LESSON PLAN REMODELLING: A MAP FOR THE GLOBAL VOYAGE

by Gale Smith

Most teachers want to make the curriculum more relevant in light of the increasingly global nature of our society. As a home economics teacher, I could see that my courses lacked a global perspective and in many ways were presenting students with an unrealistic, uncritical, fragmented view of the world in which they were living. However I found myself slow to begin the journey of bringing the world into my classroom, slow to globalize my lessons. I was worried that if I did not approach global content and issues in an appropriate manner I could very well use a “tourist” approach. Such approaches tend to be superficial treatments of culture, concentrating on festivals and foods. They can oversimplify complex interrelated issues; reinforce ethnocentrism, a “we–they” dichotomy, and western superiority; and further entrench stereotypes and prejudices. Generally I was worried that rather than fostering the goals of global education I might end up doing just the opposite. As well, I was concerned that often, global content in curriculum is considered an add-on, a separate unit to be covered. This fragments the global from the rest of the curriculum, overlooking the interconnections and interdependencies that exist.

In searching for a way to foster the goals of global education, I found a map in a process that I call lesson plan remodelling (Smith & Peterat, 1992). It is an approach developed originally to bring critical thinking into all lessons (Paul, Binker, Martin, Vetrano & Kreklau, 1989) that I have modified to bring a global perspective into all lessons. Before embarking on lesson plan remodelling it is important to first consider what would be different if global education was systematically infused into school courses. Then the remodelling process follows. It consists of a five-step process that begins when the standard approach to teaching a particular lesson is critiqued, then proceeds to setting new objectives and creating a new lesson.

WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT
To begin, it is necessary to consider in what ways curriculum and instruction would be different if the explicit aim was to develop in students a global perspective. Specifically this includes an elaboration of what counts as course content, an examination of the attitudes and processes that students would be encouraged to develop, and of the methods of teaching that would best suit these goals. A summary in point form is presented in Figure 1.
WHAT WOULD BE DIFFERENT

Content would be global and connected
a. **global** in the sense that:
   - it is inclusive, many points of view are presented, as many voices as possible are heard
   - it is broad based, includes value issues
   - it is not ethnocentric, fragmented, or trivial (avoids the “museum” or “tourist” approach)

b. **connected** in the sense that:
   - interrelationships, interdependencies, and systems are emphasized
   - it honours students’ experiences and backgrounds
   - past, present, and future perspectives are included
   - it emphasizes reciprocal relationships

Lesson planning that would contribute to developing a global perspective in students thus includes:

a. **awareness** and **knowledge** of global issues
   - human rights, peace, development, and the environment
   - racism, classism, sexism, and other “isms”
   - prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, and bias and propaganda techniques

b. the opportunity to **articulate** and **reason** about global/value issues
   - expressing empathy, open-mindedness, anticipation of complexity, and inclusivity
   - critical analysis of concepts, e.g., power, control, domination, exploitation
   - media analysis and study, especially coverage of controversial issues
   - problem posing, questioning
   - practical reasoning (deciding what is best to do for long-term, positive consequences on self and others)

c. **reflection** and **action** for the betterment of society
   - social critique
   - conflict resolution
   - social action

Lesson planning would eventually transform to practical reasoning mode
- lesson objectives would include addressing a value question, e.g., What should be done about world hunger? What factors ought to guide our use of the environment? Am I ethically obligated to ensure that my actions do not harm others? What should be done about bias in our textbooks? Or, what ought to be done about racism in our schools?
- emphasis would be given to:
  - problem identification and concept clarification
  - possible solutions and consequences
  - personal and environmental factors and underlying values
    - testing and justifying choices
    - evaluation of, and reflection on, solutions and actions
In terms of content, lessons designed for global education would be less concerned with the accumulation of vast amounts of information and more concerned with understanding and interpreting knowledge and relating it to everyday life. Rather than covering preset material, students would be encouraged to explore issues as deeply as possible, examining the different interpretations of reality, detecting bias, and recognizing complexity. Value questions and controversial issues, instead of being avoided, would become an important part of the curriculum.

Lesson plan objectives would become more process-oriented. Attention would be given to making meaning, communication, and dialogue; to analysis, comparison, critique, and critical thinking; and to reflecting on the consequences of alternative solutions and taking defensible action.

Classrooms would become sites of inquiry rather than places where students are told things. Teachers would create a classroom climate where students are engaged in the learning, where they can learn from each other, and where they can contribute their experiences, thoughts, and actions. In such classrooms, questioning, democratic discussions, dealing with controversial issues, co-operative learning, media studies, conflict resolution, and the like, would flourish.

LESSON PLAN REMODELLING: A PLACE TO START
When I was struggling with integrating my understanding of global education into my home economics program, I needed a place to start. I needed a map. My search for this starting place led me to lesson plan remodelling. It is a five-step process outlined in Figure 2. It begins with a description of the standard approach. This involves a consideration of how the topic has been traditionally taught. When I have used this with pre-service teachers and with teachers, they generally relate how they have taught a particular topic.

Figure 2

THE REMODELLING PROCESS

1. A description of the standard approach
   • the content and how it is traditionally taught

2. A critique
   • why it fails to foster the goals of global education
   • suggest what needs to be added or changed to raise global issues, to motivate practical reasoning and student action

3. The objectives of the remodelled plan
   For example:
   • students will become aware of the interconnected and interrelated nature of the world
   • students will become more skilled at being conceptually clear, and in defining problems
• students will have the opportunity to confront racism, prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, scapegoating, and bias in articles, texts, television, film, case studies, etc.

• students will learn analytic skills to critically examine the root causes of global issues and problems

• students will achieve a sense of multicultural understanding through a positive emphasis on similarities in belief systems, customs, and personal experiences

• students will learn strategies that could be used in dealing with conflict

• students will be able to outline alternative solutions and consider the various consequences to themselves and others

• students will reflect on actions taken

4. A description of the remodelled plan

5. Transformation to practical reasoning mode

• outline a practical problem as a value question

• list possible sub-problems

The second step involves critiquing what was previously done in terms of the content, processes, and teaching techniques, and describing why the lesson fails to foster the goals of global education. Usually the comments include such aspects as the narrowness of the presentation, or the ethnocentric or egocentric emphasis, or the transmissive nature of the lesson. The critique phase should also include a consideration of how the lesson could be changed. Sometimes it is implied. Obviously if the critique suggested that the lesson is too teacher centered then the remodelling would include making it more student centered. If it is suggested that there was too much emphasis on facts and figures then issues would be included. If it is suggested that the topic was considered in isolation then making global connections would be added. The following excerpts from lessons remodelled as part of course work for Home Economics Education 465 offered at summer session at the University of British Columbia, illustrate the second phase:

This approach is product and theory oriented, it places much emphasis on Euro-American preservation techniques. The standard approach does not give students the opportunity to question whether these techniques of food preservation are the best choice for us or others in this world...The traditional approach fails to make the connection with the global issues of health, environment, and food security for all. (Home economics teacher critiquing a lesson on preservation)

...In all honesty the thought of relating what we were doing in the high school shops to global education never even entered my mind. Every aspect of shop work is global in nature. The auto shop works with vehicles from many different countries. The wood shop forms many exotic types of wood into finished products, much of which is grown in rain forests that are quickly disappearing. Many of the material used in metal shops are imported from off shore mills, many with questionable safety standards. There is so much that we take for granted when we work with these materials... I feel that if I don’t make the students aware
that each piece of material that we use has a story to tell, just maybe they will never know. (Technology education teacher)

This approach is very Euro-centric in nature, and is never compensated with other examples of factory life in other places in the world, or at other points in time, both past and present. If one were to examine the 19th century working conditions of English factories with those in many developing countries today there would be many similarities. The living conditions of factory workers would also display many similarities... The traditional teaching approach does not engage students in any meaningful way other than making them appreciate the fact they do not have as rough a time as child labourers 150 years ago. Little is ever said of working conditions in other parts of the world, especially the working conditions of children. No global approach is taken when addressing the issue. (Social studies teacher describing a lesson on child labour during the Industrial Revolution)

Why does it fail to foster the development of a global perspective in students?
• assumes all students will have access to a sewing machine
• does not even suggest other methods of clothing construction
• does not question where most of our clothing comes from and who makes it
• focuses on making clothes from scratch when most students will not
• only looks at “western” methods of clothing construction
• students are not given the opportunity to question the methods being taught
• essentially it is very teacher-led learning
(Home economics teacher critiquing a clothing construction lesson)

This lesson does not reflect a global education perspective. First, the content is not global. It is narrow based, fragmented, and seemingly irrelevant to students in the 20th Century. Furthermore, connections aren’t made to emphasize the many interrelationships, systems and reciprocal relationships that existed then and may be relevant today. Second, process skills are not developed in this lesson. Students are at no time required to analyze, compare, critique, problem solve, or think critically. They simply need to find the correct answer in the text. (Grade 7 teacher critiquing a lesson on the feudal society)

The third phase involves revising and setting the objectives of the new lesson plan. Refer to Figure 2 for examples. After the new objectives have been set a new lesson plan is described that endeavors to satisfy the expanded objectives. Finally the lesson plan transforms to practical reasoning mode. In this phase consideration is given to addressing a practical problem or value question. For example:

**Practical problem**
*Am I ethically obligated to ensure that my consumer decisions do not harm others?*

Possible sub-problems:
• How does our consumer behaviour affect people near and far?
• What is the connection between my consumer behaviour and poverty? The environment? Human rights?
• What should be done about the exploitation of women? Children?
• What should be done about the consumer’s right to know the truth behind the production of consumer goods?

**Practical problem**
*What should be done about achieving adequate food for all?*

Possible sub-problems:
• What are the causes of world hunger?
• Should food security be a basic right?
• What is a subsistence crop? An export or cash crop? What crops should have priority?

**Practical problem**
*In what ways should we study the lives of others?*

Possible sub-problems
• What do we believe about the culturally defined behaviour of other peoples?
• How did we come to hold those beliefs?
• What should we learn about the cultural practices of families?
• What influence should history, religion, geographic location, economics, politics, etc. have on our understanding of others?
• Should we accept the information given in textbooks, the media, and other resources?

**Practical problem**
*What should be done about adequate housing for all?*

Possible sub-problems
• What is the extent and nature of housing problems, locally and globally?
• Should there be minimum standards for shelters and buildings?
• What environmental factors should be considered in the provision of housing?
• What is homelessness? Why does it exist?

Practical reasoning involves deciding on the best course of action. Practical reasoning begins by defining the problem in terms of current conditions in the world and relating that to what the ideal situation would be. Possible actions are explored by considering the arguments for and against, and the value base of each. The possible consequences of each action are investigated with reference to both the individual and the society. The actions are then assessed by testing: Would this action be appropriate if it was you in this circumstance? (Role exchange test); if one or more conditions is changed in the posed problem, would it make a difference to your decision? (New case test); Can we take a larger principle and see if all cases can be subsumed under that principle? (Subsumptions test); and what would happen if everyone did this? Would it still be acceptable? (Universal consequences test). The most important part of practical reasoning is not whether the decision is right or wrong but the reasons that a person is able to give for their choice. The purpose is not to win or lose but to show that people
can have valid and legitimate reasons for making decisions keeping in mind fundamental human rights (Peterat, 1991).

SUMMARY
In many instances, the remodelling process results in an extended examination of the topic or issue that can not be covered in a single lesson. Sometimes a whole unit results. I do not think this is necessarily a negative consequence. It may well be that studying one issue in depth provides students with much greater insight and with processes that could be more useful in the long term than trivial, fragmented bits of information. It may also facilitate a re-examination of what was previously taught and lead to course content that is more relevant in terms of achieving our educational goals.

This approach to revising our curriculum is something that most teachers do naturally as part of reflective practice. Lessons are seldom taught the same way the second time around. Teachers are constantly revising in light of their previous experience, in light of the nature of their classes, and in light of new information or educational innovation. Global education was never conceived as an add-on. In fact some have argued that the term global education is a misnomer. It really started out as education for a global perspective but because it was so wordy it was shortened to global education. As education for a global perspective, it is a theme, a thread, a connection, with roots in social responsibility that ought to be woven through all that is taught in schools. With this destination, the lesson plan remodelling process is a useful map to begin the global voyage in education.

REFERENCES