

GLOBAL EDUCATION AS A SOLUTION TO FAST-PACED  
GLOBALIZATION AND TECHNOLOGY IN A LAGGING US  
EDUCATION CURRICULUM

by

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The 21<sup>st</sup> century has forged an exciting and unprecedented speed in connectivity, globalization, and technology. While citizens of the world now have more access to information and interrelatedness than ever before, this begs the question of if the US education system is preparing its students to exist in an everchanging and global environment. Given the fast pace of technology and globalization today and that understanding of the world is lagging behind this pace, can the use of global education curricula in K-12 US schools help bridge that gap? Providing an opportunity for K-12 learners to be introduced to a global studies curriculum undoubtedly provides a more well-rounded perspective for the world around us and a respect for different cultures. In addition, in a US society that is heavily burdened by the effects of colonialism, global education is a tool to aid in decolonizing education. The objective of this study is to analyze existing programs that bring global education and diverse perspectives into the K-12 classroom, as well as question the ethical dilemmas— such as how to decolonize education, how to accurately represent different cultures, and what items or stories are used to represent them— that this might provide. This study will also explain why global education programs are often difficult to implement in US-based education systems because of the lack of uniformity in Social Studies education, barriers to access, and the politics of education today.

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## **Introduction:**

This study intends to use the perspectives of 5 different organizations involved in global education in the K-12 classroom as case studies for understanding how global education takes place, how its beneficial, what the obstacles are, how technology plays a role in the classroom, as well as how they may or may not play a role in colonialism in the US education system. These organizations are World Oregon, The International Cultural Service Program at the University of Oregon and Portland State University, The National Council for the Social Studies, networks of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers, and the Amity Institute at Buena Vista Elementary School. In addition, this study investigates the perspectives of teachers and administrators inside US K-12 classrooms today at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Each organization and perspective play a unique role in explaining why global education is important and how to make steps toward the goal of better preparing US students for the global world. While systems of inequity and inequality have played a role in our current education system, an ethical exposure to world cultures and what part everyone can play in respecting those around us can better prepare students for a future that is highly connected and global. When a global lens is brought into a K-12 classroom, students learn about communities and cultures other than their own and have a more well-rounded view of history. This moves the needle forward in creating more empathetic and equity-oriented global citizens.

Bringing Global education into the classroom is no easy task. Teachers are overworked, funding is always difficult to come by, and Social Studies education has little federal or state regulation, making it difficult to find guidance. Why does Global Education in K-12 classrooms matter? According to Emily Muellenberg, World History Teacher at Grandview High School in Aurora, CO, who grew up with parents who were high school teachers, “as I got older and

realized that I did want to do this, I did realize that there are not a lot of ways to so directly impact so many people in a structure that already exists like the American Education system” (Muellenberg). Muellenberg’s outlook on the teaching profession illustrates the necessity of using the US education system as a medium to introduce global education and begin teaching students about diversity, world cultures, civil dialogue, and cross-cultural communication.

## **Background:**

### **Definition of key terms/ concepts:**

1. Global education curriculums: Broadly defined, global education curriculums teach history and social studies through a global lens. This aids students in discussing and understanding larger societal issues such as poverty, race, and inequality from a perspective that is likely different from their own.
2. Ethical dilemmas of current social studies programs: World culture museums present a problematic view of the world around us through the exoticization or othering of cultures around the world. In addition, many of the artifacts presented and taught in US world culture museums and subsequently in social studies curriculums are stolen items and perpetuate dangerous rhetoric about colonialism and US imperialism. From the perspective of a global education curricula, this calls into question how to teach about other cultures in a morally correct manner.
3. Colonial gaze: a colonial gaze is defined by how a system of power is underlined and founded on colonial power (which separates “us” from the “other”), and how that system perpetuates and continues to legitimize that power. This often aids in the endurance of racist and xenophobic stereotypes.
4. Cultural incompetence: This is an inability to communicate, understand, or behave accordingly to ideals and people of other cultures.
5. Inequity and inequality in current US Social Studies Curricula: These ideals come from a lack of teachings about race, power, poverty, human rights, and different cultural practices. In addition, this has to do with students' access to accurate information and resources to inform them critically of these topics.



6. “Othering”: Othering is defined by the Cambridge dictionary as “the act of treating someone as though they are not part of a group and are different in some way” (“OTHERING | definition in the Cambridge English Dictionary”). This idea plays out as one person or group of people believing in the intrinsic superiority or difference of themselves compared to another. This plays out in social, political, and economic systems, and ultimately harms marginalized groups of people.

**My argument:**

With each passing year, our world becomes more and more globalized in trade, language, business, technology, etc. Virtually every sector of the economy, communication, business, and government relies on the cooperation of many different actors all around the world. Social media now gives rise to global social movements and the 24-hour news cycle connects us to people halfway across the world. Technology is advancing at an unprecedented pace. With this hyperconnectivity comes the responsibility to respond accordingly to this need for global connection. However, US social studies curriculums have continually pushed forth a uniquely US- American perspective that is individualistic and outdated. In short, educational curricula are not keeping up with the pace of globalization and technology. This leaves US students underprepared to become informed and responsible citizens of the US, and more importantly, of the globe. A global perspective in K-12 social studies can help in bridging this gap between US education and the rest of the world, better preparing students for adulthood. This is because a global perspective and an understanding of global economic and governmental systems help students better understand the world and its positioning in our world.

However, a global perspective goes much deeper than just learning about other cultures. This type of curriculum helps students build tolerance and respect for people that are different

from themselves as well as the ability to critically evaluate systems of power. In my experience as a Global Studies major as an undergraduate at the University of Oregon, I have learned vital skills in engaging in global conversations about human rights, economic systems, global food systems, the success of NGOs, and so on. I better understand political actions, the differences, and similarities between other cultures and my own, and perhaps most importantly, skills to actively engage with people that are different from myself. These important skills I now possess only happened because of my chosen major and the privilege of higher education. If this type of learning was adopted and made accessible to younger students, US American youth would be better prepared to enter our ever-changing and globalized world.

**Significance of this study:**

Global education and an emphasis on a global perspective in the US education system have been a topic of conversation within the last 30-40 years. However, a lack of federal legislation on education standards leaves individual states and school districts with little guidance in curriculum and lesson planning. Educators are already overextended, and funding is often difficult to come by. Within these circumstances, there is a lack of consolidated research toward implementing a global perspective into K-12 social studies classrooms. In addition, even when standards for global education are implemented in local school districts, it is difficult to find resources that lend themselves to the ethical teaching of other cultures. For example, world culture museums are frequented by many schools' field trips to open a conversation for students. However, based on US histories of colonialism and imperialism, museums are often colonial spaces where artifacts from other cultures are either stolen or exoticized. This is just as harmful to students as not learning about globalization at all.

This study reviews existing attempts to implement a global perspective into K-12 social studies curriculums and evaluates the successes, benefits, as well as shortcomings of different programs. These programs include the Global Classroom branch of World Oregon, Global Citizenship Education under the UNESCO Standards for Global Education, Language Immersion programs in the Eugene-Springfield and Portland school districts, Amity Institute interns in US classrooms, as well as the International Culture Service Programs at Oregon Universities. A culmination of this research will inform suggestions and outlines for future educators, programs, or school districts on the costs and benefits of a more globalized perspective in their K-12 social studies classrooms.

### **Historical background:**

Global Citizenship Education is an approach to social studies curriculum that aims to meet the challenges of the globalized world by teaching students to care about humanity and the planet around them. Global Education was first introduced into K-12 schools in the 1970s and 80s to make students more self-aware, have respect for diversity, and have a sense of empathy and altruism (Ahmed, p. 124). An early example of a GCED program, written for public schools in Western Massachusetts in 1988, is a directory that gives teaching materials and curriculum for their schools to begin implementing Global Education. Their topics include poverty, race relations, foreign investment, and so on. The directory also gives teachers ideas on how to write a lesson plan for their prospective grades (Back, p.8). An early example of this type of education lay a foundation for how this learning must be prepared. In addition, it highlights the importance of preparing teachers to teach a global citizenship curriculum.

UNESCO has specifically created a program for global education and plays a major role in advocating for its implementation. UNESCO's involvement in global education is a part of the

World Programme for Human Rights Education, beginning in 2005. This program aims to create these standards as a response to ongoing global human rights violations, inequality, inequity, and poverty that still burdens many communities around the globe. As a part of their world peace and human rights education, UNESCO aims to instill in learners, “the values, attitudes, and behaviors that support responsible global citizenship: creativity, innovation, and commitment to peace, human rights and sustainable development” (Global Citizenship Education).

These ideals are a part of the 4th goal of quality education of the UN’s sustainable development goal and inform the creation of UNESCO global citizenship education (GCED). This curriculum plan includes advocacy for implementation, developing guidance for educators, and tools to support learning. More specifically, UNESCO has aided in developing textbooks, hosting capacity-building workshops, hosting global forums on GCED, and accurate measurement of progress (What UNESCO Does on Global Citizenship Education).

## **Review of Existing Literature:**

Within the current landscape and controversy that surrounds social studies course topics in US K-12 schools, it is necessary to begin questioning the end goal for students, parents, and teachers by the end of a student's time in that course. In our ever-changing and rapidly technologically advanced world, students must learn the importance of global citizenship in preparation for entering our globalized world. Global Citizenship Education (GCED) is not a new concept in US school curriculums but could be used as a tool to aid students in understanding the role they will play in a globalized society.

One study based in Indiana found that though Indiana teachers tasked with implementing a GCED curriculum understand the importance of international citizenship education, the topic is still relatively new (Rapoport, 186). Directories and curriculum plans are necessary as well as more rigorous preparation to be able to teach with global citizenship in mind and better prepare students. Other examples of the topics for a GCED program include global geography, economic and political processes, and understanding diverse perspectives (Jalbani, p.85). Though this study was done in grade 4 and 5 classrooms, these lessons and ideas can be implemented in a classroom of any age. Teachers often find that teaching a global perspective is tremendously helpful in the classroom, however, there is little preparation to teach this way. Therefore, it is necessary to use a more systematic approach and dedicate more resources to global citizenship education (Guo, p.33).

To understand the implications of a global curriculum, researchers evaluated the success of 22 GCED programs in the US and found that global learning increased. Researchers also expressed a need for more studies in this field because of the lack of credibility and understanding behind non-standardized GCED programs (Ahmed, p. 126). However, GCED

programs benefit US students uniquely because of their ability to emphasize global citizenship and connectedness over individualism and patriotism. These outdated systems do not explain the complexity of our fast-paced world and the current curriculum lacks a global understanding (Myers, p. 3). US students also have the added challenge of understanding these topics through a historical lens of imperialism and colonialism. A country's history has a large impact on its education system including its structure as well as actual class material (Nygren, p. 83).

Colonialism as a concept began as a tool with the goal of subjugation and rule of territories and peoples. In use, US colonialism, “is an all-encompassing political, economic, and cultural endeavor with persisting vestiges”, which included, “the invasion and territorialization of foreign lands; the political, economic, and cultural subjugation of indigenous peoples; and the development of infrastructure through which power and control are exercised by those at the top” (Sapleton, p. 46). The structure of colonialism set up rules, norms, and values that continued systemic inequalities even when colonialism ended. Colonists established education systems as well. However, they were, “not to liberate the subjugated. Rather they sought to undergird and maintain colonial power structures, specifically white European supremacy” (Stein, 2018). While systems have developed over time, the education system has a foundation in colonialism leading to the US education system facilitating and reinforcing systems of inequality (Sapleton, p.42). Current US social studies practices and teachings often exist through a colonial gaze, only perpetuating cultural incompetence for young learners. To decolonize education, there must be a paradigm shift thoughtful and intentional course correction.

Students from countries who were colonized or were the victim of extreme violence and oppression from colonizing countries have a more communal understanding of their cities. They understand the importance of history because they’re living through postcolonial legacies. US

students must be taught this. US social studies curriculums often fall short of recognizing this need. There is a normalization of the use of museums as a tool to teach the history of a certain country and the world. However, there is also an ethical dilemma in the use of items that are often stolen from their country of origin to be placed in a museum– such as the Horniman Museum in London– and exoticized often from a Western view (Stevenson, p.1). In the US, this topic often comes up in the conversation of reparations for the US role in the transatlantic slave trade. Reparations would include both educational programs much like GCED programs, as well as returning museum items stolen during the colonial era back to their home countries (Howard-Hassmann, p. 345). In short, the United States colonial past heavily burdens generations of today and it is important to recognize the role that it must play to guarantee a future for US-based GCED programs.

Though global citizenship education has great benefits in preparing students for a more globalized world, its biggest pitfall lies in the controversy surrounding social studies education in US school systems. This demonstrates how there is a large gap between theory and practice because researchers advocate for the benefits of GCED, yet policymakers and educators are much less willing to implement its tools (Goren, p. 180). While teaching, educators often must worry about the use of politics in lessons as it is a rather sensitive issue. However, it is increasingly difficult to teach about global affairs and the moral obligations of global citizenship without the mention of politics (Veugelers, p. 207). This aids our understanding of why educators hesitate to implement the GCED curriculum. However, GCED programs prepare all students to understand the importance of human rights, peace, and sustainability– all tenants of the UNESCO standards for global education– but struggle to apply them (Nygren, p. 83). In higher education, this application is done through study abroad, coursework, active measurement

throughout a student's learning, and university advocacy programs (Massaro, p.102). This is an opportunity for K-12 education to further its teaching in global citizenship by providing more ways for students to apply their learning.

In the US, Federal education legislation really exists as umbrella mandates to ensure equal access to education rather than specific curricular goals in any subject area. However, the Every Student Succeeds Act, signed into law in 2015, does require that every state must measure student success and performance in reading, science, and math (“What is the Every Student Succeeds Act? - Office of Elementary and Secondary Education”). However, there are no federal mandates based on how students are assessed. The only requirement is that families must be informed. Regardless, this means there are no federal requirements for social studies education, and furthermore, there is little public information about federal interest in global citizenship education in the K-12 classroom. Federal interest in international studies education only begins in higher education. The Higher Education Act requires that higher education institutions communicate with federal agency heads to receive recommendations on which foreign languages and world regions are of particular interest to the US government (“Legislation -- Undergraduate International Studies and Foreign Language Program”). This education current system, where many of the decisions are made on a state-to-state basis, makes it very difficult to implement a social studies program such as GCED, because there are very few federal requirements in education.

One way Oregon specifically promotes global learning is through UO’s Chinese flagship program. This is a partnership with Portland Public Schools to promote Chinese language learning in K-12 schools, and funding is provided through Title 6 legislation to continue this learning through undergrad at UO (Home). Title 6 funding also applies to second language



learners at both the K-12 and undergraduate levels here in Oregon to promote connectivity through language learning. The Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Program in Portland Public Schools as this format is another alternative to the goal of teaching a global studies curriculum in K-12 classrooms. The goal of DLI– where students take a second language from kindergarten through high school– is biliteracy and the development of cultural competency in a global society. This program helps students “develop the ability to view the world from multiple perspectives; and participate in and contribute willingly and regularly to our diverse, multicultural, and international community” (“Dual Language / Dual Language PreK - 12”). These programs are all different avenues and new approaches to promote connecting US K-12 students to the rest of the world through language learning as well as hands-on education.

Douglas County School District, a school district in the Denver Metro Area of Colorado, had much less information on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion on its website. It was much more difficult to find any information about curriculum standards as well as what requirements they have for educators. There was a section for English Second Language Learners, as there are 3,400 English Learners attending school in Douglas County in grades K-12, and 97 languages are represented. DCSD has a department for English Language Development that intends to prepare students to be globally competitive community members. Their priority is to support English Learners in, “gaining proficiency in English in order to communicate effectively, elicit critical thinking, work collaboratively and creatively, value and celebrate diversity, and graduate with the motivation and ability to pursue higher education and/or competitively compete in and contribute to the global workforce” (“Language, Culture, and Equity - Language, Culture, and Equity”). There was no information listed about social studies curriculum standards that DCSD educators must follow, other than statements about how the curriculum follows that of the

Colorado Department of Education. However, there was a statement about Critical Race Theory and the concerns it might provide for parents. The statement reinforces that DCSD standards match that of the Colorado Department of Education and that Critical Race Theory will not be taught in classes. This is necessary information because Critical Race Theory includes issues of race and diversity, which both play a role in global learning and understanding. So, how to effectively navigate such politicized conversations while still advocating for diversity in the Social Studies classroom is relevant. In 2022, the Colorado Department of Education adopted new standards for the social studies curriculum which include, “adding the contributions of ethnic and religious groups as well as LGBTQ+ people in the teaching of history and civil government”, as well as standards for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and an implementation guide for educators (“Social Studies | CDE”).

Cherry Creek School District, which neighbors Douglas County, provided more information about their standards for Social Studies classrooms, including their support for culturally responsive education, which intends, “teaching strategies to support student voice and choice and connect to student's experiences and interests” (“Equity, Culture, and Community Engagement / Department of Equity, Culture and Community Engagement”). Their website also explicitly states that their curriculum is guided by the state standards in History, Geography, Civics, and Economics, as well as the importance of integrating ideas from other fields such as Anthropology, Psychology, and Sociology because these are important in creating responsible and diverse citizens. CCSD has a Department of Equity, Culture, and Community Engagement, where they engage community members by building relationships with schools and families and provide parents and students of color spaces to directly discuss their needs with administrators. They also advocate for increased indigenous education and resources for the LGBTQ+

community. This is important because it highlights how every neighboring school district can have varying degrees of importance placed on Diversity in the classroom and a push for a more global and diverse lens placed on education. In addition, this was an interesting exercise in comparing the accessibility of information, as Oregon school districts seem to make their curriculum standards much easier to find for parents and educators. Though CCSD had more statements about inclusivity and diversity on their website, both CCSD and DCSD lacked information about what curriculum standards were being reinforced in the social studies classroom. Both districts seemed to refer to state standards as a guide for what and how they're teaching students.

Another potential resource for pushing forth the need for Global Education in K-12 schools is the network of returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV). Dr. Jon Smythe accurately recounts the experience of an RPCV and how it could be utilized in US-based classrooms in his dissertation entitled, *Culture Shocked: The intercultural experiences and Insights of Returned Peace Corps Volunteer Educators*. Throughout his research, Smythe addressed not only how RPCVs are affected by culture shock and reverse culture shock, but also the lessons US students could learn from these experiences. Smythe discusses globalization as, “the ‘intensification and rapidity of movement and migration of people, ideas, and economic and cultural capital across national boundaries (Matus & McCarthy, 2003, p. 73)’”, (Smythe p.1). As a consequence of globalization, not only is the world highly connected, but our classrooms will inevitably become more diverse. This means that these institutions and spaces for learning become sights for potential intercultural enrichment. Part of Smythe's argument is about how to better prepare educators for this type of environment. Educators might feel a sense of anxiety about creating spaces in their lesson plans that are open for diverse thoughts because it might challenge their

own beliefs. In addition, educators might have little experience and may have never been cultural outsiders themselves. In a US-based curriculum that has historically pushed forward narratives of sameness, universality, and standardization, bringing in a diverse curriculum is challenging for educators (Smythe, p. 2).

The US is uniquely positioned to both help or hinder its future citizens through its social studies curriculum. With the recognition of a colonial past, a commitment to ethical cultural teachings, and a wider understanding of the need for global citizenship education, the US can better prepare future generations for a globalized world. In addition, GCED programs could serve to bridge the gap between the rapid pace of technology and globalization and the US American population which lags in understanding people and cultures past our borders.

## **Contextual background: Program/ Interviewee Profiles**

### **World Oregon:**

World Oregon is part of a federal governing body called the World Affairs Council of America (WACA). The WACA was created in 1918 and serves more than 90 world affairs councils in over 40 states (“WACA | History”). This organization is a nonprofit 501(c)3 and holds a mission of engaging leaders and the public to better understand the world around them. They believe it is necessary for an age of globalization and shifting international orders. World Oregon focuses on four main categories: international visitors, global conversations, global classrooms, and travel (“Programs - World Oregon”). Global classroom is a category that provides resources to educators and students through teacher professional development, youth programming, the culture box lending library, and a global and multicultural resource center. Teachers are not only given resources but are also given instructions on how to facilitate certain conversations (“Teacher Professional Development”). The culture box library is an opportunity to bring real items from other cultures into the classroom, so students have tangible examples of what they are learning. In addition, World Oregon has defined how their world aligns with common core education standards in the state of Oregon for each grade level, and this document can be accessed easily on their website (“OREGON SOCIAL SCIENCES LESSON IDEAS for use with World Affairs Council Culture Boxes”). Their global and multicultural resource center is a final resource for any books or activities that address anti-bias education, equity, social justice, civil rights, etc. I spoke with two representatives from World Oregon: Andrea Vanessa Castillo, a program officer for the international visitor program, and Samara Chism-Winfield, a program manager of the Global Classroom program.

**International Cultural Service Program:**

The International Cultural Service Program (ICSP) is a scholarship program for undergraduate international students at Portland State University and at the University of Oregon. With this scholarship comes the responsibility to become trained and to share their culture in the community (International Cultural Service Program). Services are focused on presentations about aspects of a student's home culture both on campus and in other community groups, such as K-12 schools and elder care settings. International students at Portland State University also have the option to partner with World Oregon and use "culture boxes" to teach in the classroom. These boxes contain items from their home culture to promote hands-on learning. They can contain anything from activities to books, CDs, files, flags, lesson plans, and so on (Resources). ICSP provides an avenue for global education and cross-cultural exchange. Services are focused on presentations about aspects of a student's home culture both on campus and in other community groups, such as K-12 schools and elder care settings. To find an ICSP student, requesters can go to the website, read about the rules and regulations, and request a student. For my research, I spoke to Dr. Zhang, program coordinator for ICSP at the University of Oregon, and Andrea Brignacca, MBA student and ICSP recipient at Portland State University.

**National Council for the Social Studies:**

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) is a national 501(c)3 organization with the mission of supporting and advocating for social studies education in the US. Though there is a lack of federal mandates and information on social studies classrooms, the National Council for Social Studies provides a framework for strengthening and furthering social studies education in both K-12 and higher education, particularly in the areas of history, civics, geography, economics, political science, and more ("About National Council for the Social

Studies”). The NCSS provides educators with guidance on teaching subject areas such as teaching about Black History Month, Racism, Media Literacy, Earth Day, Advocacy, and Human Rights. They also provide resources on advocating for social studies education and educator support in local governments. These resources are available through the NCSS website in all 50 states. For my research, I spoke to Wesley Hedgepeth, High School History and Politics teacher in Richmond, VA, and the President-Elect for the NCSS.

### **Returned Peace Corps Volunteers:**

The Peace Corps is an US Governmental program designed to send foreign assistance to countries that have requested volunteers. Upon return, volunteers can join networks of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCV). Oregon specifically has multiple organizations, including the Portland RPCV organization and the West Cascadia (Eugene and Springfield area) RPCV organization. Both organizations are a part of the National Peace Corps Association (NPCA), a nonprofit network of 220,000 people who share Peace Corps experience (“Portland Peace Corps Association”). Each organization has a bit of discretion in how they operate but holds similarities in programming and in mission. This mission states, “We are a diverse group of natives, transplants, old, young, all bound by having served our country as volunteers and working together to continue promoting the Peace Corps” (“Portland Peace Corps Association”). In addition, both organizations address the “Third Goal of the Peace Corps”, which is, “to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of Americans”, (“WCPCA - About Us”). This goal is significant because the network of RPCV is dedicated to promoting a better understanding of the world around us by US students. Carolyn Williams, a returned volunteer from her service in Azerbaijan in 2009, and the Peace Corps Recruiter at the University of Oregon, spoke on behalf of the Peace Corps for my research.

**Amity Institute (At Buena Vista Elementary School):**

The Amity Institute is a nonprofit exchange program founded in 1962 intended to bring native language speakers to US-based K-12 classrooms with the mission of enhancing learning, increasing cross-cultural communication, and direct personal contact with world languages. The intern program in particular brings international visitors into classrooms to serve as informal ambassadors and assist in the classroom for 32 hours per week. The Amity Institute also has a teacher exchange program whereby certified teachers can serve as temporary faculty in US primary and secondary classrooms. At Buena Vista Elementary School in Eugene, Oregon, a Spanish language immersion school, 5 interns from Amity Institute are brought in each year to aid students in Spanish language speaking. Interns are given the opportunity to live with two different host families throughout the year, as well as teach in two different grade levels, 1st-5th. Interns provide weekly cultural lessons, aid teachers in Spanish grammar lessons, and put on biannual assemblies for the entire school. I spoke with two representatives from Amity at Buena Vista: Jessica Hughitt, Buena Vista parent and Amity program coordinator, and Julia Vozmediano, Amity Intern for the 2022-2023 school year from Spain.

**Mike Hasley:**

Mike Hasley is the Vice Principal at Hungary Creek Middle School in Glen Allen, Virginia. He supervises the social studies department and was the social studies specialist for the county for 10 years. Hasley works directly with social studies curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and teachers from middle and high school levels.



**Emily Muellenberg:**

Emily Muellenberg is an AP World and regular World history teacher at Grandview High School in Aurora, CO. Her day-to-day is a mix of planning time and instruction time, which includes researching new and developing lessons to use in her classroom. Muellenberg recently switched school districts, from Douglas County School District to Cherry Creek School District, for the first time in her 18-year teaching career. In her first district, she taught a myriad of other classes, including AP human geography, US History, Government, and AP Government.

## **Why it matters**

Global education benefits not only students but also teachers, international visitors, and speakers, as well as the larger community. The following sections break down the benefits of global education into these four categories.

### **1.1 Benefits for students**

Oregon is a particularly interesting state when it comes to global education. In the state of Oregon social studies curriculum requirements are rigorous and easily accessible to find on their website. The state Board of Education reevaluates and adopts updated standards on social studies education. In 2018, “Oregon adopted Social Science Standards identifying grade-level standards for civics, geography, economics, financial literacy, history, historical thinking, and social science analysis. The 2018 standards also co-identified selected standards as multicultural” (“Oregon Department of Education: Standards - Social Sciences: Social Sciences: State of Oregon”). In 2021, the Oregon Legislature also adopted a senate bill requiring students to earn class credit in civics education to fulfill their graduation requirements. In the same year, the legislature also adopted senate bills to provide teachers with resources for teaching about the Holocaust and Genocide, Tribal History, Ethnic Studies, and inclusive education. These topics all contribute towards creating more globalized and aware citizens; this is a similar goal in implementing Global Citizenship Education. As of 2021, Eugene 4J adopted new Curriculum standards for the first time in 17 years. Within these updated standards, expected to be implemented during the current 2022-2023 school year, the curriculum in social studies was updated to include ethnic studies. Specifically, the new social sciences curriculum requires integrating “civics and government, economics, financial literacy, geography, and history. In

recent years, new state laws also have required curriculum related to the Native American experience in Oregon, civics, ethnic studies, genocide, and the Holocaust” (“Standards and Curriculum”). This criterion has been adopted with recommendations from 4J middle and high school teachers, as well as other district teachers, students, and families. These changes are targeting many different courses such as human geography, economics, and civics, as well as providing opportunities for students to learn in several different graduation pathways including IB and language immersion programs. These changes have come with the intention of preparing students to actively participate in democracy, to understand diverse perspectives in history, and to understand real-world issues through Culturally Responsive Teaching. Oregon School Districts are responding actively to changes made at the State level and are preparing their students for a more globalized work through their changes in curriculum standards.

Oregon’s education policy becomes more complex with the understanding that while policy tends to be more progressive, it is also juxtaposed with low spending on K-12 education— which was \$12,810 per student, compared to the \$13,393 national average—, as well as a long history of exclusionary and racist policies (Siverman). For this reason, diverse perspectives and populations can be difficult to come by, especially for a teacher who might not have the time to look for these resources. A parent at Buena Vista Elementary School in Eugene, Oregon and coordinator of the Amity Intern program, Jessica Hughitt, expressed how this is a concern for her, and is the reason she sends her students to a Spanish immersion school where kids are exposed to many different Spanish speakers from different countries:

Eugene, Oregon is not a diverse place and historically we have been and still are a very racist state. So, when you think about access to a diverse learning environment, it’s hard to come by here. By bringing in native Spanish speakers, people from different parts of the world, different countries, different colored skin, different accents, different traditions, just that diversity piece is not

measurable in any way. It's just so amazing for our kids to have that experience. It opens the world because for so many, they don't know anything outside Eugene, Oregon (Hughitt).

Hughitt personally values a diverse education because she went to Buena Vista herself, and this experience led her to study around the world, find work in Spain, and have her daughter in Spain. Now, she wants the same future for her children. In short, a diverse global education opens the world for students that they might otherwise know exists. The Amity Institute brings 5 interns from different Spanish-speaking countries to Buena Vista every year to support teachers in lesson planning and classroom management, as well as to form connections with students. Hughitt spoke highly of this program, stating how, "Reflecting on how they even get 2 interns over the school year, along with their primary Spanish-speaking teacher, their exposure to different dialects of the language, which is key in their own development of the language and understanding of the world" (Hughitt). She doesn't want her kids, nor her kids' peers to leave Buena Vista thinking there is only one way to speak Spanish. Understanding different dialects not only aids kids in better understanding the language they're learning but also opens the door to understanding different cultures and different areas of the world. As an intern, Julia Vozmediano from Soria, Spain, shares her experience combining culture and grammar, stating, "I try to talk about Spanish culture like food, or dancing, or I show videos. And then with grammar... all the lessons are in Spanish. And the kids learn from my accent when I talk and the verbs I use, and they respond to me in Spanish" (Vozmediano). Just by Vozmediano's presence as a cultural ambassador from Spain in the classroom, students can learn about the nuances of culture and grammar among Spanish-speaking countries. Language immersion schooling or involvement with the Amity Institute are just two avenues for bringing diverse perspectives into the classroom. There are many different tools for global education, but all of these serve the

same purpose: broadening student worldviews and better preparing them for a more globalized world.

A common pattern throughout all my conversations with professionals in this field is how their respective programming aids students in making connections and discovering something new. Samara Chism-Winfield, program manager of the Global Classroom program at World Oregon, says her work is most rewarding when she sees the “ripple effect” after a speaker, and how people are “buzzing with conversation”. These connections can be “life-changing”. A program that has a similar mission to World Oregon– to promote global understanding and communication– is the International Cultural Service Program (ICSP), a program at both Portland State University and the University of Oregon. This program funds scholarships for international students in exchange for a commitment to giving presentations and leading activities that share that students' culture with their community. ICSP student at Portland State, Andrea Brignacca, makes this same connection, stating how just by talking to young students, he can potentially “change someone's life just by opening their mind”. For Brignacca, learning to make his own decisions and form his own opinions was paramount in his development as a student and as a person. Now, he wants the same for other students, stating that students, “seeing what’s outside of their community, or Oregon, or the US, is a way for them to learn ‘how can I be better? How can I have more culture? How can I create my own ideas? How can I be successful on my own without following the norm, the books, following the rules?’” (Brignacca). In short, his work with ICSP is beneficial to students because he serves as a role model for exploratory learning and learning to think for yourself. Dr. Zhang, the coordinator for ICSP at the University of Oregon, often hears ICSP students report how surprised their requesters and listeners were to discover something new or different than their expectations of another culture.

Again, students are discovering something new, something they never knew before. In Julia Vozmediano's experience as a Spanish educator in a dual immersion classroom:

I think it's really important and I can see that they're interested in learning more about the culture. I get closer with them, and they can see that it's useful to learn Spanish. They now have new dreams. Like, "Oh I'm going to visit Spain in the future, I want to taste these foods...", and now they see that it's real. They are studying for a real reason to go there and for example, to speak with me, they don't know I speak English too. And even during recess they come to me, and they only speak to me in Spanish. So, they know now that it's useful for them to learn. (Vozmediano)

Julia's cultural lessons have excited students about their futures and created a wider world of opportunity for kids who otherwise may not have been exposed to other cultures in an US landscape. In addition, because the students don't know that Julia speaks English, it forces them to put their skills to use. They know that what they're learning is relevant because they've been given an opportunity to use their skills in a practical and meaningful way. To further this point, as an educator, Emily Muellenberg of Grandview High School discusses how rewarding it is when a student makes a connection on their own; Mike Hasley from Hungary Creek Middle School finds success in his job when a kid is interested in a lesson and is working towards finding their passion.

## **1.2 Benefits for Interns/Presenters**

Global learning in the classroom has a positive effect on all people involved, including interns, students, or presenters that choose to share their experiences and culture with others. For example, the ICSP program invests in the needs of its students and uses a community-oriented approach to programming, including speaker series where they can learn from one another, and even social events where they all bring dishes from their respective cultures. In conversation

with ICSP student Andrea Brignacca, he recalls a time when he held a presentation and cultural exchange with a group of Japanese students. After the presentation, Brignacca recalls:

I was telling them about Italy, and at the end of everything, a few different people asked if I could take a picture with them. And I was mind blown. Because I was like, “What do you mean a picture?” and just the fact for them, their meeting and talking to me was so important that they wanted a picture to remember me and remember that moment was incredible. You’re giving them something. They’re from Asia so they probably have few ideas of Italian culture (Brignacca).

The US is a world leader in movie and media production. In fact, “American storytelling is enjoyed by audiences around the world, accounting for \$14.4 billion annually in exports and registering a positive trade balance with nearly every country in the world” (“Driving Economic Growth”). Brignacca spoke about this, comparing how people often have a better understanding of US culture because they can find it in the movie industry. Vozmediano shares a similar experience with Brignacca, stating, “I feel that [US- American Culture] is a culture I know thanks to movies. I’m not discovering a lot of new things. It’s more like, ‘Oh yeah, I am seeing that thing that I wanted to see because I already knew about this American thing” (Vozmediano). This is not true of Italian or Spanish culture, so when Brignacca was able to share this with a group of Japanese students, he was fulfilled by what an impact he was able to have. In addition, he also recounts how the ICSP program has benefited him by having a larger appreciation for his own culture. Many people in his cohort have similar experiences because they’re so used to their own customs and traditions, that it feels like second nature rather than something that could be culturally significant to someone from a different culture. Brignacca shared an anecdote about learning a food he ate in his town does not actually originate from his town, but rather farther East (Brignacca). Serving as a presenter in global conversations allows reconnecting with culture and serves as a reminder of how interesting and important one's own traditions are.

To further support how beneficial global programs such as ICSP are for presenters, Dr. Zhang from the University of Oregon expresses similar outcomes for her students. She shares that students “probably don’t necessarily feel proud of their culture, but when they go into the community and talk about their culture all the time, they feel the passion from the audience and they think, ‘our culture is beautiful, it’s special’” (Zhang). As a coordinator, this is rewarding for Dr. Zhang because she gets to watch her students grow academically and professionally and become more independent adults because of their participation.

Hughitt recounts similar experiences as coordinator of the Amity program, expressing how her interns get professional development experience that they’re able to bring back to their country. She explains,

They’ve worked with a diverse population that maybe they wouldn’t be able to work with within their home country, so it increases and improves their knowledgeability to be teachers. So, they have better opportunities. I’ve heard them say that because I’ve come here, I can now get a job. Before, they wouldn’t be able to get a job, but because they did this, they can go back to their country and have a job handed to them. So, it really just increases their status in the working world (Hughitt).

Opportunities to serve as a cultural ambassador in US-based K-12 classrooms have the potential to change people’s lives, just as it changes the lives of many Amity interns. Vozmediano expressed a similar impact, as she knows that it will likely be easy for her to get a job in Spain once she returns home because of her participation in the Amity Program (Vozmediano). In addition, when asked about her interest in global education, Vozmediano stated, “I would like to work in Spain, I’ve been there my whole life. But after coming and learning more here or in another country, I would love to come here again or to another country” (Vozmediano). She discussed how enriching it has been to serve as a cultural ambassador in the US, and how she intends to now serve as a US cultural ambassador in Spain. With a smile on her face,



Vozmediano shares, “I get to be both”. In short, presenters and international interns are exposed to new ideas, new appreciation, and new growth, and this affects every part of their future, just as it affects students' or listeners' futures. Global education is transformative.

Professional development is a central tenet of higher education and US student life. When interns and presenters are a part of these programs, they too benefit professionally from programming. For example, Dr. Zhang shared how ICSP students, “their communication skills are just blossoming. You can see because you need to write emails to requestors to set up the time, the details, the transportation”, and how students must learn how to efficiently and appropriately handle professional scenarios (Zhang). In addition, students grow in their presentation and public speaking skills, which are all applicable skills in any professional career. For Julia Vozmediano, professional development comes from learning new classroom management skills. She explains how:

There are a lot of differences between here and Spain. In general, the whole curriculum is different. In Spain, we are more focused on content, and here it's more about behavior. The emotions and the feelings of the kids that they know how to sit correctly on the rug or walk in the hallway. In Spain, it's not like that. It's more about 2 hours of science, then math, etc. The [US] kids are close to the culture. In Spain, we don't have space to talk about culture in the classroom (Vozmediano).

While the structure of Vozmediano's classroom at Buena Vista Elementary School is different than many other US schools based on its language immersion structure, she emphasized how the US schooling tendency towards positive reinforcement, behavioral expectations rather than rules, and redirection rather than consequences is much different than anything that she's used to. When she returns to Spain, she is excited and eager to implement some of the new skills she has learned as an Amity intern and combine the benefits of a US versus Spanish-based schooling system.

### **1.3 School and community benefit**

The impact of global education often goes beyond the walls of a classroom. When students are mobilized and excited about what they're learning, they're more likely to continue their learning and curiosity in the community. In addition, the goals of global education are inherently community oriented. This is because global education is about bridging gaps in understanding, conversations between multiple different communities, and making connections across borders. Even in communities and states such as Oregon where diversity and multiple perspectives can be difficult to find, intentional cultural teaching in the classroom, such as the use of World Oregon resources or bringing in an ICSP student can broaden students' perspectives and increase community understanding. Samara Chism-Winfield reflects on this, and how her work often deals with teachers who ask for her help because they don't have a lot of diversity in their classrooms, but "they're trying to figure out how to support teaching their kids the importance of it... How do you support them to connect to a community that is just bordering there that can be a rich resource?", (Chism-Winfield). Her work is rewarding when she gets to connect classrooms with global perspectives that are within that geographic area, connecting the community further. She states,

To have teachers realize they don't have to get a speaker from Botswana even if they're coming through town. You can also tap into this incredible network of immigrants and refugees who are here locally, you just have to have the right avenues and connections, for both the teacher and student to see that this is a resource here locally, not only internationally, but that it really just keeps on giving because you make this connection and this community, and it just continues to benefit you as a classroom (Chism-Winfield).

There is a mutually beneficial relationship between classroom and community when a global lens is brought in. Students better understand people in their own backyard, better connecting and benefiting the community; the diverse perspectives that exist in the community bring

learning alive in the classroom and students care more about what they're learning. In addition, Teachers have provided feedback to Chism-Winfield, sharing that global learning can connect to students that may not speak up as much in class or students that might be learning English as a second language. When students feel represented, they also feel safe to share their own stories and backgrounds. These connections bring their identity, their heritage, their family, and their cultures to life, aiding with community building within the classroom walls (Chism-Winfield). Julia Vozmediano has experienced this firsthand, stating, "I feel that they are more open-minded than when I started teaching in class... When they listen to me, they want to share their experience too. It's not only that they like to listen and learn, but they also want to share their lives and how they do normal life" (Vozmediano). Students are more inclined to participate and share their own experiences when they feel represented and when there is space to do so, building connections and community in the classroom. It is the gift that keeps on giving.

Mike Hasley, Vice Principal at Hungary Creek Middle School in Glen Allen, VA, sees this every day. In his community, the classrooms change every year with more and more diverse populations setting into his school as demographics shift in the US. Specifically, his district has a high population of immigrants from India. This affects not only classrooms but community settings as well. For example, there is a newly built cricket field near his school (Hasley). A focus on diversity and world cultures in the classroom can help students in making connections with fellow students and make sense of and value their own community and community members. Andrea Vanessa Castillo, a program officer for the International Visitor Program at World Oregon, further emphasizes how diverse perspectives help us to make sense of what already exists in our communities. Portland has a limited but rich multicultural community; students should therefore be learning about it. Diverse perspectives exist right around the corner.

For Castillo, this is particularly important because of her identity as Chicana. She shared that a large portion of her work in high school, undergrad, and now at World Oregon has focused on, “the impact that Mexican American individuals have had on this state in particular. I get to talk about identity and the way that we’re coming to the table and really understanding this complex system of diversity that we have in the US has been a big focal point of mine” (Castillo). In a field that has historically been represented by white males, the future of international education is focused on and led by passionate voices such as Castillo that find importance in sharing their stories and their identity– stories that have also historically been marginalized.

The connection between community and classroom not only increases the feasibility of finding and teaching multiculturalism in the classroom, but it also shows students how to interact with people that might look, act, or dress differently than them. Gaining understanding from someone who is in their space and community and not halfway across the world is likely to better connect with students in your classroom. In addition, this also teaches students that don’t come from that background that these diverse ideas and communities are not far away, but rather right in your backyard. This makes learning come alive where more connections can be made because it matters and impacts every kid in the room. Global learning opens student’s world views and exposes them to different opportunities of which they may never have otherwise been aware. For students that come from less diverse, close-minded, and ultimately anti-globalist households, global education in the classroom might be the only chance they’ll get to learn about the world around them and how to better communicate with their peers and community members of which they may never have encountered before.

Eugene, Oregon, and the Buena Vista Elementary School community have also felt the impact of global perspectives in the classroom through the Amity program. Jessica Hughitt

shared how lasting relationships are made, and how, “The staff and the interns become friends, they hang out outside of school, the staff, there's a lot of joy in showing them around. Showing them what there is to do here, going out, dancing, trying new things, jujitsu, I mean the community loves to engage with these interns” (Hughitt). In addition, the Amity program includes host families housing interns throughout the year. In this, there is a reciprocal benefit of culture sharing, where interns get to learn about US home life, while host families get to learn about the culture of their intern. Hughitt shares that this is “long-lasting” (Hughitt).

#### **1.4 What is the big-picture benefit? Breaking down stereotypes and othering**

The US education system today is often characterized by highly politicized topics, values of individualism and freedom, and the inherent tendency to perpetuate stereotypes that “Other” cultures and people who may look different, act different, hold different values, practice different religions, and hold different cultural norms than that of the “typical” American in the US. In a country that has often been characterized as the “melting pot” of the world, where there is no one main identity, the politics of identity and who deserves the right to exist just as they are quite ironic. International student Andrea Brignacca shared how “Being an international student can bring a lot of positive things and negative things. never got discriminated against because fortunately for me, Italy is a country that is well-seen by the US for several reasons. But there are many countries that are not as well seen” (Brignacca). US culture is going through a highly volatile shift, where citizens are demanding equality and equity for historically marginalized groups who are often discriminated against, such as international students.

Global education, especially when started at a young age, can counteract Othering, and teach Americans in the US to celebrate and value cultures and ideals that might be different than their own. Wesley Hedgepeth, a High School History and Politics teacher in Richmond, VA, has

made humanizing the “Other” a cornerstone of his educational career. In conversation with Hedgepeth, he shared how by connecting students to stories and perspectives of real people in other places, students in his classroom have a greater understanding and empathy and therefore become better global citizens (Hedgepeth). Humanizing the “Other” teaches students not just what's in a textbook, but rather how to exist as good and compassionate human beings that understand the world around them. Hedgepeth also shared his firsthand account of the hard work of educators to have students leave their classroom with more than just curriculum-based learning, but rather as better human beings:

I think that one of the ways to ensure that students are able to leave your classroom being able to have more skills and understanding– the idea of humanizing the Other– is through providing them with frameworks like being able to source their information properly and being able to practice civil dialogue. In 2021 in about a third of the country, students were in classrooms where there was legislation that banned the teachers from talking about divisive topics... that idea of being able to discern high-quality sources, to be able to practice civil dialogue, and talk with one another about really hard topics, like giving sentence starters to students to literally have the words to disagree or to think deeper on a topic that might be a challenging one for them or their peers to talk about.  
(Hedgepeth)

For Hedgepeth, these ideals are not just a part of his classroom, but rather integral to his teaching and to creating better and more well-prepared citizens for the country and the world. This means not shying away from difficult topics, but rather teaching students how to research from high-quality sources, how to be informed, how to form their own opinions, and how to talk about these opinions with others respectfully and productively. Diversifying perspectives in the classroom is more than learning about world cultures, it is about breaking down harmful stereotypes that have plagued marginalized communities specifically in the US for hundreds of years.

For this same reason, Dr. John Smythe argues that utilizing RPCVs as a resource for insight into this cultural “otherness”, both during their time abroad and at home could be a useful tool for taking stress off educators while also bringing a global lens into K-12 schools. Smythe also underscores the importance of preserving the differences in cultural teaching between self and Other, as it allows for the nonviolent relationship between the two. In other words, recognizing differences, learning about them, and why someone or something might be different from you, gives way to cultural understanding and respect. Students learn to grow in their differences (Smythe, p. 11). Shifting our curriculum to value these differences and to learn about the Other moves our values away from standardization and unification, and towards respect for diversity and an ongoing conversation where every party is learning, even if it is anxiety provoking for educators. Within this framework, RPCVs can aid teachers in exploring curriculum from an international perspective because they have a more direct connection with the material. Smythe gives examples of different RPCVs, who have been able to share the intimate details of their experiences, which are eye-opening for students. In addition, he suggests how RPCVs also have a unique ability to connect with students who may come from different cultures and feel a sense of Otherness in US-based classrooms. This idea is presented as a bridge. In other words, the RPCV is the bridge between the content and the lives of students (p.229). RPCVs are useful tool or avenue to begin developing policies and practices which recognize the increasing cultural diversity in a globalized world and an increasingly globalized US education system. Smythe argues, “weaving intercultural insights into the U.S. education system at all levels can help to broaden and internationalize the curriculum where the goal is to value and learn from differences as well as to become a member of an equitable global community that resists standardization and sameness” (p. 263). RPCVs and their experiences can aid educators

and policymakers in fulfilling the need to teach cultural diversity in an ethical and responsible way that creates meaning for all parties involved.

Global programs are aiding in breaking down stereotypes in different ways. For example, in the ICSP program, students are encouraged to express their real opinions on certain topics, even if what they say, or think is controversial. This might be shocking to the audience and could even, “bring moral debates to the table. But this is just how we want the program to be, so to honor each of their own takeaways from their own culture” (Zhang). By encouraging international students to speak for themselves and their own opinions in presentations regardless of what the audience might think, it allows for further understanding of the nuances in human culture and existence. For example, in a hypothetical situation, a US student hearing from an international student from Russia in support of Ukrainian refugees during the current crisis in Ukraine might be shocking to learn. However, this also makes it clear to the US student that individual identity and opinions go beyond borders and cultural lines, and they often might have more in common than at first glance. This helps break down stereotypes and biases and creates space for connection and understanding. ICSP student Andrea Brignacca uses this philosophy in his presentations, sharing how he is, “a big believer in representing yourself”, so within his own presentations, he will, “mostly give a taste of what an Italian person looks like, what an Italian person talks like, and how an Italian person reacts and just give them the possibility to hear and experience someone that is actually from Italy” (Brignacca). Brignacca honors his heritage this way because he represents his own culture and family by accurately representing his own identity rather than what the audience may want or expect.

The Amity program at Buena Vista values this same ideal by providing interns with two different host families throughout the year. Every family has their own cultures and traditions in



the US just as every family and community does around the world. So, interns are placed in two different families throughout their year of service to expose interns to different cultural values and norms. For Amity, it is just as important for interns to have a better understanding of US-based values and culture as it is for students to learn cultural norms from the interns. In one example, one host family this year was a bit more of homebodies, taking day trips, but not traveling outside of the state too much as they're busy with school, work, and sports. The intern was able to experience this lifestyle. Then, in the second half of the year, they were moved to a host family, "that's very go-go-go" (Hughitt). This experience gave the intern a more well-rounded experience of US life. Though global programming, educators, and professionals may all go about diversifying education slightly differently, each group has a very similar end goal in mind: overcoming stereotypes and teaching the next generation about the values of human connection, conversation, and understanding.

## **Lessons for how it works well:**

Bringing new ideas, values, and curricula into the classroom, especially in a volatile political climate, undoubtedly comes with challenges. So, to make progress, it is important to lay out and understand how to overcome these roadblocks and still find success. In conversation with different groups and individuals engaged in global learning, this happens through starting at a young age, preparation, collaboration with different perspectives, and by emphasizing the mutually beneficial relationship that must be present between learners and educators.

### **2.1 Global education beginning at a young age**

Bringing International speakers into the K-12 classrooms brings ideas and learning happening through a textbook or a movie to life. It makes another part of the world very real and tangible rather than something that feels very far away. ICSP coordinator at the University of Oregon, Dr. Zhang, discusses how young learners are, “still in the process of receiving a lot of information. And this helps them decide what type of person they want to be, and what type of ideas they want to have in their mind or want to embrace in their mind” (Zhang). Primary and secondary schooling is a very formative time for students. Bringing ICSP presentations in while students are still figuring out the world exposes them to different perspectives and cultures at exactly the right time. Andrea Brignacca, MBA student and member of the ICSP program at Portland State emphasizes this same ideal. When he is in the classroom, he tries to, “make people comfortable with diversity, with things that are different, and with people, they’re not used to seeing, so they can understand, and maybe they can create their own idea” (Brignacca). Programs such as ICSP, which bring a global lens into the classroom are successful because it exposes students to new cultures and ideals while they’re already trying to make sense of their lives, their community, and their world. When students are prepared at a young age to interact

with different cultures, identities, and beliefs, they grow up to be better global citizens that are less likely to learn– and subsequently, must unlearn– biases. ICSP is not the only organization advocating for global learning to begin at a young age. The global classroom department at World Oregon provides resources and opportunities for global education at all ages, because the classroom is, “how you form your understanding of the world, and that starts at a young age... [global education] prepares anyone going out into the world and students are better equipped to connect, relationship build, be more successful in any career, and it’s really the tools for the future of any global citizen human being. So, it just makes a lot of sense to start at a young age” (Chism-Winfield). For World Oregon, the “proper” age to begin learning about the world is not even a question.

This same philosophy can also be found within schools and classrooms. At Buena Vista Elementary School, a Spanish immersion school, students were taught in kindergarten starting with a 90:10 model, where 90% of teaching was in Spanish and 10% in English. As students got older, more teaching was done in English and less in Spanish, until Spanish was taught under a 50:50 model. Though this is no longer the model, this was the model because, “The idea is that they’re young, they’re sponges, so let’s get that Spanish in really young, and then as they grow up, they get more equalized Spanish and English” (Hughitt). Young learners have minds that are still developing and forming their own ideas of the world each and every day. As an educator and intern, Julia Vozmediano has found that throughout the year as students grow, she often hears, “Please Maestra, we want to learn more” (Vozmediano). While her 1st-grade class was more focused on taking information in, her 3rd-grade class is very inquisitive and often wants Vozmediano to share more. In a school where “it is the philosophy that kids learn because of the culture... for them, it is a way to learn more Spanish and to be the person that they want to be”,

students are taught the importance and impact that learning about the world can have. Students are given salient developmental skills through cultural learning from the very beginning of their schooling. Many of the organizations and representatives invested in global education use this as a tool to aid students in becoming better and well-prepared global citizens. Educators are aware of this as well. Emily Muellenberg shared how in her teaching even at the high school level, she finds that students have, “young developing minds that probably need a few more guardrails” (Muellenberg). In short, professionals in the spaces of working with students find that there is a responsibility and opportunity as an adult and educators to guide and shape young minds because it is a tool for finding success in advocating for global education and in preparing students for the highly connected and globalized world, we exist in.

## **2.2 Proper preparation**

Global education works well through proper preparation for both learners and educators to enter the field. Though preparation or pre-work may often be overlooked, a lack of proper preparation can lead to uncomfortable and therefore unproductive conversations for all parties involved. Especially in a scenario where an international speaker is coming to speak to US American students, there may be an added layer of a language barrier and cultural difference. Those involved in planning logistics, “don’t necessarily realize how important it is to scaffold their experience and not just pop a speaker or international visitor into a space that's not thought through and intentional about how you’re doing that, it's super important” (Chism-Winfield). Scaffolding means preparing the speaker for the space they’re walking into and making sure they’re comfortable and prepared to speak about their experiences and ask questions. For example, in ICSP programs, this means an entire term or semester dedicated to learning about public speaking and the kinds of questions speakers may be asked. Scaffolding also means

preparing students with whom the speaker is going to be and making sure they know how to ask respectful yet inquisitive questions. Cross-cultural communication has the potential to bring in many “touchy” subjects such as race, religion, politics, gender, etc. So, students must also know how to address these kinds of topics. Intentionality is important. ICSP students often find that students are young, so, “their attention span goes from 30 seconds to a minute”, so it is difficult to have learners remember something from the presentation. It takes work for students, “Not just to have a monotone presentation about something, but to bring energy to them, and move and show them around and give them examples” (Brignacca). This does not come naturally to all presenters. Julia Vozmediano reflected on her first few days in her 1st-grade classroom, sharing that it was intimidating because she wasn’t expecting to teach at such a young age that often doesn’t speak English very clearly yet, let alone Spanish. Hindsight, she wishes she had a bit more preparation and skills for how to interact with and teach a 6-year-old because it does not come as naturally to her. Luckily, Vozmediano shared that she was able to adapt, but this anecdote from her experience sheds light on just how important preparation and scaffolding are for global education to be productive and successful in having learners retain information and therefore be more well-prepared for their future.

### **2.3 Collaboration with different perspectives in decision making**

The National Council for the Social Studies is a 100-year-old organization that advocates for the necessity of social studies curriculums and supports educators across the country. Wesley Hedgepeth previously mentioned as an educator in Richmond, VA, also serves as the President-Elect for this organization. When discussing the council's role in diversifying the classroom with Hedgepeth, he shared how the council finds success through strategic planning changes every 5 years. As an executive council, Hedgepeth and his affiliates are constantly in discussion and

reflection about the needs of educators and how they can better represent these needs. The council makes decisions along with, “The House of Delegates [who] is made up of all of our different affiliates like our indigenous community, other special interest communities, our college and university faculty, our international assembly, and all of our state affiliates” (Hedgepeth). Changes are made with the guidance of many different special interest groups. Hedgepeth demonstrates how the council finds success through constant collaboration and communication between the executives and the diverse populations it represents. This is true not only in strategic planning but also in response to current events.

In August 2022, the College Board, a nonprofit organization that offers advanced placement classes to high school students to earn college credit, announced a new class on African American studies. Florida Governor Ron DeSantis isn't against the new curriculum, stating it, “was not historically accurate and violated a state law that regulates how race-related issues are taught in public schools”, (Fawcett). The College Board later released an updated curriculum, which no longer included many of the topics DeSantis publicly disagreed with, such as some of the names of Black writers that could have been associated with “critical race theory”, as well as politically hot topics such as the Black Lives Matter movement. Throughout this controversy, Hedgepeth was alerted by their College and University Faculty affiliate of the NCSS with concern about the College Boards' timing and that it was in direct response to DeSantis. Hedgepeth reflected on how their, “constituencies were looking to us to lead, to make the statement about the issues... It was a statement that wasn't necessarily 100% what anybody wanted but it was what we thought was most necessary at the time”. As a 501(c)3 organization, the NCSS does not take interest in partisan debates about them but also how the NCSS would not find success without diverse interests invested in their work. Hedgepeth states that “We were

concerned about the actions of the Florida Governor and the College Board, but we were also concerned about the protection of our teachers in Florida and what a statement might say or do to them”, as their priority is educators and education over politics (Hedgepeth). By leading with this priority in mind and being attuned and collaborative with the needs of many different constituents and perspectives, the NCSS can continue its important advocacy and find success.

While the NCSS is a national organization and therefore has access to more affiliates and a larger group of perspectives, other organizations had pieces of this same ideal. At World Oregon, Andrea Vanessa Castillo believes in representing a multitude of voices and therefore weaves it into her work. For example, she recently hosted a round table with 16 different countries represented where they discussed the question: what does diversity mean? This opportunity provided space not only for important learning to happen but also for many different perspectives to come together and have productive conversations about difficult or broad topics. When making decisions about the future of one's organization, classroom, business, school, nonprofit, etc., including multiple perspectives in decision-making aids in accurately portraying different cultures and breaking down stereotypes.

#### **2.4 Mutually beneficial relationships**

Organizations within the field of global education have found high levels of success because of the emphasis on mutually beneficial relationships between educators or speakers and learners. In other words, now more than ever, there is an emphasis on serving international speakers and guests just as much as it is important for learners to find lessons and value in what they are hearing. For ICSP students, they're told, “You're never responsible for telling everything about your country. You're talking about a really personal experience and you're only representing your family or your group of people in your country” (Zhang). This is successful for

many reasons, but most importantly because it teaches students never to generalize one's culture, and speakers get to speak on what they're comfortable and safe with sharing. International students might sometimes be grappling with difficult topics from their home country just as much as the students are teaching. Forcing them to share on these topics is harmful to speakers because it creates an unsafe environment, closing off the speaker from US classrooms and culture. Furthermore, this also can lead to tokenizing or Othering of another person or culture because they're forced into speaking on things that don't represent their personal values. In other words, ICSP is a successful program because there is a focus on the needs of ICSP students and what they're comfortable sharing as much as there is an emphasis on sharing their culture. Program coordinator Dr. Zhang states, "This is really about our own students' overall well-being too. So, we never want to have a student in a situation where they're talking about something they're not comfortable talking about" (Zhang). Programming that focuses on a person over "profit" -- profit means what they can teach others about their culture or what they have to offer in the classroom-- leads to success for ICSP through maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship for both student speakers and requestors.

ICSP also has the opportunity for students to learn from one another. Brignacca reflects on this, sharing how, "We learn about diversity, people from different parts of the world, and most of them are from countries I've never gotten in touch with. To hear their stories about their culture and how they deal with different things, different stereotypes, how they live, what they eat..." (Brignacca). If global programming is only focused on the benefits for one group and not another, opportunities for learning are limited. In addition, there is no incentive for speakers to share their culture or their stories if they are not taken care of and there is no space for them to



learn. In other words, ICSP finds success in its programming because there is space for learning to happen in many different capacities.

The Amity intern program at Buena Vista Elementary holds this same ideal. Jessica Hughitt shares:

It's a win-win because [interns] come here, they support our school, they get to learn about our culture, and they improve their English. For many of them, it's the very first time they've traveled outside their country, so it's a big experience for them. For us, we get to meet these wonderful human beings, we get to learn about their cultures, they stay with host families, so a lot of friendships are made which lead to ongoing relationships, families travel to go visit these interns they had connections with and vice versa (Hughitt).

The Amity program experiences very similar successes as ICSP through making sure all parties involved in global programming benefit from the work that's being done. Not only is important learning done in the classroom, but interns are also getting an enriching cultural experience. Julia Vozmediano reflects that, "seeing the kids share with their family what they have learned from me is the best part. When they send me videos saying, 'Look at this, I cooked from the recipe you gave me with my family' or 'Look I have been talking with my family about tradition and I want to go to Spain' I like when they share with their families" (Vozmediano). Relationships form between interns and families, as well as in other areas of the world. In other words, it is global education that inspires cross-cultural communication and relationship building. For Amity programming, there is no losing.

## **Obstacles to Success in Global Education**

Throughout conversations with professionals and students in the global education field, it became abundantly clear that despite one's best efforts, the US education system does not make global education a priority, and therefore it is difficult for professionals and students alike to advocate for this work. Obstacles to success included: equity and access, quickly changing curriculums, funding, difficulties for international students and workers, teacher bandwidth, and the politics of teaching.

### **3.1 Equity/ Access**

Equity and access to learning tools is a national issue and affects those in education from the top organizations and federal councils all the way down to every individual educator and school. For the National Council for the Social Studies, this is their everyday reality and difficulty, as they “have affiliates and stakeholders all over the country and all over the world. So, it’s difficult to have a one size fits all approach. We certainly are aware of the needs of our individual members and our teachers across the country...” (Hedgepeth). Each area and school district that the council represents has different needs, abilities, and access, and it becomes a barrier to successful work when there is nuance from person to person, state to state. In another example, though Emily Muellenberg moved school districts in the 2022-2023 school year for the first time in her 18-year teaching career, her philosophy of helping students find relevance in their learning remains the same. However, with the switch, she is now able to tap into more resources offered by the school library—partially because her new school is twice the size of the previous school. The librarians at Grandview High School have access to, “newspapers from all over the world, or they can help you streamline your searches”, (Muellenberg). In summary,

Meulenberg's time as an educator points to a large issue within the US education system when it comes to global learning: questions of equal access. She points out that global learning is not a standard, and therefore teachers must go out of their way to make sure their lessons are relevant and globally connected. In an education system where access to information is unequal and teachers are already overworked, this is often not feasible. In addition, she is now able to find more resources because of a new school district. In Muellenberg's experience, Cherry Creek School District has great licenses and databases for the entire district to access. Though Douglas County School District—Muellenberg's previous district—may have also had certain licenses, spending on these databases is different, budgeting is different, leadership represents different values, and the districts differ in size. Educators are on the front lines of inequity in education. Muellenberg shared that in her experience:

When you look at the [US] American education system and you look at the disparity between staffing and classroom numbers and department sizes, student enrollment, funding, how are you going to train these teachers, and what the school board policies are even like to get courses and books approved— I mean in my current district, all of that stuff is in reach. But you can imagine hundreds of places around the country where it's just not possible to have, for example, an African American English class. It's just not going to happen. You don't have the funding, you don't have the staffing, and the school board is just never going to approve it (Muellenberg).

Students and educators in one district have more access to information than another, only because of the neighborhood they live in or where they can find a job. In addition, teachers are now facing inequity in access to resources based on the politics of their school board, district, or state. Wesley Hedgepeth feels fortunate that his school will defend him as a teacher and his work if it's grounded in scholarship but recognizes this as a privilege that many other teachers around the country don't get to enjoy (Hedgepeth). Unequal access to unique resources and learning

opportunities is a reality for educators, not just in the Denver Metro Area, but all over the country.

Social studies curriculums vary across the US. Even between neighboring school districts, values, and lesson plans can be drastically different. Mike Hasley, Vice Principal at Hungary Creek Middle School in Glen Allen, VA, discussed this idea. In his previous role as a social studies educator, he struggled to write lesson plans because there was no national guidance, and the need for global studies in K-12 had to compete with other important content areas. In addition, it is competing against previous biases in people and curriculums, which has led to a highly Euro-centric view of history taught in many classrooms today. With such varying degrees of curriculums and expectations across the country, it is difficult to implement new ideas and programs for global studies learning. In short, the implementation of programs such as ICSP or even Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives needs to be individualized and cater to the audience of specific districts and schools. If the curriculum isn't uniform, neither can the implementation of the global studies curriculum. He shared how, "In some cases, there's an imaginary line drawn on the ground that is the difference. One zip code is different from another zip code and that impacts what a kid gets in the classroom" (Hasley). One's school district and school also affect what resources a student and teacher can access. He shared a story about how in his school district, every student was given a laptop for educational purposes by the year 2001. In his neighboring school district, where his children attended school, this was not the reality, further displaying how school location plays a large role in access to educational tools such as laptops.

### 3.2 Rapid shifts in curriculum

One aspect of becoming an educator that may be surprising to those not involved in this field is how often changes are made to the curriculum. In Mike Hasley's experience, the curriculum is reevaluated and changed every 7 years at the state level. He explained how "our last governor was a Democrat... under his governorship, the curriculum was being changed, and things were being added. And then the Republican governor was elected, and he put a break on it, he wanted to slow it down" (Hasley). Aside from the politics involved with this decision, it is difficult for educators when their curriculums and state standards are changed every few years. Amongst all the other issues that educators must deal with, they also must keep up with the changes in what the State expects them to teach. Educators could have lesson plans, books, and resources that all serve a purpose in the classroom, and they have found success in their use. But the State as well as the School Board can come in and make changes, forcing the educator to redo all the work they've already completed. It is difficult to build on important work that has been done in the classroom when educators must start over so often.

Rapid changing standards and expectations also affect teacher attitude toward the school and toward their profession. Muellenberg shared how in her school district and in Colorado, curriculum changes are made every three years. This leads to teachers feeling a bit cynical about the future and about adding elements of global education and lessons that value Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion into their lesson plans because:

Nothing ever sticks in education, so older teachers are a little jaded thinking that these ideas are just a flash in the pan. So, you don't want to invest a lot of time and energy into them because in three years they're just going to have the teachers throw the changes away and try something new (Muellenberg).

Muellenberg reinforced that not all older teachers are unwilling to teach new and inclusive ideals, but it is more difficult when some educators have spent so many years having

expectations of them constantly changing. While young teachers often enter the workforce excited and idealistic about the future of education, older teachers often become jaded by the system that has made their job harder. Introducing elements of global education is difficult under these conditions.

### **3.3 Funding**

Global education initiatives face funding shortages like funding issues within any nonprofit sector. This is because nonprofits are often at the forefront of new thinking with global education but are also expected to bridge the gap between what the government funds in education and what actual classrooms and schools need. So, these organizations are always in need of more money. For Dr. Zhang, finding funding and advocating for programming is a large part of her job.

I feel like this is meaningful, ICSP is very meaningful. Not only the different people we can bring from different parts of the world but also our community is learning so much from them. And the scholarship is really critical for the students. Without ICSP they wouldn't be able to come here. But the reality is if we want to bring more people into the University of Oregon, we need more funding. So that's the reality. Without people advocating for ICSP or for international programming as a whole, then this is just going to fall away, and we won't have these chances for our future students (Zhang).

For these international students, funding is the difference between getting to Oregon and being a student at all. ICSP at UO began in 1982 by the Oregon State Board of Higher Education and is currently funded by the UO (“International Cultural Service Program (ICSP) | International Student and Scholar Services”). Funding from higher education is an avenue that K-12 schools could use to bring a global lens into the classroom more successfully. More specifically, if the higher education institution funds this kind of work, this makes it even easier for K-12 schools as

they're often overfunded and overworked. A program such as ICSP not only benefits the students involved because they're rewarded a scholarship but also provides a resource for K-12 educators that they might not otherwise have had because of budgeting constraints. In short, having the funding to support their work is highly important for ICSP. For Amity Institute interns at Buena Vista Elementary School, financing their travels is often the biggest burden to their experience, just like ICSP students. Amity interns, "come from countries struggling economically or their family is. This is a life decision for them to invest everything, their savings or go into debt to come" (Hughitt). For many coming to the US to share their culture or to work in the Global education space is one of the largest decisions they'll make in their life because they must invest everything they have into traveling. Without funding, there is a harmful domino effect on the entire community as international students do not attend the university, they do not enter our community and become active participants of it, ICSP presentations do not take place, less cross-cultural communication takes place, and ultimately the community becomes less diverse.

### **3.4 Difficulties for international students and workers in the US**

When students and workers do find a way to make it to the US to share their culture or work in spaces for international education, a difficulty that'll likely face when they arrive is poor support systems and sometimes a sense of unwelcome attitudes from Americans from the US. Andrea Brignacca came to the US when he was just 17 years old and attended school in South Carolina. Then, he attended Rawlins College in Orlando, Florida for his undergraduate degree. Now, he is finishing his MBA at Portland State University and reflecting on his experiences living in these different communities. He shares how, "Fortunately, I think Portland is a very

good city for [international students]. Like I don't feel the need as much as I did in Florida to have help or community. In Florida, all of my friends were internationals for that reason because I needed that community” (Brignacca). While Brignacca joked that maybe it’s just because he doesn’t like Americans from the US, he found that Florida was a much more difficult space to be an international student in. In Oregon, most of his friends are American students from the US, because he feels more welcome than he did in Florida. While Oregon undoubtedly has a racist past and many years of work to do to make its future more diverse, Brignacca’s reflection is very telling about the experience of international students in the US. There have been times when he felt he had to be friends mostly with other international students, because no one else would understand his experience in a place that was not overly welcoming of his presence. Julia Vozmediano has similar reflections, stating, “I have seen with me and the other interns the cultural shock can be a problem because we have studied how to be a teacher but, in our countries, not here. So, there are things that you must adapt to. That can be hard” (Vozmediano). Speaking on behalf of her intern cohort, Vozmediano’s experience as an Amity intern sheds light on how international visitors can also experience difficulties in adapting to US culture. On top of systems that do not support international visitors, interns, and speakers such as Vozmediano and her fellow student teachers are put under large strains mentally and physically to come to the US and work. This lack of support for international visitors is not only a part of US sentiment but often is a part of US systems as well. Jessica Hughitt serves in her role as a support for Amity Interns, meaning a large portion of her role is aiding interns in the logistics of moving to the US for a year. Hughitt shares,

It’s been really eye-opening on a community level, there are a lot of positives, but also how many barriers there are for foreigners. They come here, they need to get a social security number, they need to set up a bank account, there's all these to-do’s when they first come here, and there are millions of barriers. A lot of



information is not translated yet, or there's no one at the bank who speaks Spanish, or you must have a social security number to set up a bank account, but that takes up to a month, so there's a barrier of getting paid. There are all these little things that are really frustrating at times... For example, just trying to try to find mental health services for one of our interns was a nightmare... recognizing the lack of ease it is for internationals or foreigners is a step towards hopefully being able to create awareness of that lack and make it easier but that's something definitely community wise that these interns bring to the surface (Hughitt).

US systems are just not set up for international visitors. For programming that prioritizes and brings in these visitors, this is a large barrier to success.

### **3.5 Teacher Bandwidth**

Unsurprisingly, one of the biggest issues for almost all nonprofits, students, and educators that participated in this research shared how the most difficult part of this work is teacher bandwidth. In speaking with educators such as Mike Hasley and Emily Muellenberg, it becomes clear just how many hats educators must wear. Emily Muellenberg stated how teachers today not only have to be educators but also social workers, support workers, psychologists, etc. Educators are pulled in so many different directions, so it is difficult to ask teachers to add more to their already very busy schedules. In addition, Muellenberg also spoke about incorporating aspects of global learning into the curriculum. She discusses how even if the educator finds it highly valuable, the teacher also must be highly intentional about how and why they want to accomplish these goals. Global studies curriculums, resources for things such as Holocaust and Genocide studies, lesson plans, and so on need to be constantly created and updated. Certain school districts have more to support teachers, but sometimes there's just not enough time. So, educators must put more thought and intentionality into this work. She argues, "If you're not intentional, I think it's really easy to let globalization and interconnections totally pass you by in almost any teaching subject", (Muellenberg). It's difficult to ask educators to implement new

global-based education ideals when so much of their work is already a strain. Global learning cannot happen without thought, sensitivity, and deliberate planning. How can educators do this when they're already so overworked? Even when educators find this work important and want to implement more aspects of global and diverse perspectives into their lessons which would build and connect their classrooms more, there's just not enough time. So, educators often, "fall back on the things that are already at your fingertips, or things you already know, or things that your colleagues have done" (Muellenberg). Creating new lessons and implementing new ideas is fun for so many teachers, but simply isn't enough time to create and workshop these. In a system where global studies are shrinking because "it has to compete against US history, state history, civics, and government", professionals in the Global Studies field must get creative with how to support teachers while still advancing their missions and moving global education forward (Hasley).

In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic drastically changed the landscape of education for the US education system. Aside from the difficulties with online teaching, the pandemic put thousands of teachers in a state of survival. Chism- Winfield experienced this firsthand when implementing teacher training workshops for educators in the Portland area. Pre-pandemic, these workshops would be full, and educators attended with a sense of hope and liveliness. Now, educators are, "just not able to have as much time and energy or capacity to do the professional development that brings some of those workshops and happenings" (Chism-Winfield). This becomes a large problem because "some of the best teachers are already burning out and that's scary because they're on the front lines of helping students learn about the world. Those are kind of your go-to" (Chism-Winfield). Educators are immensely important, not only for students but for the future of government, the economy, business, and the planet. If teachers are unable to

continue their work because of the strains of the pandemic in an education system that already does not support them, the future of all our systems becomes unstable. Changes because of teacher bandwidth and COVID-19 strains were made similarly to Buena Vista Elementary School in Eugene, Oregon, where the school recently restructured its education model (see page 20). There was not enough support staff, educators were spread too thin, and ultimately, their old model “was not sustainable. We could not find enough teaching staff to provide that model” (Hughitt). Schools are being forced to restructure and rethink the ways that they’re providing an education to students because the strain from the pandemic, along with the high expectations of teachers with a very little monetary payoff, is too large on educators. If the US Education System intends to have any teachers left in the coming years, addressing teacher bandwidth and lack of support needs to be a main priority.

## **The Benefits and Harm of Technology in the Classroom**

Technology plays a particularly crucial role in global education. Technology has shifted the world in three ways: (1) serving as a catalyst for rapidly increasing globalization, (2) serving as a tool to further connect our classrooms and our communities to other areas of the globe, and (3) ironically disconnecting individuals from the world around them because of its addictive qualities. In short, it is impossible to talk about globalization and global education without the discussion of technology.

### **3.1 Benefits of technology**

For educators, the evolution of technology over the past 20-30 years has become a game of catch-up in which they must invest time into understanding technology which continues to rapidly advance ahead of comprehension. US Students in today's classrooms have grown up with technology, so they know how to use it to their advantage both to help and hinder their learning. However, teachers and schools have found ways to use technology as a resource. For example, Wesley Hedgepeth found an organization that sets up shipping containers in public parks and spaces intended to connect you to the rest of the world.

Inside they would have the technology to connect and do a Skype session with people in other cities. You could reserve it ahead of time or you can go in there randomly, so my students and I went in there and we were studying about Nigeria. That's one of the countries that we're required to teach about, and we learned that there was one of these containers set up in Lagos, Nigeria. So, we organized a conversation so my comparative government students could chat about whatever they wanted, but they came prepared with some questions.

With the help of a creative organization that was able to set up these containers, technology allowed Hedgepeth and his students to have real conversations with the people and

cultures they were learning about in school. This aids students in connecting to their learning and realizing that global education is not just what you read in textbooks, but rather real-life people who reap the consequences and the benefits of everything a US student may be learning. Not only is this a learning opportunity for US students but is also easier for international professionals involved in global education. Technology makes this space more accessible. When hosting international visitors at World Oregon, Andrea Vanessa Castillo explains how “there are so many folks who would never be able to come in person because they’re a nurse working in their country and can’t take that time off but because there were virtual options available, they were able to participate the past two years” (Castillo). While the COVID-19 pandemic brought hardship and difficulty all over the world, it also aided almost every sector of the world to consider how it could adapt and change toward the needs of others. Now, World Oregon has learned more about the ways they can utilize various platforms to have an impact, and save visitors time and money from traveling, especially when this is inaccessible for so many.

Mike Hasley has similar experiences from his classrooms in Virginia, where he explained how technology has allowed for access to resources he may never have had otherwise. Even just 20 years ago, “A teacher wanted to show you a video and some other teacher had it from the library and there's only one copy, then you didn't get to watch the video. But most computers these days have access to anything you want to watch. Virtual resources" (Hasley). Technology has aided teachers in creating meaningful connections for students, where they see learning come to life and students understand their learning in a way that was not possible before. In addition, Hasley’s students have become “more creative”. In Hasley’s district, there is a focus on “student ownership and creativity. We’ll have students using 3D printers, creating movies, anything beyond making a PowerPoint, things like that, maybe they’ll create a podcast. So, it’s nice that

we have these tools that allow them to be creative” (Hasley). Technology also aids students in exploring and discovering things on their own. Students know and understand technology more than adults do because they’ve spent their whole life around technology. They’re intuitive and able to create using technology as a tool just as educators do. In addition, as a consequence of student knowledge of technology is that they’re able to, “keeps teachers more accountable because the students know what's happening and they see what's going on in the world and they want to know more about it. And so, they ask teachers”. Hedgepeth adds that “teachers aren’t always at the forefront of that, because we’re so busy and we can't always do that, but students are keeping us on and reminding us that we need to engage with diverse perspectives and current events” (Hedgepeth). When used correctly, Technology not only has the power to enhance learning and creativity but also to build a relationship between student and teacher that isn’t based on power dynamics. Rather, it is based on a mutual understanding that teachers and students have expectations of each other, and just as much as a teacher expects students to follow rules and do their best in their classroom, students also expect teachers to perform well and teach them about the world around them. The technology essentially aids in building a classroom partnership.

### **3.2 Harms of technology**

Just like many other educational tools, technology can hinder students in the classroom if not used correctly. As a result of access to phones and media, students' attention is pulled in so many different directions, that teachers must learn how to respond to the changing needs of students today. For many educators, “curriculum matters, but in a history class you can google a lot of the stuff we’re going to learn in class. So, then it's like: how do we also get them their social skills and work habits and resiliency” (Muellenberg). While technology has the potential

to aid in an educational experience, things such as social media have had the opposite effect on students, where they no longer have the attention span to make sense of what they're learning. This makes teaching students more than just curriculum— but rather the skills they'll need in life— that much more difficult. This struggle is shared among different educators of all different grade levels, where “kids use technology to do what they're not supposed to do. It's new for teachers to manage. Because kids can now say, ‘Hey I'm going to go to the bathroom.’ and then they'll plan their bathroom trip together” (Hasley). While this example does not have a large consequence anecdotally, it serves as a larger analogy of the access that students have in the classroom today. Students are no longer focused on one thing at one time because they can look to social media and technology at any moment and in any place. For Brignacca, this is a difficulty in his work because students have attention spans that feel like “30 seconds to a minute” (see page 21) (Brignacca). In short, students are easily distracted and constantly look to technology as a distraction, leading to harm because of technology in the classroom.

A recent struggle because of technology for Emily Muellenberg is the use of headphones in the classroom. Headphones have slowly been designed over time to be smaller and smaller. Now, a wireless earpiece can look as small as a quarter. In Muellenberg's classroom, though she confiscates phones for the period of class time, “every once in a while, you get a glimpse and I would say at any given time in most of my classrooms, there are at least 3 to 6 kids who have headphones in with music playing even though their phones are on the wall” (Muellenberg). The word used to describe the effects of technology: addiction. For example:

One student told me, and she was funny about it, but it's also not funny. She told me that her pediatrician said that her brain has been rewired to pay attention better with music in her ear. Because she listens to so many hours of music a day that she is actually distracted when there is no music playing, she broke herself. She rewired her brain (Muellenberg).

While this is unlikely to happen to many students, it also displays the ways in which used improperly, technology can harm students mentally, physically, and socially. Furthermore, in Muellenberg's perspective, technology has made students more isolated and ironically, less connected. She says, "I just think human relationships have changed. I just don't think [students] have the same empathy, they don't have the same social skills, and they don't know how to walk into a room and talk to an adult in a polite way or respectful way" (Muellenberg). While technology has the potential to connect students and classrooms to people and places across the world, it also has the potential to hinder them in social and emotional skills. This is a new challenge facing educators and yet another roadblock they must overcome to support student learning and student success in the long run.



## **Ethics of Deconstructing Residual Colonialism in Education**

Within Social Studies education, the history that is portrayed is often told from the perspective of the “winners”. In US history, this tends to be white, cis-gendered men of high class from Western Civilizations. This can be explained by lessons about US founding fathers from an early age, places like Mount Vernon being a tourist attraction, and celebrations of Thanksgiving as a peaceful exchange between colonists and Native Americans. Historically, this leads to lessons from a Euro-centric and white-washed lens. In turn, this creates a colonial gaze for all curricula and programming. Our education systems were also created as a mechanism to reinforce colonialism. Anthropology Professor Peter Demerath speaks on this at an address for the Council of Anthropology and Education, where he states, “I come to this also from a journey of witnessing, ethnographically, the distortion, radical inequality, alienation, hopelessness, and pain that human-constructed educational institutions can inflict on young people, especially African American, Indigenous people, and People of Color” (Demerath, p.1). During his time as a professor, he has seen firsthand the harm that colonialism in education has provided for marginalized communities through unequal access, harmful teaching methods, and the notion of competitive individualism as the one and the only way to success. Demerath points to the writings of Kirsten Olsen and Lizania Cruz, explaining how students have been “wounded by” US American schooling, and how for so many, their “[US] American Dream” died when they began schooling. He refers to a kind of “imperial debris” from ways of American schooling that have not been updated or modernized for a hundred years (Demerath, p.3). He makes the argument that US schooling is riddled with inequity and close-mindedness because of colonialism.

Global education can be used as a tool to overcome the hardship that has come from a colonial gaze. However, this also begs the question of how programming must be conducted ethically. When asked about the ethics of international education as a field, many respondents struggled. This is because “with international education it is complicated. It’s always complicated, always ongoing, and you’re always moving with the process” (Zhang). However, it is necessary to face questions of ethics head-on, because otherwise, it is impossible to make progress towards more inclusive and diverse systems.

#### **4.1 Active Conversation and Reflection**

World Oregon specifically has dedicated both time and research to answering this question and how to bring diversity into their spaces and their programs more ethically. As an entire field and network, important conversations are happening about how organizations are showing up in the world and how they’re actively working on their Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives. The field of international relations has, “had some historically problematic areas of whose story is being told and really the colonial, white privileged stance of the world”, and World Oregon in the past has, “veered away from talking about racism, areas of domestic, and local topics that I think that we now are pushing and advocating for” as a result of active conversations of how they want to show up in the world and if they’re ethically representing global cultures. For Vanessa Castillo:

I think that we’re being called in different directions right now that is requiring us to either reaffirm what our mission is or take a different perspective on how we are building a presence in the community. So, I think that we’re in a very transformative time right now that is calling us to look at our existing programs

and say okay are we really holding onto this? Or are we going to be evolving into a different space? (Castillo)

While there are no clear answers on how to do international education “correctly”, World Oregon is working towards deciding whether the direction of their organization plays into ideals of colonialism and how they’re going to work against these harmful ideals. At an organizational level, it is important to continue conversations and reflection about diversity in strategy and in educational implementation. For the NCSS, “We are constantly in the discussion– we as the executive board– meeting regularly to talk about the different issues that come across our desks. So, there's a lot of reflection happening. We are in touch with our state affiliates... the teachers on the ground in different cities, understanding how things are happening for them and what their needs are” (Hedgepeth). The NCSS can find success in continually questioning the ethics of social studies curriculum, who is affected, and how topics are taught because they are collaborating with people and perspectives from all over the country. Furthermore, the NCSS stands for teaching the whole story of US history and states that this, “has been a priority of the council since its inception. We’re 103 years old and we’ve always stood for best practices in teaching and learning in social studies. So, part of this would be including the full story of imperialism and colonialism” (Hedgepeth). It is necessary to question critically if a 103-year-old organization could have always stood for diversity in programming despite the multiple cultural shifts and social justice movements of the 20th and 21st centuries, reactionary movements against these, multiple world wars, economic depressions, etc. which have disproportionately harmed diverse communities. Questioning one's own systems and processes is an important step in making progress forward. However, the NCSS is also taking the correct strides, through things

such as constant reflection, which will move the organization in a direction toward more diversity in programming and a recognition of colonialism.

#### **4.2 From whose voice?**

Understanding the ethics of global education brings forward questions of who is teaching certain information, how it is being communicated, and if they're being taken care of. The ICSP program at UO focuses heavily on student well-being and making sure students are financially, physically, and mentally healthy before anything else. In addition, students are told they never have to answer any questions they aren't comfortable with, and that they're not responsible for representing anything other than their personality and experiences. In short, individuals do not represent an entire culture, and therefore their experiences should not be generalized. These priorities demonstrate a tool for deconstructing a colonial gaze because it works against tokenizing certain people and cultures. In addition, it centers the individual students and their needs rather than their educational "capital"; it's not only about what the student can teach to others but rather their needs and comfort in sharing their culture.

Teachers often share feedback on how successful having an ICSP student speak in their classroom is helpful in working against a US colonial norm. In particular, one 5th-grade teacher at Chapman Elementary School states how this program exposed his kids to different "cultures and perspectives spoken authentically by a person of that culture. The children are more engaged when they hear stories from a real person than a video clip or read in a book" ("Testimonials of ICSP at PSU"). Adding a global lens to K-12 classrooms comes with challenges of how to authentically present information from a perspective that isn't whitewashed or a colonial gaze. This teacher highlights how a program such as ICSP is successful in omitting this challenge and

is a fantastic resource for educators. Another testimonial from an administrative intern at Portland Public Schools discusses how their students were inspired and enchanted by the cultural treasure shared by ICSP students. There is a need for authenticity in teaching students about the world around us. Oftentimes, this means stories must be shared from voices other than just that of the educator.

However, to further complicate this conversation, even when educators do want to bring in diverse perspectives and recognize the correct ways to tell others' stories, educators often struggle with the ability to teach outside of a colonial gaze even if they believe in it because of the politicization of education. For example, Mike Hasley recalls a time when he was questioned why he was teaching about Islamic cultures and not enough about Christianity, even though he teaches in a public American school where connections to religious teachings should not exist. In short, the field of international relations has only recently begun to question the ethics of bringing multiculturalism into the classroom and how to appreciate versus appropriate culture.

#### **4.3 The Peace Corps: A Case Study**

Similar to World Oregon conversations which reflect on the role they've played in global colonialism, representatives from the Peace Corps are coming to similar conclusions about changes that must be made. Carolyn Williams, a Returned Peace Corps volunteer, and Peace Corps Recruiter at the University of Oregon agrees that her organization undoubtedly has played a role historically in a colonial agenda. When she first took the job as a Peace Corps recruiter, she was concerned about what values she was representing. She states, "I think that global development can be super problematic but the way the Peace Corps is situated, it minimizes a lot of that risk of being a Neocolonialist organization", (Williams). One way the Peace Corps does

this is by only entering countries that are asking for volunteers. In fact, countries must apply to be a part of the program. The Peace Corps has volunteers for many different sectors including economics, agriculture, and education. The country must also apply for the type of volunteer wanted, and the Peace Corps will never send any type of volunteer other than what is requested. In addition, as soon as they want volunteers to leave their country, volunteers are gone. Williams also discusses how, “If you go to the Peace Corps, you’re going to be working with a community. You have no ulterior motive. Your job is to help that community and to understand and experience it”, (Williams). It is important to note that the idea of an ulterior motive has been highly debated. The Peace Corps has three goals: to meet the needs of the country, to promote a better understanding of US-based America and Americans to the world, and to promote a better understanding of world cultures to US-based Americans. According to the Peace Corps as an organization, a volunteer's time in the Peace Corps has no purpose other than to fulfill these three goals and to create a mutually beneficial relationship between the volunteer and the host community. However, as a volunteer and representative of the Peace Corps, Williams tends to lean into these debates any using a critical lens for international aid organizations. When students question Williams on the history of the Peace Corps and about the role they may be playing in a colonial structure, she has productive conversations with students as communication and conversation are the first step to facilitating change. She often tells students that the fact that they're even asking these questions means they're okay. In other words, for future volunteers under Williams's mentorship, it is important to continually ask questions and use a critical lens to understand the institution and systems we act under.

Another shift Williams shared about the changes within the Peace Corps that lend a hand in breaking down residual colonialism within our systems that promote globalism is simply

generational. In her experience, even if the Peace Corps did not represent diverse values, newer volunteers demand it, representing a cultural shift. Williams shared a story of attending a panel of returned volunteers, one of which returned from service in 2020. He shared how during his training, there were times when others would say something that expressed ideals of White Saviorism. White Saviorism is an ideal defined by a white person aiding or “rescuing” a non-white person ostentatiously or with the self-serving goal of being admired, often because they believe they have acknowledged that a non-white person does not have (Gomprecht). Other trainees would say, "That's not okay, and that's not what we're here for.' They would actively call out the volunteers, and that didn't happen when I was before, that kind of cultural shift” (Williams). Professionals involved in the international aid and education spaces must match this cultural shift towards actively calling one another out when they're incorrect. International spaces, especially those in the US, have historically appropriated cultures and caused harm to disenfranchised communities. So, professionals must become transparent and comfortable learning and unlearning these biases to move forward and appreciate culture rather than appropriate. Much of this is happening and will continue to happen at the grassroots level (Williams). When talking about appreciation versus appropriation:

I think it is important to be transparent in these conversations because, in all sorts of conversations we have about global education and understanding what's happening around the world, [appreciation versus appropriation] is a conversation that's very prominent both within the context of the US multiculturalism, but international engagement overall (Castillo).

In short, there is no option in avoiding this very important ethical dilemma. Professionals involved in spaces of international aid and education must look inward and question the impact of previous work, as well as how to diversify and reshape the future. While some organizations

are working towards this, others will be forced to change because of the cultural shift happening in newer generations of international aid and education professionals.

#### **4.4 Politics of Teaching**

Through conversations with educators— those experiencing the most first-hand consequences of the challenges in education— one overwhelming reality for educators today is the politics of the teaching profession. This challenge is twofold, as not only is, “so controversial today”, but also the politics and debates surrounding teaching as a career (Hedgepeth). The Virginian political climate is particularly volatile, where government officials have put “safeguards” in place to heavily regulate what is and what is not taught in the classroom. In one example, Mike Hasley has begun having to, “double-check and make sure that books that kids are reading aren’t rated R type of books. But what one parent might consider being rated R isn’t what other parents would consider being rated R, so there’s a lot of debate on which textbooks kids can be reading” (Hasley). Hasley explains how there are changes being put in place by the State, but no uniformity across districts, schools, or parents of what this means. This government involvement in the classroom opens the door for politics to control the classroom rather than actual learning. In another example from Virginia,

There was at one point, Governor Youngkin set up a tip line essentially for community members to turn in teachers, to report teachers if they were teaching divisive concepts. What happened is that that was eventually disbanded. Evidently, a lot of the comments were compliments. People were calling in and saying really great things about what teachers were doing and kind of clogged up the system and so they found out that that was not an effective way to tell on teachers (Hedgepeth).



While this example sheds light on a grassroots success in overcoming a tactic intended to divide Americans from the US and further strain attack teachers and their profession, it also serves as a cautionary anecdote of how politics and colonialism are controlling our education system today. Governors such as Governor Youngkin are using the politics of fear and surveillance to stop educators from teaching kids about diverse perspectives.

Another large debate in US politics today is that of Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory is defined as an “intellectual and social movement and loosely organized framework of legal analysis based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of color” (“Critical race theory (CRT) | Definition, Principles, & Facts”). The idea is that racial factors are inherent in our legal institutions and are used as a tool to maintain a racist system of social order. While this term was first coined in 1980, it has only recently become a term debated on the main political stage as a political tool to argue that the education system is “indoctrinating” US-based youth. However, for educators, this debate was and continues to be confusing, based on the origins of the acronym “CRT”. This is because, “if you take any good teacher prep stuff and if you do continuing education, Critical Race Theory is not what CRT typically stands for, for teachers. CRT stood for Culturally Responsive Teaching” (Muellenberg). Mike Hasley also emphasized this point, sharing how, “Culturally Responsive teaching has always been the original origin of the acronym ‘CRT’” (Hasley).

The conflation between culturally responsive teaching and critical race theory serves as an example of the politics involved in bringing diversity into the classroom. Education Week published an article in 2022 entitled “What is Culturally Responsive Teaching?” which clarifies

the similarities and differences between the two. The term “Culturally Responsive Teaching” was first coined in 2000 by Geneve Gay, inspired by frameworks of culturally relevant pedagogy in the 1990s. This teaching style “helps students of color see themselves and their communities as belonging in schools and other academic spaces, leading to more engagement and success” (Najarro). This approach to education includes anything from having diverse faces in books in the classroom, to teaching students to use a critical lens towards systems of inequity. Due to the politicization of education, as well as the use of the same acronym, this ideal has become conflated with Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory is not an approach to education as Culturally Responsive Teaching is. However, “because these pedagogies directly address aspects of students' cultural identities and how those identifiers are present in classroom conversations, legislation against critical race theory—or protests at school board meetings—often end up lumping these concepts together and targeting them in bans and investigations” (Najarro). A lack of understanding of what these two concepts are as well as how they may or may not play a role in one another has led to a conflation in understanding of the two. Other analyses of this ideal explain how Culturally Responsive Teaching and Critical Race Theory could work in tandem. One study argues that Critical Race Theory, “in addition to being used as a tool for investigating the pervasiveness of race bias in society, also provides a basis for critiquing the trends that multicultural education has encountered over the past 10 years”, (Wallace, p. 347). This study argues that multicultural education is liberal conjecture because of its focus on being united through differences rather than recognizing inequity because of differences. Therefore, “it is imperative for multicultural education to be culturally astute and responsive to prepare teachers for constructively addressing the influence of social inequity in their classrooms”, (Wallace, p.347). Through both secondary research scans and conversations with educators today, there is a

lack of widespread understanding of these concepts and how they could be beneficial or harmful. In addition, these ideals have only recently come to debate on the political mainstage, meaning there is little research on the effects of this wording mix-up.

While it is likely a political decision to use the same acronym to politicize the use of culture and race in the classroom, it is ultimately harming educators and students. Culturally Responsive Teaching and ideals are embodied below:

How do you connect with students and build a classroom that is safe for all of those different ideas and values and perspectives to exist in your classroom, even if your curriculum isn't doing it? And so, it was really sort of jarring, like why did "CRT" have to be the same initials as "CRT"? Because it's hard to argue that culturally responsive teaching is a bad thing. I would like to value my student for who my student is. Period. Done. It's not debatable. But now it's become Critical Race Theory, and they are two different things, but you now can't talk about one without conflating the other (Muellenberg).

Educators are frustrated that this is their reality. Not only have they had to defend their work and their livelihood among these debates, but now they must explain the nuance behind the term "CRT", which in previous years was not politically divisive. It's fairly intuitive for people to support culturally responsive teaching when they understand it's a term used to describe supporting all children's learning in the classroom. In addition, it may also be easier for US citizens to understand Critical Race Theory when they learn it is a framework about racial inequity which undeniably exists in the US as opposed to a curriculum. However, now that these concepts have become confusing for many based on the acronym, it's much more divisive and difficult for educators to defend.

These debates and attacks on teachers have clear cause-and-effect harms on the education system. For Emily Muellenberg, who switched school districts this past school year,

The single top reason why I switched was when the new board of education voted to undo the equity policy, so that was the night that I opened my computer and updated my resume... Who cares what my curriculum is? The fact that they're dismantling these policies, and sometimes it does have to do with striking books and topics that would make students feel seen, it felt wrong (Muellenberg).

Douglas County School District is losing teachers, and arguably some of the best and most well-established educators they've ever had, because they're making decisions such as striking down an equity policy. While for Muellenberg this was the last straw among a myriad of other factors affecting her job at DCSD, the current political climate surrounding social studies education has a great effect on her work.

Furthermore, the teaching profession is, "not just seeing an attack on what's being taught, they're actually seeing attacks on the teaching profession. That they're just trying to manipulate kids" (Hasley). Teachers today are dealing with parents, school boards, and community members essentially telling them how to do their job. Muellenberg shared how for many, because they went to school, they believe they know what should and should not be taught in the classroom under the ideal that we've all been there so therefore it must be easy. Muellenberg states, "We are professionals who have a pretty complicated layered training set and so it is always so insulting to me. You don't see a lot of other professions where people not in the profession tell them how to do it" (Muellenberg). There are few other professions that people feel comfortable commenting on or telling the professional how to do their job. The direct assault of teaching as an important contribution to society and a viable profession drastically affects the ability to bring in values of diversity and cultural responsiveness. The US education system currently cannot even support teachers in doing their professionally trained job, let alone bring in topics that some might feel are too "woke" or pushed a certain agenda. In a final thought about the crisis, the US education system is facing:

Good teachers are trying to help them make decisions and understanding and complexities on their own. To me, it just feels absurd, ironic, and insulting, all wrapped into one nice little package. I think too, as a government teacher, I think about campaigns and people who are so desperate to win elections and hold power that the politics of fear has really become the dominant strategy (Muellenberg).

## **Conclusion: What is the future of Global Education?**

After spending time with multiple professionals in the field, it is clear the future of global education is hopeful yet heavily burdened with politics, inequity of resources, and lack of proper systems to bring these ideals to fruition. For certain organizations, all they desire is more attendance. For some, all that's needed is more streamlined processes. But for larger groups, such as the US education system as a whole, progress is historically very slow. So, what can we do to make a difference in bringing global education to K-12 classrooms?

### **Ask questions: learning begins with a conversation**

For many professionals in the field, the future of global education begins when, “people are brave enough to say what they think and are brave enough to ask the questions they want to ask” (Zhang). Reframing these difficult questions about race, gender, equality, and colonialism, as a conversation where people come to the table with varying amounts of knowledge on these subjects would aid US Americans in tearing down the fear involved with asking questions. Oftentimes, people are too afraid to say anything on difficult topics because they feel they don't know enough. For Dr. Zhang, if people are brave enough to ask these questions and begin a conversation, that's where learning begins. For representatives from World Oregon, a starting conversation is a space where they work best.

I would love to see many more folks who are not engaged in international settings, or international affairs, feel comfortable enough to come to a space like World Oregon and say, “Okay where do I get started?” And we have the resources to be able to say, “Okay, you may not be ready to have a full-on conversation about Russia-US relations, but you can join us in this conversation. Our community partners are having this conversation. Our immigrant stories group is having an event on this" And to be a real resource hub and have the capacity to be a resource hub” (Castillo).

While questions of access to resources are inevitable, Castillo conveys the importance of showing up to spaces and making the first simple step. Some people might not feel comfortable jumping in headfirst and talking about a difficult or headed topic such as Critical Race Theory and the state of US education today, but there is always a simpler place to start, such as attending a community conversation on race and hearing other people's stories.

### **Support schools and school boards**

For educators such as Mike Hasley, the future of global education is bleak. Our current education system is clouded by politics, overworked teachers, and a lack of resources. So, “it’s just too difficult for that kind of focus even though it really is needed. I can see pockets of it happening, but not on a national scale. Unfortunately, the pockets of that happen have to do with the politics of that area” (Hasley). For an educator's perspective, global education is all about where a person lives and what beliefs that area represents. Whether or not someone agrees with this, schooling based on district and region is the basis of our school system. So, to make progress, we must work within these confines. Muellenberg, though she teaches in a more Democratic-leaning area, agrees with Hasley, stating, “I do think that it will be totally inequitable across the board. I think it will be slow and it will be staggered, and it will be like most change, it will be a two-step forward, one step back, because change is scary, and people don’t like it” (Muhlenberg). From the perspective of those affected most (aside from students) by educational changes and decisions, teachers, it is difficult to see a curriculum and cultural shift happening in the near future for all districts.

While inequity is a large barrier to education, it also opens the door for citizens to get more involved, simply by voting and advocating for the needs of educators. In one example based on the Colorado School Board of Education:

[The CO School Board] just approved a new Social Studies curriculum, and it is much more global studies, DEI based, including how you have to cover Holocaust and genocide studies. And you have to include underrepresented groups in the curriculum. It was very contentious, and the Colorado State Board of Education is a 4-3 Democratic board. And had it been the other way, those social studies curriculum standards would not have passed. So, when people vote and think “Oh state board of ed, who are these people?”, it matters” (Muellenberg).

In order to support global education and diversity in education, we’re required to become more active citizens in our democracy in the clearest way possible: through voting. When communities invest their knowledge, time, and money into education, outcomes like this can exist.

### **Create working systems**

For certain organizations, the difference between investment in global education and not is simply in creating working systems. For example, for ICSP, Dr. Zhang believes and reiterated how ICSP works because their systems work. The process of making a request, getting feedback, and setting up times for presenters is streamlined and methodical, allowing for the investment of time into actual learning rather than maintaining technical systems. To find an ICSP student, all an educator needs to do is get on the website, read about the rules and regulations, and request a student. The ICSP program at UO highlights the students that are participating each year on their blog, and lists alumni profiles (“ICSP Blog at the University of Oregon”). The website also gives testimonials about the success and importance of ICSP programs. Will Bucknum, the Connections Director at Mansfield Hall stated, “I have particularly



enjoyed seeing the thoughtfulness and curiosity from ICSP students about how they can gear their presentations to our students, and a genuine interest in making their visit meaningful. We are lucky to have such a program available to work with us”. ICSP students have also given first-hand accounts of how the program is, “an invaluable program — crucial to the University as it promotes and encourages diversity like no other”, stated Octavio E. Lima, former ICSP student from Brazil, class of 2022. Working systems provide streamlined opportunities for educators to seek out a global perspective more easily and efficiently.

The Peace Corps as an organization exists on the opposite end of this spectrum. When speaking about investment in networks of RPCVs, Williams shares how, “there's kind of a desire to connect with other volunteers, but not necessarily to be involved in this group... many of us put it as such a big identifier in our identity but we don't take the time to reach out to other volunteers in that way” (Williams). There are no incentives or systems in place for volunteers to stay connected, therefore volunteers simply won't engage at all. This plays a role in global education because if there is a desire from educators to connect to RPCV Networks as a resource for their classroom, this may be difficult to find. Williams explains, “When you come back from the Peace Corps, you can fill out a form that's about being willing to talk, that is one of the things you can check... but I don't know how you would get that information. If the website had a landing page of volunteers to go talk to K-12, then I think it would probably happen a lot more than it does” (Williams). Though, the Portland Peace Corps Association, as it is bigger than the West Cascadia organization, has a speaker match program, which matches speakers from the organization with requestors, much like the ICSP program at UO and at PSU. This is beneficial as RPCVs have a different perspective and first-hand knowledge of the world around them that can engage audiences and help them become more open and curious about other cultures

(“Portland Peace Corps Association”). However, this varies greatly from organization to organization and region to region. This represents an untapped potential for the Peace Corps to further the third goal of the organization (which is to help promote a better understanding of other peoples on the part of US Americans), simply by creating a working system for educators or community members to get in contact with returned volunteers. In addition, this serves as a lesson for other organizations with similar missions. Oftentimes, all that is needed is working systems to better connect our classrooms to the world and create a more prepared generation of US American students to step into a globalized workforce.

## **In Conclusion**

A common theme in this field and conversation is that when students are engaged with new ideas and perspectives they’re excited about, there are lifelong connections and changes made in that student's life. That benefit is immeasurable. Bringing a global lens into the classroom has this potential. In addition, global education has the potential for professional development for interns and presenters, and the potential to diversify and open the worldview of entire communities. However, the availability of resources for social studies educators is necessary and the promotion of Global education or GCED programs because this exemplifies what already exists and how educators are currently promoting global education. The goal of global education is to create more globalized citizens that have a broader worldview. Doing this at a K-12 level makes these important topics more accessible to all learners, rather than just those at the higher education level. In short, global education is a unique and powerful tool to aid in this process and to create more well-rounded, empathetic, and prepared global citizens.

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