The GlobalEd Project: A New Perspective for Middle School Students

University of Connecticut
The GlobalEd Project

- Employs computer-assisted simulation to promote a cooperative learning process in social studies programs.

- Students and teachers are provided access to a state-of-the-art, custom designed website for research on international relations issues.

- Brings technology to the classroom shrinking the globe and promoting a variation of distance education for the international system of a new era.
GlobalEd: How does it work?

- Groups of students from various middle and high schools participate in a problem-based simulation, during approximately 5 weeks, embedded within the classroom.

- During the simulation period every group/class represents a real-world country and uses technologies, such as e-mail and synchronous and asynchronous discussion formats, to facilitate communication.
GlobalEd: How does it work?

- The issues discussed are:
  - Conflict and Corporation,
  - Global Environment,
  - World Health,
  - Human Rights and
  - International Economics.

- Pre/Post-test design to access the students’ outcomes before and after the simulation.
GlobalEd: Instruments

✓ instruments are administered and involve
  – demographic information
  – frequency on reading newspaper
  – watching TV’s international and national news
  – self-efficacy scales (on both academic and technology levels)
  – knowledge, attitudes and behaviors (KABs) in group work and problem-solving.
GlobalEd: Main Goals

- Promoting the transfer of student knowledge and their performance on problem-solving and negotiating skills is one of the project’s educational goals.

- Examine gender differences’ impact in an educational environment through the use of problem-based learning (PBL).
GlobalEd: Teachers’ Perspective

Teachers perform a crucial job on taking part in the GlobalEd Project since they will be responsible for:

- Integrating the project to the curriculum by means of resourceful websites and a Unit Plan;
- Guiding their students in what concerns to activities on diplomacy, international relations, culture and geography;
- Producing weekly assignments, exercises, surveys and questions related to the issues so that the students will be able to improve their knowledge and skills during the simulation.
GlobalEd: Students’ Perspective

✓ Students will:

- Learn to use web resources for studying the history, culture and values of their assigned country;
- Prepare a Position Statement on the assigned issue including description, the group’s viewpoint, potential problems in the negotiation as well as ideas and solutions to be proposed;
- Present the Position Statement to the class and discuss the country’s goals for the simulation;
- Learn to prepare diplomatic communiqués.
GlobalEd Findings

✓ From the Middle School Winter 2003 simulation’s students:

– The vast majority has Internet access at home: 90.8% (91.1% male and 90.2% female).

– 72.1% of them strongly agreed or agreed that they enjoyed working with computers.

– 64.6% of them strongly agreed or agreed that using computers makes learning more interesting.
Pupils’ Comments

“I have learned that when dealing with foreign countries and people, you must learn to see things from all perspectives.”

“It’s hard to agree with other countries when you can’t see through their point of view.”
Pupils’ Comments

“I have learned about the issue of women’s rights and how it affects our world positively and negatively.”

“I learned how to communicate with people over the internet.”
Conclusions

✔ GlobalEd is an effective method for increasing technology skills with students
  – Increases in technology use:
    • For communication with others;
    • Reading comprehension;
    • Searching and evaluating information;
    • Problem-solving.

✔ GlobalEd is theoretically based on problem-based learning
Conclusions

- GlobalEd has long-lasting impacts
  - On students
  - On teachers
- GlobalEd is Interdisciplinary
  - Math, Science, Social studies, Language Arts and Technology
- GlobalEd is motivating to pupils, students and teachers