



Global Education Exploration Study Key Findings and Implications

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Background and Methodology

In April 2012, ProjectExplorer.org commissioned the [Global Educational Exploration Study](#), a nationwide survey of more than 1,200 teachers, parents and stakeholders in education, with the goal of better understanding the global education landscape. Specifically, the survey explored access to global education resources, barriers to use of global education resources in classrooms, and the short and long-term benefits of students' exposure to global education at the secondary school level. The survey was launched in partnership with MarketTools, Inc. and conducted among a nationally representative sample of teachers and parents of secondary school aged children in grades 3-12 as well as organization leaders responsible for making hiring decisions. The latter group was surveyed for the purpose of exploring how global awareness and understanding, or the lack thereof, may affect students' access to future employment opportunities.

As a follow up to this study, in January 2013, ProjectExplorer.org conducted a nationwide, online survey of 223 individuals between the ages of 13 and 25. The goal of this survey, [The Students' Perspectives on Global Education Survey](#), was to explore the perceived importance and impact of global studies, relative to other subjects, among current and former secondary school students.

Key Findings

There is a tremendous gap between the perceived importance of global education and access to global education resources among secondary school teachers and students nationwide.

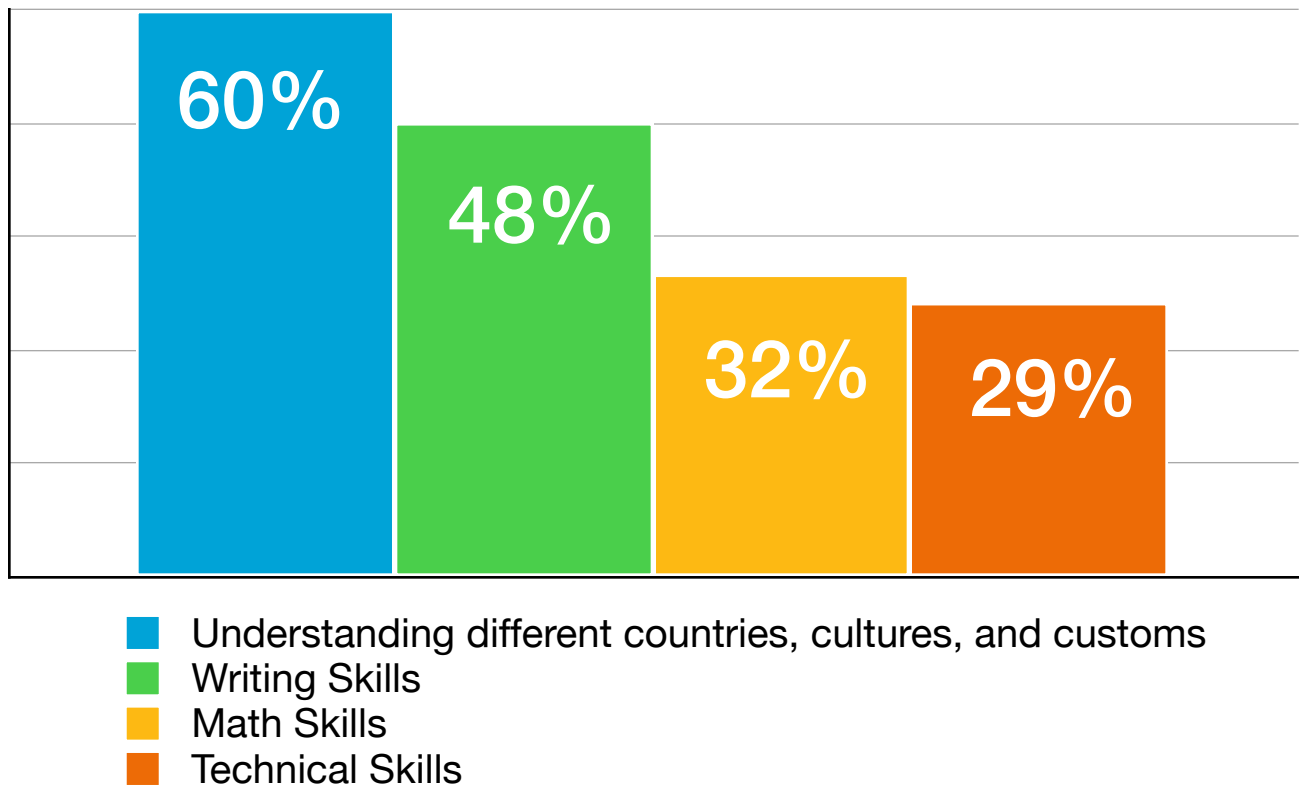
80% of teachers agree that it's more important today than ever before for students to learn about other countries and cultures, yet only 30% say they often incorporate material about other countries and cultures into their lesson plans. Nearly 6 in 10 teachers report this is due to a lack of resources or administrative support, **not** for lack of student support.

6 in 10 students surveyed reported they find understanding different countries, cultures, and customs extremely important — more so than writing, math, or technical skills.

Fewer than half of students surveyed reported writing skills are extremely important, while fewer than a third said math and technical skills are extremely important, 32% and 29%, respectively.

Perceived importance of subject areas among secondary school students or recent graduates

% ranking topic as “extremely important”



The higher level of importance students attribute to cross-cultural understanding relative to other subject areas is based in part on their belief that an understanding of other countries and cultures will contribute to the development of a better world.

Nearly all (98%) of the students surveyed agree that a strong understanding of world history and events is critical to developing solutions to global problems.

An understanding of other countries and cultures...



Allows for a more harmonious interaction between people.

Allows us to solve problems that may seem distant but have far reaching effects into the future.

Allows us to understand each other and thus help each other make a better world.

Is the key to world peace.

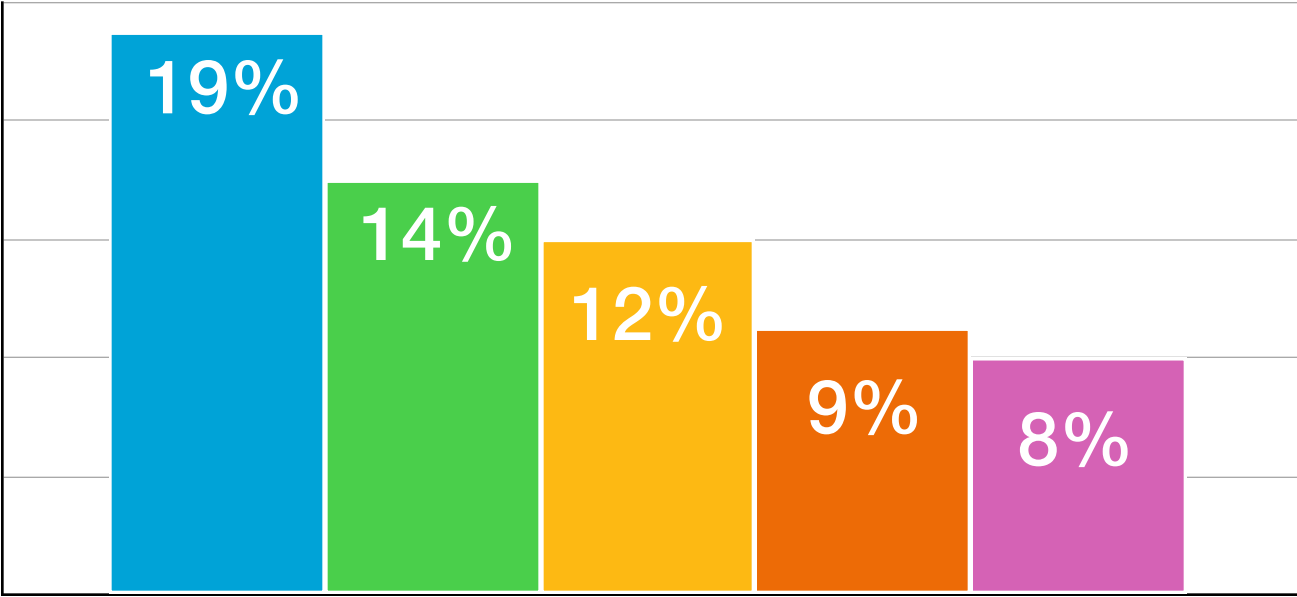


Despite the importance that a majority of students place on global education, only 4 in 10 teachers and one-third of parents of students in grades 3-12 consider global awareness absolutely essential. Teachers and parents believe “the basics” — reading, writing, and math — are most important to a student’s overall success in today’s world. More than three quarters (78%) of teachers agree, *“We need to teach today’s students the basics like math, science, and reading skills before we spend time teaching them about other countries and cultures.”*

Students, on the other hand, would prioritize global education over reading, writing, math, and a host of other subjects. If students could elect to have more instruction in only one subject, they are most apt to choose world events, followed by foreign language, then math, the sciences, and economics.

If you could choose to have more instruction in only one subject, what would it be?

ranking Top 5 responses as %



- World Events
- Foreign Language
- Mathematics
- Sciences
- Economics

The importance students place on global education relative to other subject areas stems from their belief that more global education would help them gain a broader understanding of the world, access a broader range of opportunities, and develop a stronger capacity to operate as a global citizen.



The world is a very broad place and it is important to be able to understand and communicate with others. Otherwise, we would just be confined to our own little bubble. Nothing gets done that way.

With all the different cultures, languages and politics, I believe that in order to get a better understanding of the world, we need a better understanding of all the people in the world.

Global thinking can help open an enormous amount of doors for someone and the world truly lies in the palm of your hand when you think globally and cross culturally.



Organizational leaders and hiring managers share students' view of the importance of global education. They consider global awareness most critical to students' success in the real world — their ability to work well with others in academic, professional, or social settings.

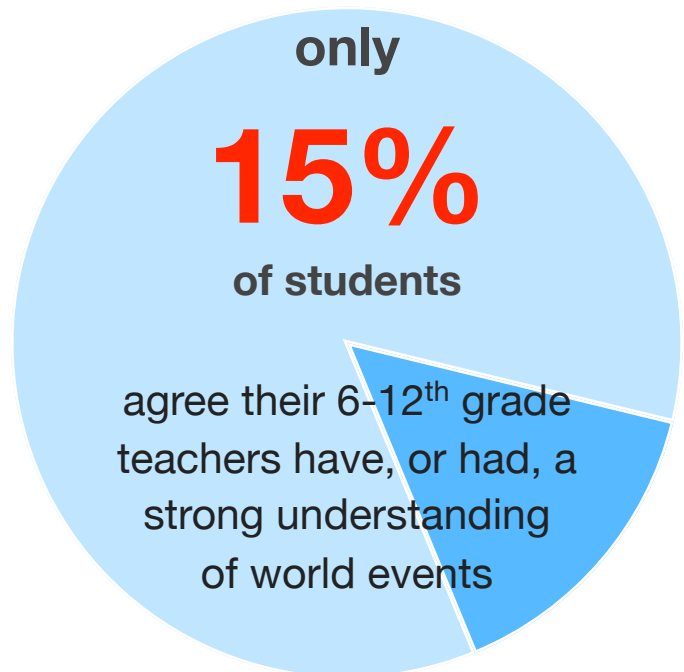
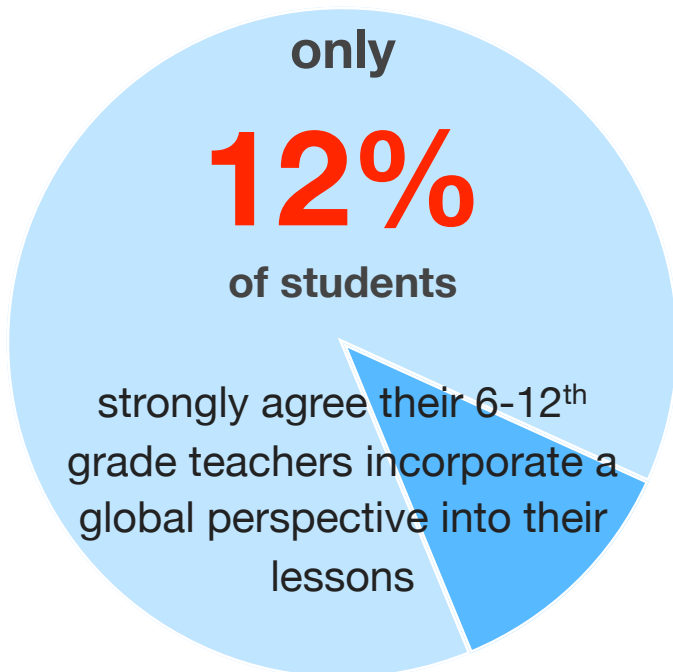
A majority of organizational leaders surveyed reported they would hire the young adult with the better understanding of global cultures and issues rather than the young adult from the better school, with the higher GPA or with the higher IQ, all other skills and credentials being equal.



9 in 10 students

recognize that jobs are becoming increasingly international in nature and believe they will be stronger employees with a better understanding of different cultures

Students, however, feel under-equipped to compete for professional opportunities on the basis of global awareness and understanding. They believe their appetite and enthusiasm for global education has not been met with an adequate level of instruction in global studies.



In the absence of global education and resources in classrooms, students seek it out themselves. Nearly three-quarters of students surveyed (73 percent) report actively seeking out information about world events outside of their classrooms.

Summary and Implications

A clear gap exists between the perceived need for global education and resources available for it, which teachers, parents, students, and organizational leaders all acknowledge. Teachers, students, and organizational leaders also agree global education is more important today than ever before, but are not aligned on the importance of global studies relative to other subject areas.

Students view global studies, including world events and foreign language, as the subject of highest importance to their future success — their understanding of the world, capacity to act as a global citizen and, ultimately, their success in the global economy. The organizational leaders poised to hire them concur. Teachers in secondary education institutions, however, report global studies is of secondary importance to other subjects they believe are more essential to students' success: science, math, reading, research and writing.

This may be a result of the heavy degree of emphasis on and prioritization of standardized testing and STEM subjects in secondary schools. This raises the question of whether global studies must come at the expense of education in STEM subjects, or whether the two can be better integrated — whether they can coexist in a way that amplifies students' ability to learn both. Could there be a global studies overlay to a science or math lesson, for example, that makes the subjects of science and math more interesting to students while bringing global studies to the fore, without prioritizing it over other critical 21st century skills or standardized test prep? The opportunity exists to explore these opportunities to reconcile students' appetite for global education and the degree to which global education has been integrated into classrooms.

Acknowledgements

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About ProjectExplorer.org

ProjectExplorer.org is New York-based nonprofit (501c3) organization founded in 2003. ProjectExplorer.org creates and distributes multimedia content and lesson plans aimed at improving global competency in primary and secondary education.

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