how many pictures you look at, how much research you do, or how many books you read, nothing can fully prepare you for the experience of spending time in a different culture.”

## Gaining Global Awareness

Global awareness was first defined by Robert Hanvey (1982), who explained five dimensions in which students need to be prepared in order to develop cross-cultural skills and attitudes which are essential for functioning in the world of today and the world of the future. His five

dimensions are perspective consciousness, state-of-the-planet awareness, cross-cultural awareness, knowledge of global dynamics, and awareness of human choices. These dimensions are difficult to foster in a classroom if the teacher has had no cross-cultural experience. However, experiences like those of the KDP scholarship recipients naturally lead to ideas for creating a global atmosphere for their students.

In the classroom, such a global atmosphere is welcoming to each student and encourages students to share their backgrounds and to learn about others. It broadens the perspective of students and piques their interest in new people and places while adding the dimension of life experiences to the usual curriculum of facts and ideas. Without the global atmosphere and the attitudes engendered by that openness, the cultural diversity seen in today's classroom can lead to confusion and strife among the students. Global awareness and a global atmosphere help to bring multicultural understanding and appreciation, and prepare students to meet the demands of tomorrow's world.

### *Perspective Consciousness*

Perspective consciousness is the perspective of each individual person and his or her awareness of and appreciation for the worldview that individual has as well as the worldview of others that person encounters. It helps an individual understand that a person's worldview is not universally shared. A worldview is created from a complex puzzle of conscious and subconscious opinions, ideas, evaluations, and conceptions, which are shaped by the ethnicity, religions, differences in ages and sexes, and even social status of the person. A person's worldview also is shaped by that individual's perception of his or her relations to others, both those who are similar to that individual and different from him or her, in each place the person has lived (Burnouf 2004). Allison Zolad "learned a lot about the perspectives of others who had an entirely different view than Americans" because she took advan-

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**Sally Rushmore** is a writer and educator with a special interest in global education. She is a certified teacher of English as a Second Language and has taught at every grade level including higher education. Her professional writing has a wide audience.

## EF Tours Global Awareness Adventure Scholarship Recipients

Thanks to the generosity of EF Tours, the following KDP members were able to have a global awareness experience.

Michelle Caffrey  
Westfield State College  
Destination: Egypt

Julia Cook  
University of Indianapolis  
Destination: China

Daniel Dalton  
Purdue University  
Destination: Peru

Jessica Delaney  
Morningside College  
Destination: Italy and Greece

Lindsey Hohner  
The College of Saint Elizabeth  
Destination: Australia

Kelly Suzanne Howard  
Bellarmine University  
Destination: Italy

Katie Kaufman  
Linfield College  
Destination: Greece

Alicia Krogstrand  
University of Nebraska at Omaha  
Destination: Italy and Greece

Bridget Leigh Maher  
The University of Michigan at Ann Arbor  
Destination: China

Ellie Miller  
University of Indianapolis  
Destination: Ireland

Kara Miller  
McDaniel College  
Destination: Australia

Kim-Thoa Nguyen  
University of St. Thomas  
Destination: Japan

Joy Oguntimein  
DePauw University  
Destination: Costa Rica

Alison Riegel  
University of North Carolina at Greensboro  
Destination: Italy and Greece

Ashley Savola  
Westfield State College  
Destination: England and France

Sandra Stern  
St. Edward's University  
Destination: Greece

Eric Tourtlotte  
McDaniel College  
Destination: Spain

Alicia Whitaker  
Ouachita Baptist University  
Destination: Austria, Italy, and France

Allison Zolad  
Michigan State University  
Destination: England, France, and Italy



ALISON RIEGEL standing by the Senate building in Italy's ancient Roman Forum.

tage of her visits to London and Paris to spend time with locals. On her trip to China, Bridget Maher "gained a more in-depth and dynamic perspective of China and the Chinese people," so she now feels "much more unbiased in my understanding of the East."

One must become aware of and understand his or her own perspective consciousness before being able to appreciate the perspectives of others. Bridget Maher felt that her trip was an "incredible way to learn about myself." Julia Cook, another student who traveled to China, discovered that "Americans, being so isolated from much of the world, forget that our way is not the only way." She learned that "any time you step outside of your comfort zone, you discover a little bit more of who you are." As a result, she will be much more aware of her students' needs and "foster a sense of compassion and understanding for the many different practices and customs that exist beyond our own culture." She

now realizes that "many students enter U.S. schools every day that . . . practice different customs at home," and they need someone to "glimpse what their worries in a new place might be."

### *State-of-the-Planet Awareness*

State-of-the-planet awareness encompasses an in-depth understanding of global issues such as population growth, migrations, economic disparities, depletion of resources, and international conflicts (Burnouf 2004). Joy Oguntimein returned to the United States from Costa Rica with a desire to teach her students about "the struggles their foreign and domestic peers face, such as hunger, homelessness, and starvation and instill in them (or plant the seeds) a desire for helping out." Children need to be made aware that what affects the world affects them as well.

While in Australia, Lindsey Hohner realized "how environmentally aware other countries are compared to the United States."



DANIEL DALTON at the "guard house" overlooking the ruins at Machu Picchu in Peru.



ALLISON ZOLAD in England standing in front of Stonehenge.



She was amazed at the various healthy habits she found in Australia to protect our world. As a result, she wants to “try harder to bring the issues in America to the forefront.” She also found Australians to be much more globally aware on a daily basis than Americans. She found that every broadcast had news from around the world as well as local news. “I learned about the daily happenings with the recent election at home while traveling abroad, and I also saw the updates of event happenings in European countries right from my hotel room.”

### *Cross-Cultural Awareness*

Cross-cultural awareness, though sometimes seen as stereotyping, refers to the diversity of ideas and practices in human societies and how they com-

pare (Burnouf 2004). Kelly Howard related that at the school where she now teaches, many different cultures and differences can be “seen every day while walking through the halls. Oftentimes, students are ridiculed for their differences.” She hopes her trip will help her “model for students that culture and differences should be celebrated, both in and out of the classroom.”

By visiting Ireland, Ellen Miller gained a “better understanding of differences between cultures,” and her cultural awareness likely will affect her daily activities in the classroom. Daniel Dalton’s trip to Peru “helped to give him an understanding of the cultural differences as well as universals that exist within societies

that developed following European colonialism.” He wants to convey to his students how “Spain’s influence can be seen in the architecture, food, language, educational system, etc.; but at the same time the native influence in Peru continues to exist in the cultural traditions of the country in contrast to the U.S., which has lost much of the native culture.”

Cross-cultural awareness also includes some recognition of how the ideas and ways of one’s own society might be viewed through the eyes of others (Merryfield 1994). Joy Oguntimein envisions “an international week celebration at my future school” as a springboard for teaching her students “about the similarities between children from other countries and them.”

### *Knowledge of Global Dynamics*

Students who have knowledge of global dynamics comprehend key traits and mechanisms of the world system and understand basic theories and concepts that may increase intelligent consciousness of global change (Merryfield 1994). In connecting her “book-smarts with reality” in Italy and Greece, Alison Riegel learned “about two different cultures, how different life is in the U.S., and how the economics of each country affect the economics of other countries.” Kim-Thoa Nguyen realized that her travel was mutually beneficial to visitors and natives. She shared:

*The Japanese people were as interested in learning more about my culture as I was about theirs. I realize that Americans have as much to learn from Japan as they do from us. In this increasingly global economy, our knowledge and understanding of other countries can strengthen the human ties that bind us to the world at large.*

Teachers and students need to learn about the interconnectedness of the world in a way that cannot be achieved through mass media (Burnouf 2004). Julia Cook took a trip to China that was focused on business, so she was “able to begin to grasp what aspects of business make China truly unique.” She also “gained a better understanding through that knowledge of what makes American business different.”

Alicia Whitaker discovered that even though Austria, Italy, and France are closely linked geographically, they are “each unique in their cultural aspects,” which resulted in her becoming acutely “aware of cultures and customs . . . and understanding what those mean to the people of the various countries.” It amazed Kara Miller to realize “how much America permeates life abroad.” She found that she “learned more about American culture from the views of others,” which gave her “insight into what it means to be globally aware.”

### *Awareness of Human Choices*

Hanvey (1982) encouraged teachers to help students realize the problems of choice confronting individuals and nations as the consciousness and knowledge of global systems continues to expand. Through the knowledge and teaching of her tour guide, Michelle Caffrey had a “first-hand look at this incredible culture [of Egypt] and, most importantly, how its history has impacted our world today.” Her trip helped her see that “the world is not really as big as we think it is. The same problems exist around the world, and it is up to us to help fix them.” Katie Kaufman, who traveled to Greece, had a similar experience of awareness of choices made throughout history as she “walked upon a land that is thousands of

years old . . . and realized how young our country is.”

This awareness helps students see the different ways in which one situation or decision by an individual or a nation is influenced by and influences others. After learning about the English and French educational systems, Allison Zolad made plans to continue studying various other educational systems and to encourage colleagues in the U.S. to “incorporate facets of successful characteristics of foreign education systems.”

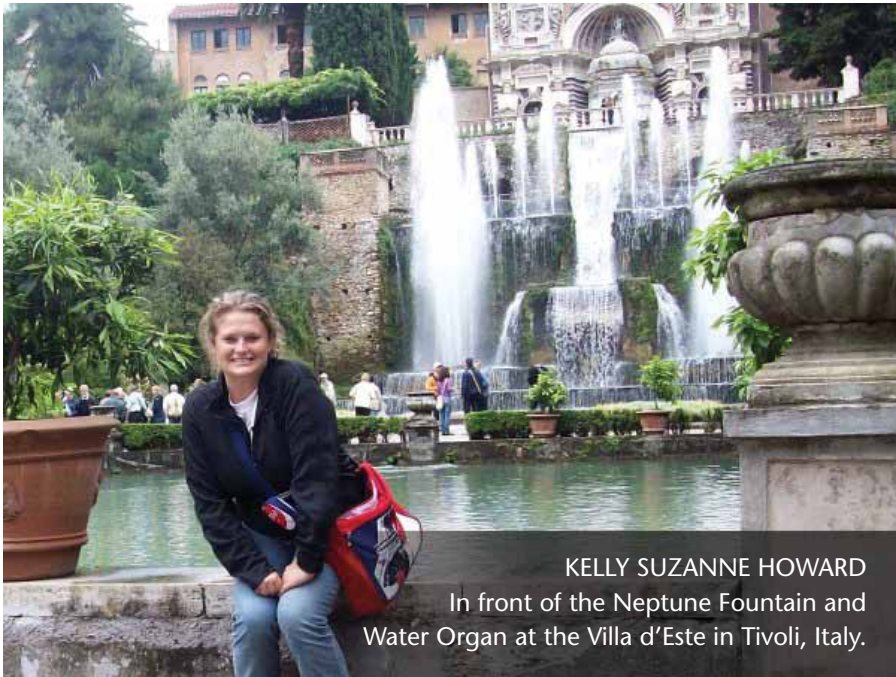
### **Practical Classroom Applications**

After realizing how it feels to be immersed in a language that is not

her first, Alicia Whitaker gained a “new appreciation for those who travel to the U.S. and begin learning English.” Allison Zolad realized that she had wrongly assumed that people in other countries could communicate with her in English. She shared:

*One of the most difficult things to deal with was the language barrier. I had always been under the assumption that the vast majority of people in Paris would speak English, but this was far from the truth. Finding techniques to communicate with people is something that will aid me in my classroom when working with recent immigrants or other students who speak little or no English.*





**KELLY SUZANNE HOWARD**  
In front of the Neptune Fountain and Water Organ at the Villa d'Este in Tivoli, Italy.



**KIM-THOA NGUYEN**  
at Japan's Golden Pavilion, where the real gold structure glistened in the sunlight and illuminated the tranquil waters surrounding the building.

Alison Riegel teaches about insects and life cycles in her second-grade classroom, so she looked for ways to incorporate that interest into her trip to Greece and Italy. She discovered beautiful and interesting insects to photograph and research. "In this way, the whole school will be able to learn about insects on different continents."

As a future math teacher, Alicia Krogstrand's travels made her recognize the importance of doing a unit on "converting from different monies from around the world." Alicia Whitaker shared:

*Teaching music [is] a wonderful way to explore the world with my students. I have always been enthusiastic about the possibility of studying cultures and music from around the globe; but through this trip, I will be better able to teach my students about the history behind music of the world. Much of the European music history goes hand in hand with our own country . . . using pictures from my international travels, as well as music*

*and instruments I have collected from around the globe, I will introduce my students to a world of music and inspire students to look outside their textbooks and learn about the world around them.*

Going to Egypt helped Michelle Caffrey to experience a male-dominated society. "At times I was offended by some of the men of this culture. I knew that I . . . had to be culturally sensitive. . . I'm sure I will have students whose families are from cultures like this, so I think it was a good experience for me because I know a little more about the lifestyle and point of view that they would be coming from."

"Traveling in a foreign country can sometimes be stressful and uncomfortable," said Ashley Savola. As a result, "the greatest lesson I learned through this experience was a better understanding of how big [and diverse] the world really is. As our world shrinks through advances in technology, it becomes easy to think we're all the same. The falsity of this became increasingly obvious . . . all cultures are different even if they share common ties such as language." She shared her belief that "as our communication with foreign countries becomes more vital, so too must our understanding and respect for each other."

Teaching in a theme-based summer school in Oregon has provided Katie Kaufman an opportunity to use her pictures and experiences. Because the theme is "The Seven Wonders of the World," her trip to Greece has impacted her to be a "better teacher and more culturally competent."

Kelly Suzanne Howard, a former college soccer player, was fortunate to travel to Italy during EuroCup 2008. In her words:

*It was incredible to see soccer through a European perspective. The intensity and exhilaration was unlike anything I've ever seen. Something that I've done every day since I was a little girl suddenly began to change immensely in a short amount of time. My travel experience has made me look at everyday things in my life with a completely new perspective.*

Soon to be a special education teacher for 9th-grade English, she made plans to “share my experiences with my students in order to help them better understand the history and culture of many pieces they will read” and to “become more engaged in their learning.”

### Creating the **Global Atmosphere**

Anyone who has been in a classroom recently, whether as a student observer or a student teacher or a full-time teacher, knows how different today's students are from their own former or present classmates.



### **Global Awareness in Your Classroom**

Create a global atmosphere in your classroom by fostering understanding, bridging the gaps, and trying to see through your students' world lenses. It is important to understand the history and culture of each child and to sense what changes and difficulties each copes with daily.

#### *Fostering Understanding*

- Ask students to tell or write about the most difficult thing in their lives right now. Discuss how the teacher and class can help one another with “hard things.” In six weeks, follow up and see whether there has been any change.

- Ask students to write down the most important holiday their families celebrate and ask when it occurs. As it approaches, work with the student(s) to create ways to share with their classmates what is important about the holiday and how it is celebrated.
- Emphasize things that are the same for all people—needs for food and shelter, desire to be accepted, various emotions, etc. For example, if a child's pet dies, talk about the loss and explore that each person may react differently to loss—quiet grieving, crying, begging for a new pet—but everyone misses the pet.
- Truly listen to comments and complaints from students and

their parents and try to understand whether there are gaps in learning due to changing schools or even countries. Find tutoring or team the student with a buddy (even one who is a little older) to help. You may even need to team the parent with another parent for help in answering questions.

#### *Bridging the Gaps*

- When teaching about money in math, teach about conversions to other currencies such as the euro or pesos. Use a Web site such as [www.oanda.com/convert/classic](http://www.oanda.com/convert/classic). Find out what other currencies students have used. See whether students have other currencies they can show, or go to a bank and exchange money for some in one or two other currencies.



ELLEN MILLER  
with Ireland's Dunluce Castle  
in the background.

In recent decades, educators have developed countless diversity programs to deal with the growing complexity of obvious racial and cultural mixing in the classroom; however, in today's globalizing world, traditional assumptions and practices surrounding issues of diversity based on past models are not enough.

The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education has estimated that only about 5 percent of K–12 teachers in the United States have had any academic preparation in global or international studies (Merryfield 1994). As Alicia Krogstrand wrote after visiting Italy and Greece, "I experienced different cultures that were not relevant [to me] before I encountered them." Because she now sees the relevance of various cultures to her and her teaching, she will "be able to relate to students and their different backgrounds and cultures with more understanding." And Jessica Delaney knows that "without this travel experience, I would have gained knowledge from other types of media which is not even comparable to the experiences

and memories created while traveling internationally."

Jessica had the opportunity to put into practice what she learned when she returned. Earlier in the year she had met and worked with a young student recently adopted from the Ukraine. He was having a difficult time assimilating into the American culture. After her trip she realized "the difficulties he was and is having adjusting and understanding our culture and way of life." She gained an appreciation of the "wide variety of cultures that exist in this world which [are very] different from our own" but, she said, "the best way to learn, understand, and embrace this diversification which exists is to make an effort to learn about these differences." She is grateful for her new awareness and appreciation and feels that "some experiences cannot be formed through textbooks, Internet, or even Google™ Earth, but must be formed through first-hand experiences."

## Closing Thoughts

These scholarship recipients will

- Use the metric system consistently in science classes. When possible, use measuring tools that show other systems so that comparisons can be made in math classes.
- Instead of telling students the classroom rules at the beginning of the year, discuss previous classroom rules they've had and guide them to create appropriate rules for your class.
- Be aware of various spellings of English words among English-speaking countries. Have a spelling unit on some of the words. Talk about which countries might spell words "organise" or "grey" instead of "organize" or "gray."

### Enlarging the Lenses

- Have an international fair for your grade level, department, or whole school. Ask

parents and community members as well as students to come and set up a display, bring food for tasting, show a slide presentation, wear a costume, or do whatever they feel comfortable doing to help students understand a culture in which they have lived. Create a "passport" for students to take to each booth to be stamped. Discuss their perceptions before and after the event.

- When studying a different country, have an "immersion" day. Invite someone who speaks a language from that country or who has lived in that country to come in to help teach. Do as many things as possible the way they would be done in that country—from simple things

like eating the foods at the times they would eat a meal, to having a "lights out" time for siesta, to buying items at a "store" with play pesos while using Spanish.

- Put children in "country" groups and give each group a set of cultural guidelines that are unique to that group—for example, one group would stand when the teacher enters the room while another would never look someone straight in the eye. The students of each "country" must abide by their own rules whenever interacting with anyone else in the class. Students must try to figure out the other countries' rules. Helpful books are available from [www.tribes.com](http://www.tribes.com).

# GLOBAL AWARENESS *adventure*

Your ticket to becoming a better teacher

“

I learned more than I ever expected to. It was more than a tour of Egypt; it was a complete educational immersion...I feel very confident in the information I now know and would feel comfortable teaching my students about Egypt.

”



**Michelle Caffrey**  
Westfield State College  
Great Barrington, MA

The Global Awareness Adventure gives undergraduate students of education the opportunity to learn outside of the classroom. These tours provide future teachers with the chance to explore the world and gain a competitive edge, allowing them to foster 21st century learning. Once in the classroom, these teachers will inspire their students to become more engaged learners and better citizens of the world.

EF Educational Tours will award 10 international, all-expense-paid EF tours in 2009 exclusively for active undergraduate Kappa Delta Pi members. For an application form and complete scholarship guidelines, please visit [www.kdp.org](http://www.kdp.org). Deadline is January 30, 2009.



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**KATIE KAUFMAN**  
at the Acropolis with Athens, Greece, in  
the distance.

never see a student with a confused look without remembering their own feelings of confusion in an unfamiliar culture. They will never demand an assignment from a frustrated student without remembering their own frustration when they did not understand instructions in another language. They will never sit on the other side of the table from a non-English-speaking parent without remembering their meager attempts at understanding a foreign language. Those memories will enable them to be more understanding and patient. Those memories will help them probe positively for the various cultural differences of each student. And those memories will help them foster a positive, affirming atmosphere in their classrooms.

Global and international education must be a priority of teacher education. The needs of humanity transcend cultural differences, races, skin colors, and national borders. Global education must include ongoing teaching that focuses on understanding human values, global systems and how they interact, global issues, and global history. It is imperative for students that their teachers have a global awareness and foster learning that includes exchanges of information and culture among students in the classroom as well as around the world by means of electronic media.

Because the majority of students who go into education in college may be less culturally diverse than the general college population, it is critical to continue to offer them opportunities for cross-cultural experiences and global awareness through trips and conferences that include students from other cultures. These future teachers have the opportunity to be the first signpost of “welcome” for new students while at the same time offering to all students a glimpse of the big, wonderful world. ■

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