

Introduction and What You Can Get Out of This Book

*“We need to learn to live in this global world,
to manage the events of the global world. So far,
we have not yet learned how to do it well.”*

—Mikhail Gorbachev, April 23, 2012,
speaking to students in Chicago Public Schools

Why This Book?

Recall a moment, after a really good day at school, when your child steps into your arms and conveys an enthusiasm that can barely be contained by your embrace. Perhaps he figured out a math concept without stumbling, got to mix elements that created a surprise chemical reaction, played his favorite game in gym class, created a piece of art in a style that opened new frontiers in his imagination, watched a performance that inspired him, learned a phrase in a foreign language that delightfully rolled off his tongue, or made a new friend. While it’s hard to avoid reading anything about education today that doesn’t sound the warnings of a highly competitive, globally connected, technology-driven knowledge economy requiring “21st-century skills,” when it comes down to the child into whose eyes you lovingly gaze, what you really care about is

for him to come home happy and look forward to going back to school the next day.

This book is about bridging that gap between the pure joy that accompanies childhood discovery and the realities of learning for a changing, interconnected world our children will inherit. Whether you are a parent or a teacher (or both) reading this, the intersection between the joy and the skills is the crucial—and often elusive—sweet spot you might spend years seeking to find and nurture.

Our children’s success depends more than ever on their ability to communicate and work effectively across cultures, to adapt to rapid changes in the ways complex problems must be solved, and to realize that not everyone thinks like they do. The sooner they start thinking about the wider world, the better they’ll do—not because they are motivated by panic or competition but because they enjoy interacting with new friends around the world, discovering new interests, and imagining doing big things in it. This positive approach can help them to flourish in life.¹

For today’s children—tomorrow’s leaders—solutions to challenges around health, the environment, natural resources, the economy, global security, and even ideological coexistence and the cultivation of creative arts will be among the most urgent questions they will face.² The answers can’t be contained within one city’s, let alone one country’s borders. Though yet to be invented, we know that effective approaches to these increasingly complex and interconnected issues will be centered around a whole new category of skills like *global collaboration, empathy, creativity, and effective communication*. These also happen to be the skills most needed for peace building and living a happy, meaningful life. As big and elusive as realizing these outcomes may be, the small steps we take at home and at school to launch meaningful connections with the wider world can make the most lasting impact.

The need for a straightforward “how-to” guide, or toolkit, for K–5 learners to connect with the world led us to team up and write this book. Over the past few years, terrific global tools have proliferated, a #globaled (global education) community is sharing ideas on social media, and adults are taking more initiative to bring the world into their schools. But wading through so many resources can be unwieldy, offering content that is inappropriate for younger learners, and volunteers and professionals can feel isolated or overwhelmed by the effort.

In our work around global learning and raising global citizens, we were continually asked which specific resources and tips would encourage creative, empathic, effective global citizens and learners as well as

help to build more inclusive elementary school communities. Resources for secondary school students seem to have proliferated, but adapting these for younger students often doesn't work, limiting in-depth global learning and authentic engagement in elementary schools. This book is our attempt to share in one easy-to-use guide our own experiences and research, as well as hundreds of excellent outside resources we have personally used—to enrich and enliven the global learning experience for K–5 students and the adults who care about them.

Ten Reasons You Should Use This Book

This book can assist you if you want to do the following:

1. You would like to seamlessly integrate global lessons into existing curriculum.
2. You are considering organizing special events around global awareness at your school.
3. You already are planning an International Day, Week, Month, or Year and want to infuse some fresh ideas and best practices.
4. You would like to involve more parent and community volunteers and organizations in the life of your school.
5. Your elementary school is planning on holding after-school clubs with a global theme, from foreign language classes to art and sports activities.
6. You would like to use educational technology to connect with students in other locations and participate in global collaboration projects.
7. You are looking for fresh ideas for your classroom teaching.
8. You would like to incorporate global themes and activities into your lessons meeting Common Core Standards.
9. You are looking for fodder and feedback on global projects with your Personal Learning Networks.
10. You care about the world and hope the children in your life grow up to get along with each other and with the wider world!

Whether your school is based in a cosmopolitan city or a rural town, with ample or very limited resources, *The Global Education Toolkit for Elementary Learners* offers numerous exercises and tools for incorporating global awareness into the curriculum and outside class time. Building intercultural skills does not happen in a vacuum of a single lesson or

a single week but rather through meaningful exchanges and activities taking place throughout the academic year.

We start from the position that schools do not need to add an extra class for teaching global studies. Instead, when they take an interdisciplinary approach to integrate multicultural lessons into their classes across grade levels and content areas—personalizing the global—they will begin to realize what global citizenship looks and feels like, and this contributes to a process of cultivating lifelong learners. Children begin to see diversity as an advantage and a natural part of their lives; they are less likely to view differences as a threat, and they will approach international experiences with greater know-how and enthusiasm.

Considerations for an International Fair

We recognize that every school will be at a different place in realizing global education goals. Some may not be ready to integrate global resources and perspectives throughout the curriculum but could benefit greatly from a special focus like a “Global Awareness Week,” “Culture Day,” or “International Fair.” An annual celebration allows students to experience many different cultures in a concentrated time frame. This is not the same as holding a single, isolated international activity while ignoring global studies the rest of the year.

An effective “International Fair” can meet distinct needs:

1. as a culminating showcase of students’ projects from the year
2. to highlight and celebrate the diverse cultures represented in the school, fostering an increasingly inclusive community
3. to encourage curiosity and learning about various cultures and countries
4. to build enthusiasm for new global initiatives just starting out
5. as an entry point for a topic to be studied more in depth, possibly across age and grade levels (such as folktales, water resources, or where food comes from).



How to Use This Toolkit

Whether you want to integrate international lessons throughout the year or would like to start an International Night at your school, this guide provides the tools for practical, effective, and fun activities that will advance global awareness in your K–5 students—and beyond. Many teachers are interested in increasing their students’ knowledge about the world but haven’t found the right activities to incorporate into their existing lessons. The age-appropriate ideas and resources we have collected here can be used on their own for individual lessons, in homeschooling,

in after-school clubs, in Scouts, for special celebrations, or to tie into an entire year's theme. Teachers, parents, and volunteers can use the simple and clear instructions, low- or no-cost ideas, while students will thrive with experiential learning.

The following chapters contain numerous activities that can be used on their own or altogether. There is no required sequence or recipe that calls for anyone to follow the sections step by step.

Chapter 1—How to Get Started: Planning Considerations for Bringing the Global to Your School. The information in this chapter helps teachers, staff, and volunteers take the first steps, ask the right questions to determine the scope of their efforts, determine themes, and build support.

Chapter 2—Things to Do: Look at All the Places We Can Go! This is a stand-alone resource of over 50 globally inspired ideas that you could implement immediately, in any setting.

Chapter 3—Infusing Global Learning Into Academic Subject Areas (With Special Consideration for Aligning Common Core Standards). This chapter offers a breakdown by subject areas, so global learning can be plugged right into various academic subjects and themes. It also showcases examples of lessons that meet Common Core Standards.

Chapter 4—Technology Tools to Connect With the World: Unlocking Global Education 2.0. Tap into some of the best and simplest interactive, digital tools to build relationships with people, places, and ideas in the wider world, as well as enhance your own professional development.

Chapter 5—Charitable Giving and Service: Ready, Set, Make a Difference! Develop your school, club, or classroom's plan for making a difference—near or far. Get inspired by—and learn from—dozens of examples shared in this chapter, of elementary school-aged kids engaging in philanthropic giving and service, to start your own initiative.

Whether you dedicate a day, week, month, or entire year to an international theme or you decide to intersperse global activities and learning across disciplines, special activities, or community building, a thoughtful execution of global education resources, themes, and technology can help build a foundation of awareness that can change the school's culture and shape the way students will react to the world around them, for many years to come. We hope that the resources contained in the following chapters will help you along a path of discovery and encourage lifelong learning.

Note From the Publisher

All of the resources in this Toolkit have been collated by the authors and are available through a companion website: www.corwin.com/globaledtoolkit. On the website, you will find links to all of the resources **bolded in blue** throughout the book, organized by chapter and section in which the links appear. Also, the Additional Resources are available on the website to be downloaded and printed. Please note that there are no live links in this book.

Links provided on the companion website may provide access to websites that are not maintained, sponsored, endorsed, or controlled by Corwin. Your use of these third-party websites will be subject to the terms and conditions posted on such websites. Corwin takes no responsibility and assumes no liability for your use of any third-party website, nor does Corwin approve, sponsor, endorse, verify, or certify information available at any third-party website.

Author's Note From Homa

When I made a career and lifestyle switch to research and write *Growing Up Global: Raising Children to Be at Home in the World*, the sheer amount of resources available to help expose our children to the wider world overwhelmed me. Like a game of Whack-a-Mole, each time I thought I'd gotten a topic under control, more initiatives and perspectives would pop up, and the "game" could never be won or done. I resolved that issue when it became clear that my goal needed to be to help *share a mind-set that would lay a foundation for a lifelong journey of connecting* with a dynamic, fascinating, perplexing, surprising, beautiful world. Though many practical resources and recommendations were included in *Growing Up Global*, I found the secret sauce was more about the vision than the "stuff." But the need for turn-key solutions for lesson plans and a global education toolkit never went away.

As I traveled to dozens of communities across North America with *Growing Up Global*, teachers and parents continued to ask for more specifics, and I would often write the name of an organization or tool that had just come to my attention on a blackboard, piece of scrap paper, or included in a PowerPoint presentation. A more systematic process clearly was needed. Thanks to the power of social media, Becky Morales and I met virtually. We admired each other's work, and it seemed to converge around a much-needed tool for elementary school-aged children, where we saw the biggest gap. Collaboration seemed to come naturally, and I'm so happy to share the result of our partnership—this resource. I'm sure the Whack-a-Mole feeling won't go away, as innovation continues—and that's a great thing.

I hope this book can serve as a strong beginning for anyone who wishes to instill a love of global learning in children who will certainly inherit a world whose future connections we can dimly anticipate. As this is a labor of love, we know the process isn't over, and we look forward to sharing this journey of learning and discovery with all who care to join us.



Author's Note From Becky

Years ago, when I began to teach Spanish in a local high school, I was shocked at the lack of geography skills and basic cultural awareness I witnessed. Pointing to a map of Europe and Africa, I had been talking about the Islamic architecture in southern Spain and the influence of Arabic on certain Spanish words. I was about to explain how the Moors had come up across the Strait of Gibraltar. As I pointed to Morocco and North Africa, I asked the students to name the continent. In class after class—and even at another school when I changed jobs—students incorrectly answered “South America.” *National Geographic* confirms that geography is taught by less than 9% of K–12 social studies teachers and not even one quarter of high school students graduate with a geography class.

A few years later, I brought in my sister-in-law, visiting us from Mexico City, to class as a guest speaker. In the Spanish 1 classes, students were to interview her in Spanish, about her life as a teenager in Mexico. Imagine my embarrassment as my students asked her (coming from one of the most populous cities in the world) if she had ever seen an apple, a car, or a computer before. They simply had not been exposed to many people outside of their local community. How would this deficiency—this lack of global awareness—stand in the way of their future?

In my Spanish classes, I did my best to weave together language, culture, and geography lessons, and guide my students to discover the richness of Spain and Latin America. I wanted my students to graduate from high school with a global mind-set, a friendly attitude toward people of different backgrounds, and an awareness beyond their immediate community. Nonetheless, I understood that these lessons of our interconnectedness should begin much earlier and should be an integral part of all of their subjects. Teachers and parents of elementary-aged kids can—and should—take the initiative to give them the opportunity to see issues from different perspectives and communicate with and learn from peers around the world. In this book, our aim is to help educators to do so, offering very practical tools.

As we raise our own four young children, my husband and I seek out activities, festivals, and experiences that will expose them to the world and to other cultures. We have quite the international family: My husband is from Mexico City, we have two biological daughters, one son adopted from China, and another son adopted from Ethiopia. As their parents, we feel it is our responsibility to not only teach them about our family's cultures and traditions and to instill pride in their heritage but also to demonstrate respect toward all people regardless of race or ethnicity.

Developing global awareness in children is not only important for multicultural families such as ours: The world is more interrelated today than ever before, and parents, schools, and businesses are pushing to change the way schools teach and prepare our students for the 21st century. Are we preparing today's youth for the international challenges they will face tomorrow? How can we start building a global foundation for our younger students? I think children are never too young to begin learning about the world, especially when the activities are fun and interactive.



NOTES

1. Pioneer in positive psychology Dr. Martin Seligman posits that to flourish is the goal in measuring “well-being,” which goes further than the attainment of happiness. Flourishing realizes ever-increasing “Positive emotion, Engagement, Meaning, Positive Relationships, and Accomplishment,” or PERMA. This also can be considered as “thriving.” From: Seligman, M. E. P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York, NY: Free Press.
2. These findings have emerged from numerous studies such as: Committee for Economic Development. (2006). *Education for Global Leadership: The Importance of International Studies and Foreign Language Education for U.S. Economic and National Security*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED502294.pdf>

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