

Nurturing Global Competence through Global Thinking Routines

By Veronica Boix Mansilla with the IDGS team at Harvard Project Zero¹

Introduction

What is Global Competence?

Global competence is defined as “the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance.” Globally competent individuals are aware, curious, and interested in learning about the world and how it works. They investigate issues of global significance, recognize multiple perspectives, communicate their views effectively across cultural and linguistic differences, and take action to improve conditions. Global consciousness deepens this idea. An individual exhibits global consciousness when she is “attuned to local-global connections and phenomena; can understand them in a global context, and perceives herself as an actor in such a global context.” As here defined, global competence and consciousness go beyond *having* information or skill; they involve the habits of mind with which students come to understand the world and live and work in it successfully. How can we effectively support students to understand and act on global-local phenomena within and across disciplines? How might we nurture a global sense of self through enduring understandings and global habits of mind? How can we create classroom cultures that nurture global consciousness or competence?

Thinking Routines: a Basic Introduction

To begin to address these important questions, in this project we draw on a long-standing line of work at Project Zero (see David Perkins, Ron Ritchhart, Shari Tishman). For over two decades the Visible Thinking, Artful Thinking and Cultures of Thinking initiatives at Harvard Project Zero have investigated qualities of higher order thinking and the establishment of classroom cultures that promote such forms of thinking among learners of all ages. A key contribution of this line of work has been the design and testing of *thinking routines*.

Project Zero researcher Ron Ritchhart defines *thinking routines* as “structures . . . regularly used to scaffold and support students’ thinking” (cf. *Creating Cultures of Thinking*, p. 178). Such patterns of intellectual activity repeated over time shape the fabric of the thinking classroom in various essential cognitive tasks such as introducing and exploring ideas; synthesizing and organizing ideas; and digging deeper into ideas (Ritchhart, Church, and Morrison, 2012), directing attention, providing specific practices, making thinking visible, and encouraging action around thinking.

¹ See IDGlobal.gse.harvard.edu We thank Ron Ritchhart and David Perkins for their invaluable feedback on earlier version of this set of routines. I thank Anne Charny and Michael Kozuck for their contributions to this handout.

Broadly adopted routines such as “See Think Wonder”, or “I used to think/Now I think” involve patterns of intellectual activity that are repeated over time shaping the fabric of a thinking classroom. Thinking routines have been designed to support students in a various essential cognitive tasks such as introducing and exploring ideas; synthesizing and organizing ideas; and digging deeper into ideas (Ritchhart, Church and Morrison, 2012). *Thinking routines* offer a “low threshold for entry” for all students, and a “high ceiling” (*Creating Cultures of Thinking*, p. 10) of pushing thinking further.

It is important for teachers to remember that routines are not “activities.” *Thinking routines* are simple, easy to remember “patterns of [intellectual] behavior,” (*Making Thinking Visible*, p. 246) to put thinking front and center in the classroom. Experienced teachers identify *first* what kinds of thinking they want to engage in your students, and keep their eyes and ears alert to “building an arc of learning rather than crafting a single episode” (*Making Thinking Visible*, p. 50 – and see the tables on 51 and 52!)

Global Thinking Routines

While existing *thinking routines* can be applied to content of global significance, the development of a globally competent person requires the nurturing of rather specific habits of mind such as the dispositions of moving beyond the familiar to engage new ideas and experiences openly, discerning local-global significance, comparing places, contexts and cultures, taking cultural perspective and challenging stereotypes.

To nurture the dispositions described above the IDGlobal team at Project Zero is developing a battery of *Global Thinking Routines* as carefully designed patterns of reflection geared to preparing students to understand and act on matters of local and global significance.

Global thinking routines are simple patterns of thought that are used repeatedly in a learning environment to facilitate the development of *global competence/consciousness* among learners. Over time, they become part of the fabric of the learning environment, contributing to a culture of global competence. A few characteristics drive global competence thinking routines:

- They are elegant thinking sequences rooted in close analysis of forms of thinking embodied in global competence.
- They are open ended guides assuming no right or wrong answer but able to make learner’s global thinking visible.
- They can be used as a tool by teachers – micro-interventions to support and assess students’ global competence development

- They can be used by learners individually and in groups as structures to scaffold global thinking.
- They contribute to a culture of global competence as they become recurrent or “routine” forms of practice, and part of “the way we do things here”
- They invite teachers to inquire about their own practice as offering opportunities to elicit and examine student thinking before, during and after the process of instruction.

Other Project Zero Resources for Thinking Routines and Global Competence:

Educating for Global Competence: Preparing Our Youth to Engage the World, Veronica Boix Mansilla and Anthony Jackson, <https://asiasociety.org/files/book-globalcompetence.pdf>

Futurewise: Educating Our Children for a Changing World, David Perkins (Jossey-Bass, 2014)

Creating Cultures of Thinking: The 8 Forces We Must Master to Truly Transform Our Schools, Ron Ritchhart (Jossey-Bass, 2015)

Future of Learning Institute: futureoflearningpz.org

IdGlobal Project: IdGlobal.gse.harvard.edu

Global Thinking Routines - Some Examples

The 3 Ys

Nurturing a disposition to discern the significance of a situation, topic or issue keeping global, local and personal connections in mind.

Overview

Intrinsic motivation is a key engine of deep learning. As humans we are motivated to learn when come to believe that a topic or body of knowledge matters. However, gauging significance –i.e. determining whether something matters and why --is a capacity seldom taught. There are multiple criteria against which one can assess the significance of an event. In some cases an event or a place is significant because of its *universality* or reach –i.e. a large number of people are affected by it (global economic crisis). In other cases we consider something significant because it is visibly *original* or new (e.g. the internet in 1992). Sometimes significance is *personal* (the topic compels us emotionally, cognitively). Still other times it is *generativity* (the capacity to generate new questions, lines of inquiry, or work), or explanatory power (the capacity to explain why something happens) that adds importance to a theme. Significance is not a fixed quality of objects, places or events. Rather it is attributed, constructed by viewers. Assessing global and local significance requires that the mind operates at several levels at once. The 3ys routine invites learners to move across personal, local and global spheres. In doing so they not only learn to weigh the topic's relevance, they learn to unearth connections across different geographical spheres.

Purpose: This routine encourages students to develop intrinsic motivation to investigate a topic by uncovering the significance of such topic in multiple contexts, make local-global connections, and situate themselves in a global context.

The 3 Ys

1. **Why** might this [topic, question] matter to me?
2. **Why** might it matter to people around me [family, friends, city, nation]?
3. **Why** might it matter to the world?

Application: When and where can it be used? Use this routine when you want students to consider carefully why the topic might be worth investigating. They become aware of how a topic, issue or question has far-ranging impact and consequences at the local and the global levels. Use this routine when you would like students to explore applications of what they are learning in local-global context.

Tips for use: Use with image, text, quote, video or other inviting materials. Make sure learners understand the exact meaning of “it” the topic or question (e.g. “the growing inequality depicted in this image”) prior to engaging the 3Ys. Use the questions in the order proposed or in reverse order. If time allows, compare and group students’ thoughts to find shared motivations and rationales for learning

Step Inside and Back

Nurturing a Disposition to take social/cultural perspective

While as human beings we are typically curious about the experiences and views of others, taking social perspective is a challenging cognitive and emotional task. In developing a disposition toward social and cultural perspective taking individuals move from (1) “acknowledging” that a person or group has a perspective that is similar or different from one’s own to (2) “positioning” such perspectives—i.e. providing evidence for why a person may feel or think the way they do (e.g. taking into account the role and relationship a person has). Viewed in this way, social and cultural perspective taking demands some understanding of contextual and cultural influences.

Traditionally, developmental stages in cultural perspective taking were seen to move from *informational* perspective taking whereby differences were seen simply as a matter of having or lacking information, to *self-reflective* perspective taking whereby individuals can imagine themselves in the position of others; to *third party* perspective taking, whereby students examine different perspectives from the view point of a bystander; and finally to *societal* perspective taking whereby they consider how perspectives are influenced by systems and broader social values.

Generally speaking successful perspective takers are able to (a) identify various perspectives in a given situation (b) provide evidence for thoughts, values and feelings these individuals may hold and (c) explain how societal or more macro forces—particularly roles and relationships—shape their perspectives. Importantly, experienced perspective takers approach their interpretation of others’ views with healthy skepticism.

Purpose: This routine invites students to take other people’s perspectives with varying levels of complexity and recognize that understanding others is an ongoing often uncertain process

Application: When and where can it be used? Use this routine if you want students to examine one or more people’s perspectives (e.g. religious, linguistic, cultural, class, generational, etc.), and reflect about bias and stereotypes.

Step inside and back

Choose	Identify a person or agent in the situation you are examine
Step Inside:	In your best guess: What might this person experience? What might this person know, believe, care about, and why?
Step out:	Reflect on your best guess above. How close might it be this person's actual perspective? What else do you need find out?

Tips for use: In step two, emphasize “best guess” to point to the speculative nature of the perspective. Add “why?” to encourage students to think about influences on perspectives.

Unveiling Stories

A routine designed in collaboration with the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting to examine world journalism

This routine invites students to reveal multiple layers of meaning in an image, a text, or a journalistic report. Each layer addresses a key dimension of quality global journalism: the central most visible story; the way the story helps us understand the lives of our fellow human beings around the world, the ways in which they story speaks to systemic global issues; what is new and instructive about the issue explored; and the important absences, unreported aspects of a story, and partial frame provided.

Unveiling Stories

1. *What's the story?*
2. *What is the human story?*
3. *What is the world story?*
4. *What is the new story?*
5. *What is the untold story?*