

Global New Jersey: Teaching and Learning in Global Times

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William Gaudelli is a social studies educator at the University of Central Florida and a former social studies teacher at Hunterdon Central Regional High School in Flemington, NJ. His recently published book, *World Class: Teaching and Learning in Global Times* (2003), focuses on the teaching of Global history and world cultures in New Jersey. This article presents edited excerpts from his book: Global New Jersey, Global Curriculum, and How Should Teachers Engage Students in Study of Recent Events? The book can be ordered from LEA, 10 Industrial Avenue, Mahwah, NJ 07430 or at www.erlbaum.com. Gaudelli believes that most “global educators” are also advocates for “classroom change from traditional, rote pedagogy to constructive, multidisciplinary learning.” He argues that “this pedagogical shift is needed to prepare student skills and aptitudes for an increasingly inter-dependent world” and that “constructivist pedagogy” fits well with the broader principles of global education.

What social and economic factors demonstrate the extent to which a state is globally integrated? The obvious place to begin is the origin of the people living in the state, or population diversity. New Jersey is the most densely populated state in the United States, with 8.4 million people living in an area of only 7,419 square miles, or approximately 1,134 per square mile. A significant number of New Jersey residents, 1.2 million, are born outside the United States. A third of New Jerseyans are either born outside the United States or have parents who are immigrants. These figures do not include the large number of New Jersey residents of African American lineage (13%) and early 20th-century European immigrants who peopled New Jersey after processing through the Immigration and Naturalization Center at Ellis Island. The largest number of immigrants in New Jersey (one of every two immigrants) is from Latin America. Asian-born persons represent 33.5% of the immigrant population, second only to California as the highest population of Asian-born immigrants. Indians make up a substantial portion of that population, particularly in communities like Edison, often referred to as “Little India.” Only four other states have greater immigrant populations. New Jersey and New York have a long history of giving refuge to immigrants that date back to the middle of the 19th century. New Jersey remains a portal for immigrants due to its proximity to two of the largest international airports in the United States, John F. Kennedy International Airport and Newark International. The difference today is that “huddled masses” now disembark airplanes rather than ships and many are not poor and unskilled laborers like those in earlier waves of immigrants. Since 1980, most of New Jersey’s population growth has been due to immigration from outside the United States. Immigrant influx has more than offset the domestic migration out of New Jersey over the same period. The pattern is clear; people immigrate to New Jersey from other nations and a substantial portion of native-born New Jerseyans migrate to other states.

New Jersey is also a leader in international travel and trade. Newark International Airport is one of the nation’s busiest and has a steadily increasing number of international travelers. In 1999, 7.7 million international passengers traveled through Newark Airport, roughly one fourth of all air passengers handled there, along with 242,000 tons of international freight, or one fifth of all air cargo. The Port of Newark, situated just a few miles from the airport, also is central to New Jersey’s global place. Two major shipping lines, Maersk and Sea-Land, are involved in international shipping and represent about \$3 billion annually to the regional economy along with an estimated 56,000 jobs. Secaucus-based Goya foods, a major producer of ethnic food products and a large employer, receives the bulk of their products from Spain, Latin America, China and the Caribbean through the Port of Newark via these shipping lines. Although these shipping lines have threatened to pull out of New Jersey, they remain, representing a direct pipeline of global commerce in the state.

In 1999, Governor Whitman optimistically trumpeted economic globalization, stating “New Jersey is the eighth largest economy in the United States. We are the fifth leading state in foreign investments, and we are the ninth leading state in exports. . . We have used trade to expand our role in the global economy.”

Global Curriculum

The NJ World History/World Cultures Curriculum Guide (NJWHWC 1988) offers economic globalization as a central reason why global education is needed in the state: “New Jersey is highly industrialized and heavily involved in international commerce. Many national and multinational corporations have their headquarters here; thousands of businessmen and women are regularly involved with international trade. This global work perspective creates a demand for a highly educated work force familiar with different cultures.” The NJWHWC 1988 was the

Department of Education's response to the increasingly global nature of the state. The guide was written at the tail end of widespread implementation of global curricula in the 1980s. Becker and Kniep, leading global education theorists, are frequently cited as the guide uses existing social studies discipline structures and offers themes that unite these distinct academic frameworks.

Local control is a significant concern in New Jersey, as more than 600 decentralized school districts have authority to select text and resource materials, determine curriculum, implement instructional strategies, and fund curriculum initiatives. School districts have significant latitude in shaping how the course of study is implemented. The NJWHWC 1988 offers a range of options about how districts might infuse global content, from a fairly traditional world history approach to a course about contemporary global issues. Other options include world cultures, world geography, and international relations, each with a different, yet related, body of content knowledge and assumptions about how the world should be taught.

Engaging Students in the Study of Recent Events

Despite its complexity, the current situation deserves sustained and thoughtful attention by teachers, particularly global educators. *Social Education* dedicated a special issue to address pedagogical concerns surrounding this conflict. Authors in this issue provided a variety of suggestions about how to engage students in a study of 9-11-01 and its aftermath.

I recently saw a bumper sticker that expressed the sentiments of some people after the events of 9-11-01: "Kill 'em all, let Allah sort them out!" Antipathy towards Islam has spiked over the past years, along with a measurable increase in nationalistic sentiments in the United States. Certainly a degree of patriotism is to be expected at a time of national crisis. Caution must be exercised, however, especially in global classrooms, as to not allow earnest patriotism to boil over into xenophobic, vitriolic war mongering. Some discussion questions towards that end might include:

1. What are the characteristics of patriotism? Nationalism?
2. What has history shown regarding when national love becomes a source of violent hatred?
3. What contemporary examples have you seen since 9-11-01 that indicates a healthy love of country compared to a dysfunctional rejection of "Others"?
4. What criteria might you develop to ascertain "healthy" and "dysfunctional" love of nation?

Questions like these may give rise to important classroom dialogues where students are challenged to analyze the complexity of national pride in times of global catastrophe.

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