

Adventist Classrooms: A Potential Global Village

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Back in the 1960s, Marshall McLuhan introduced the concept of a “global village,” suggesting that our world has been contracted into a village by electric technology and the instantaneous movement of information. In the 21st century, web technology has made our world even smaller by providing instant connections among economies and people worldwide. Our students are growing up in this interconnected world and, as educators, we must provide opportunities for them to become more globally aware. All students need to learn about global issues in school so that they can become successful and contributing citizens and effective Christian witnesses in our ever-changing global society.



A study of global cultures, global challenges, and global connections, should be included at all grade levels and across all subjects. And our Seventh-day Adventist school system has a unique advantage in providing opportunities to do just that. The SDA school system is a worldwide system which includes approximately 5,600 schools, colleges and universities around the world with over 80,000 teachers and more than 1.1 million students (according to the world church website). The church is organized into 13 world divisions (regions), operating schools in nearly 145 countries. Such a worldwide system provides innumerable possibilities for global connections. Adventist students and teachers have varied opportunities to connect with other Adventist students and teachers around the world to collaborate in the learning process and to learn from each other. And with the technology available today, all you need is an internet connection.

Instead of reading about French culture and practicing using a tape recorder or computer program, why not connect via Skype with a French classroom in Quebec or even in France? What about exploring Britain’s role in WWII with a history class in England, or sharing short stories with a writing class in Australia or India or South Africa? Studying global warming? Compare your data with classrooms around the world. Consider collaborative projects with another class in another school in another country. Think “learning with” rather than “learning about.” Following are some ideas to get you started as you consider ways to increase your students’ global awareness. And if you don’t have a Skype account yet, see the links provided at the end of this article for an easy introduction to using this free download to make absolutely free video calls worldwide.

iEARN

<http://www.iearn.org/> is a global network of over 20,000 schools to create on-line linkages that enable students to engage in meaningful educational projects with peers in their countries and around the world. The site describes interactive curriculum-based projects in which students aged 5-20 are creating, researching, sharing opinions, and becoming global citizens. You may also wish to explore iLearn-Canada (<http://www.iearn-canada.org/index.htm>).

Roots & Shoots: A Program of the Jane Goodall Institute

<http://www.rootsandshoots.org/aboutus> is about making positive change happen—for our communities, for animals and for the environment. With tens of thousands of young people in almost 100 countries, the Roots & Shoots network connects youth of all ages who share a desire to create a better world. Young people identify problems in their communities and take action. Through service projects, youth-led campaigns and an interactive website, Roots & Shoots members are making a difference across the globe.

UNICEF - Voices of Youth

<http://www.unicef.org/voy/> offers an online space for youth to connect and learn about global issues affecting children and adolescents. Opportunities are available for students to write, dialogue, participate in forums, and take action on many issues affecting youth worldwide. The site thus provides authentic topics and authentic audiences for students.

BookRix

<http://www.bookrix.com> is a social community that connects writers and readers and allows your students to publish their books, short stories, etc. on the web. Others can read and make comments. The NAD is currently exploring the possibility of creating union or division accounts so that writing can be shared within the system without having it open to the general public.

World Youth News

<http://www.worldyouthnews.org/> is an international youth news service first launched by iEARN and the Daniel Pearl Foundation. World Youth News intends to foster global understanding and collaboration through student journalism. Students from around the world participate in a training course before they are eligible to contribute news stories. Schools are welcomed to reprint any articles from World Youth News in order to add a global perspective to their own publications.

Though these examples are not specific to Adventist schools, similar projects can be undertaken among Adventist schools worldwide. If you want your class/school to be part of a global interchange within the Adventist school system, or if you have additional ideas for making these connections, please contact me!

For Further Information:

Apple's EdCommunity <http://edcommunity.apple.com/ali/collection.php?collectionID=98>
Ideas, resources, and more as you begin to build capacity for teaching and learning in a global context. Includes links to several organizations that work to assist in the understanding of the issues and concepts related to global education.

“50 Awesome Ways to Use Skype in the Classroom”

<http://www.teachingdegree.org/2009/06/30/50-awesome-ways-to-use-skype-in-the-classroom/>

A page from the TeachingDegree website that includes a list, with links, of 50 specific ways to use Skype in the classroom.

“Bringing the World to the Classroom” [video file] 02 July 2007. Video posted to

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CbvKBZLuIDE&feature=related>

How can educators overcome the gap in knowledge and interest in international issues? The Global Gateway aims to provide teachers with the resources to engage their students on pressing issues like the environment, human rights and their implications back home. (5:40)

“How Do You Use Skype?” http://www.ehow.com/how_5033548_do-use-skype.html

Skype homepage. www.skype.com Download your free Skype software here.