

Developing a methodology for including the global dimension in the ITE curriculum

Jayashree Inbaraj, Subbalakshmi Kumar and Greig Whitehead describe a project in India which has successfully introduced global perspectives into Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and draw lessons from it for other ITE institutions.

The Global-ITE project focuses on developing an understanding of different global perspectives among student teachers. To enable this it uses direct links between ITE institutions in three countries – Kenya, India and the UK. Within this link complex, ‘*Learning and Sharing*’ has become the Global-ITE catchphrase – viewed initially as an exercise related to concepts and content, but now showing that important teaching methodologies are also being developed and need to be shared.

Of the three countries, India has shown the way in many aspects of process. Implementation of the methodology

required is perhaps easier in India than in the other countries, due to the more centralised control of teacher education and greater contact with students in the ITE institution itself. But the important lesson is that given the right mix of administrative support and appropriate course structure, along with commitment from the teacher-educator, then the global dimension can be effectively included within the ITE curriculum.

Assuming that commitment from the teacher educator is there (or can be developed) the question becomes one related to course structure and administrative support. This

introduces a raft of wide ranging factors, including relationship between ITE provider and schools, degree of internet access, assessment criteria, etc. If necessary, can these aspects be changed to enable a learning environment that is conducive to the incorporation of teaching for the global dimension?

At Kapila Khandvala College of Education (KKCE) in India, change has occurred in many of these areas to support the inclusion of the global dimension, via the Global-ITE project. To enable this ongoing work at KKCE to be considered as a model within Global-ITE and other ITE programmes, what follows is a brief account of the major processes developed at KKCE over the past three years.

Firstly, all (100) trainees are treated to three days of workshops and seminars conducted for Global-ITE, which relate specifically to development education and the global perspective. Other college programmes, such as community work, lessons given by the trainees and action research projects, are all designed to meet the objectives of the project.

Some of the assumptions that we worked with:

- Teaching is essentially the arrangement of the child's environment so that he/she will have experiences which the teacher believes will change him/her in desired ways.
- A programme that focuses on global understanding requires student teachers to develop political consciousness so as to understand the cultural, economic and social forces that have helped to create the conditions and quality of life in India and other countries.
- Exploring alternatives and taking steps towards action for change is a necessary component of sensitising and training teachers for global citizenship.

Based on these assumptions, student-teachers were provided with experiences to:

- appreciate the factors contributing to global citizenship;
- see how the global dimension can impact on all curriculum subjects;
- create positive dispositions such as respect for self and others;
- develop skills for participatory approaches, eg: communication, negotiation, problem solving;
- make connections (local to global) and take positive action.

Trainees who opted to be part of the Global-ITE core group have to demonstrate the above qualities.

The association with NGOs working at grass roots level helped the student-teachers to see the issue they had chosen in a wider and more real perspective.

The subject-based approach (2001-2002)

In the first year, the programme adopted the subject-based approach. This was to ensure that global perspectives could be inculcated through curriculum content. With this approach, trainees analysed the subject and tried to find areas in lessons where they could introduce related issues. This approach worked well for practice lessons and textbook use. The drawback was that the focus was on the subject and did not get close enough to related issues.

The issue-based approach (2002-2003)

In the second year, the student-teacher had the choice of selecting an issue related to the eight key concepts underlying the global dimension: conflict resolution, social justice, sustainable development etc. Workshops were arranged and a platform to interact with related NGOs was created. Participatory methodologies were introduced to encourage discussion and reflection. Every trainee had a voice and was provided ample opportunity to express thoughts and opinions.

The cohort was trained to carry out action research projects on global citizenship issues in schools. Reflective practice was an important tool for the student-teacher to reconstruct from his/her work and provide substantial feedback on experiences.

The association with NGOs working at grass roots level helped the student-teachers to see the issue they had chosen in a wider and more real perspective. Additional information was accessed through the Internet. The student-teachers became more aware of facts, figures and concepts relevant to the issue and were more able to understand the global implications. This helped their understanding of events and policies affecting people at the local level, enabling them to work more effectively with these concepts in the classroom.

Trainees found new and innovative ways of introducing concepts, attitudes and values in the school classroom, which were much more exciting and realistic than simply dealing with issues drawn from the curriculum text book. For example, Falguni, a trainee Civics teacher, organised a project which enabled the school students to get their surroundings cleaned by the municipal authorities. Rashminder's Science students examined the labels on branded food products and compared prices with locally-grown produce, concluding that: 'the food companies use advertisements to lure us to buy their products'. Shanu's English language students wrote stories about street children, empathizing with those less fortunate than themselves, and created a display to raise awareness of the issues amongst the whole school population.

In these projects and many others there was a vibrant element of positive action generated in the classroom. All the projects came alive with the students' attitudes and

actions. The approach has made the student-teachers think, which has resulted in classroom learning being more meaningful and relevant to our changing times. When the students were planning their action research projects, it became a common sight to see two or three discussing one project. Sharing ideas and perspectives became a healthy outcome, which is again a sustainable practice.

Other important aspects of the KKCE process

(1) Building a strong institutional support

This is indeed the first way forward. Our experiences tell us that the smaller the organisation and the flatter the hierarchy, the easier it is to embed the program. Consultation and participation are essential to create strong institutional support. At the moment there is plenty of motivation in India because institutions have now to be more accountable, which demands collaboration and new experiments. But we do need to continue to think of ways to sustain the good practices that Global-ITE has created, after funding for the project ends in 2004.

(2) Using the integration/permeation mode

The development education (DE) process was integrated into the teacher education curriculum. The Global-ITE group was given a 30-mark curriculum project, in which they were able to focus on global citizenship. Theory papers such as 'Environmental Education' and 'Sociology of Education', provided a rich opportunity to discuss global values in the classroom. Teacher educators used participative methods to discuss these issues, providing a clear focus for DE.

(3) Conceptual clarity – speaking a language that people understand.

The concept of DE is complex, its scope is so very wide, thus the biggest challenge was to gain a deep understanding of development education and facilitate a rapid uptake of both process and content necessary to make the Global-ITE project work. Workshops, seminars and informal discussions, shared reflections with counterparts from UK and Kenya in face-to-face contact and through the interactive website aided the process of understanding.

(4) The teacher-educator component

The project coordinator's greatest challenge was to assemble a team of teacher-educators who were eager to learn new things, develop new ideas and participate wholeheartedly. They needed to become sensitive to the global issues involved in order to be able to integrate DE into their curriculum. This aspect was carefully evaluated, showing that:

- demonstration lessons by teacher-educators incorporated the global dimension;
- lesson guidance indicated their interest in including the global dimension;
- feedback indicated teacher-educators appreciate the inclusion of the global dimension;
- teacher-educators began to see how content can be handled in a broader perspective through theory classes such as 'Sociology of Education' and 'Environmental Education'.

The most challenging aspect was in enabling teacher-educators (and through them student-teachers) to plan lessons based on participative approaches that incorporated reflective exercises. Reflective practices and participatory methods are not so common in Indian education.

Summary

Global-ITE works through an interactive website and face-to-face communication to enable 'learning and sharing' of global perspectives. It is an innovative pilot for collaborative global learning. India, as part of the three-way link complex, has developed methodologies that greatly assist in introducing the Global-ITE concept at the local ITE and school level. For this pilot project to demonstrate methods that can be used by other ITE institutions, as a basis for incorporating the global dimension into the curriculum, it is important that we learn from and begin to incorporate some of the processes that have been developed at KKCE in India.

Jayashree Inbaraj is a senior teacher educator and ITE coordinator for Global-ITE, at Kapila Khandvala College of Education (KKCE), Mumbai, India. jyai@vsnl.net

Subbalakshmi Kumar is a private education consultant, based in Pune, India, and manages the India sector of the Global-ITE project. subhakumar@vsnl.com

Greig Whitehead is coordinator of Gloucestershire Development Education Centre (GlosDEC) and manager of Global-ITE. They have worked together on the theme of development education for the formal education sector in India, Kenya, Australia and the UK for the past 15 years. greigwhitehead@yahoo.com

web: www.global-dimension.co.uk

email: info@global-dimension.co.uk