

GLOBAL CONTEXTS



Global contexts (GC) are elements intrinsic to unit planning that accompany key concepts and a statement of inquiry in order to drive the unit. Teachers are provided with a list of global contexts to use when developing unit plans, with the goal of selecting an idea that can help students frame content and grasp its relevance through perspective-taking and a sense of international mindedness. *MYP: From Principles into Practice* (IBO, 2014, updated 2017) frames the purpose behind global contexts as: “learning contexts should be (or should model) authentic world settings, events and circumstances. Contexts for learning in the MYP are chosen from global contexts to encourage international mindedness and global engagement within the programme.”

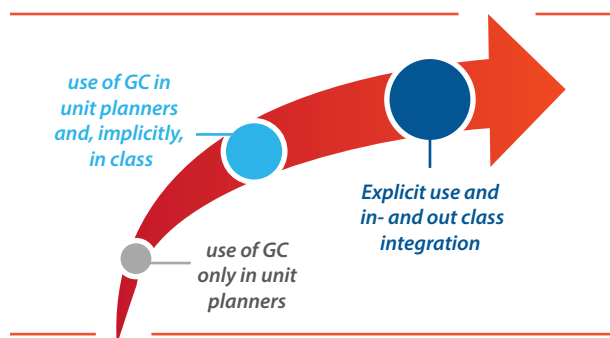
This report summarizes the findings from the research study by the Claremont Evaluation Centre (CEC) on implementation of global contexts as part of the key strategies.

What does global contexts implementation look like across the world?

- Teachers generally meet the IB expectations for global contexts. In fact, teachers report implementing this strategy more than any of the others.
- Most teachers indicated using global contexts practices either once a week or once every two weeks.
- Teachers reported generally positive attitudes about global context and a high amount of understanding of the strategy. It is notable, however, that a small portion of teachers did not believe that global context supports student learning.
- A similar size group of teachers struggled to reference real-world examples outside of the classroom.

Implementation practices
findings from 2018 schools visits (27 schools)

Below you can find the trajectory of implementation of global contexts in MYP schools.



Factors that allow for progression in the implementation of global contexts are:

- 1) Awareness of global contexts
- 2) Use of them in both unit plan and teaching, but not in a consistent way
- 3) Integration of global contexts in-and out of class



In the **first category** we find schools where a small number of teachers said that global contexts never went beyond their unit planners. In a very few cases teachers admitted that they did not embed the global contexts into their unit planners at all or were not aware of what they were.

Not really in any thought out in a specific way... I do, when I write the unit plan, I do choose one, I do choose it consciously, they are related to the questions that I write, but I don't really go any further than that at the moment
– MYP Teacher



In the **second category** we find schools in which was common for teachers to mention the global context at the start of the unit and then have students reflect upon them during assessments. Other ways that teachers addressed the global contexts were to have them written on the wall or the board, ask students to write them down at the start of the unit, or to informally make connections between the class materials and real-world events.

I feel that [teachers] do mention them but they stay within the first week of the bimester and maybe in Spanish when we write the projects, but they do not explain what the global context is... – MYP Student, Focus Group



In other schools, global contexts are embedded in class activities although they are not consistently and explicitly discussed throughout lessons. Students at these schools tended to be familiar with global contexts but not entirely clear about why they were being taught in class. This pattern corroborates survey findings in which students

generally suggested that they were unable to see how class material had real-world applications or was relevant to their lives.

I put it into my planning and I think that it must be this, this is identity, that they will be seeing the identity of each of the artists, of the movements and how they are going to create a single thing, it comes in totally to their identity but I tell you that I have failed to reinforce them and let them see that we are seeing the global context.
– MYP Teacher



In the **third category** fall around half of the schools visited by the CEC evaluation teams. In these schools, students were asked not only how their assignments were connected to the global contexts but how the global contexts and the assignment was connected to their lives. Explicit, frequent in-class discussions of global contexts was observed.

And then generally, especially for individuals and society, in the start of the unit, we have this entire lesson where we discuss the unit plan. And we actually go through what we're going to study and how it relates to global context.
– MYP Student

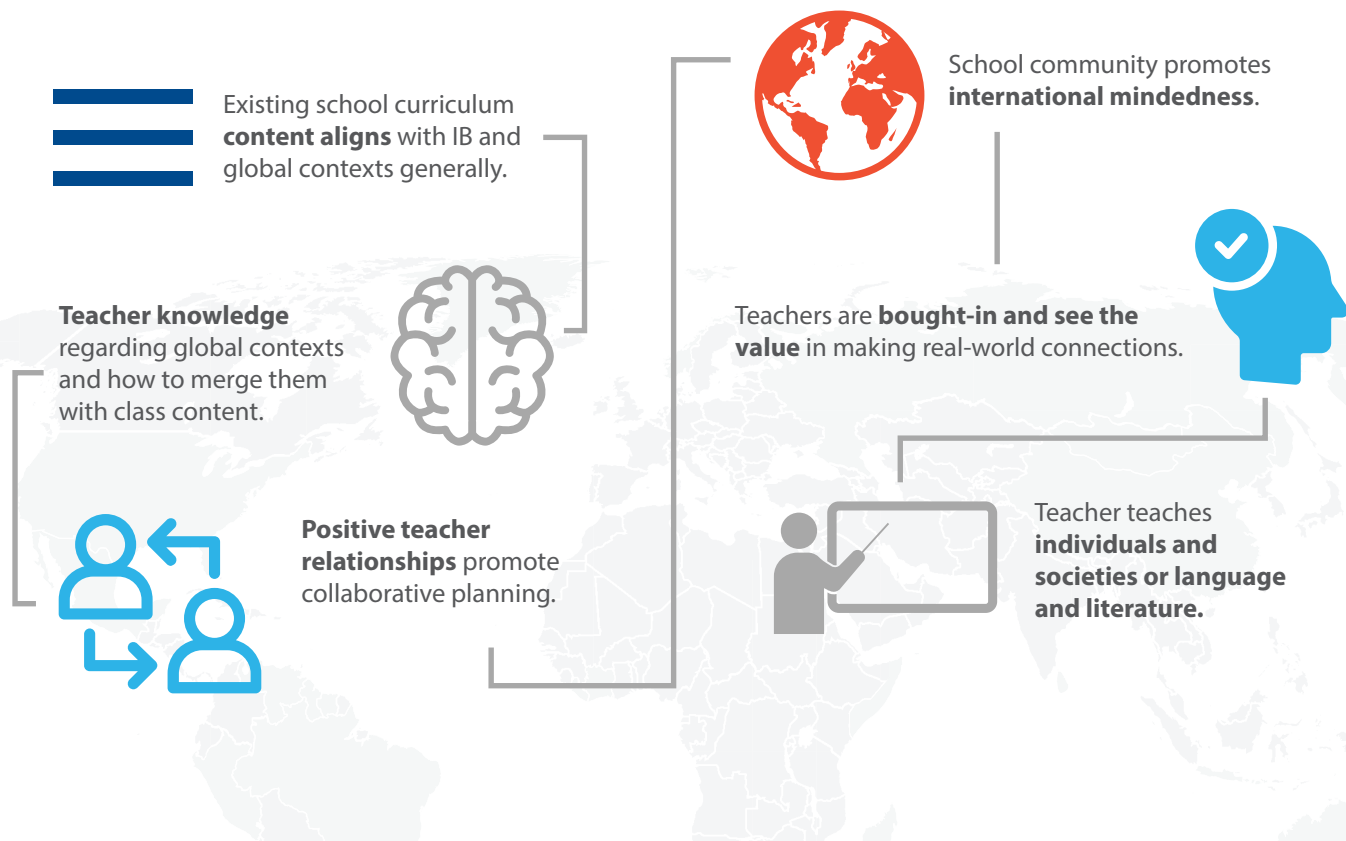


Students familiar with these implementation practices were able to recall specific experiences connected to global contexts, and indicate that it made course material more understandable, relevant, and meaningful. To note that, as in the case of concept-driven teaching, even at schools where we saw implementation practices connected to global contexts that were high quality, this quality was variable across staff within these sites. Administrators and coordinators readily acknowledged this.



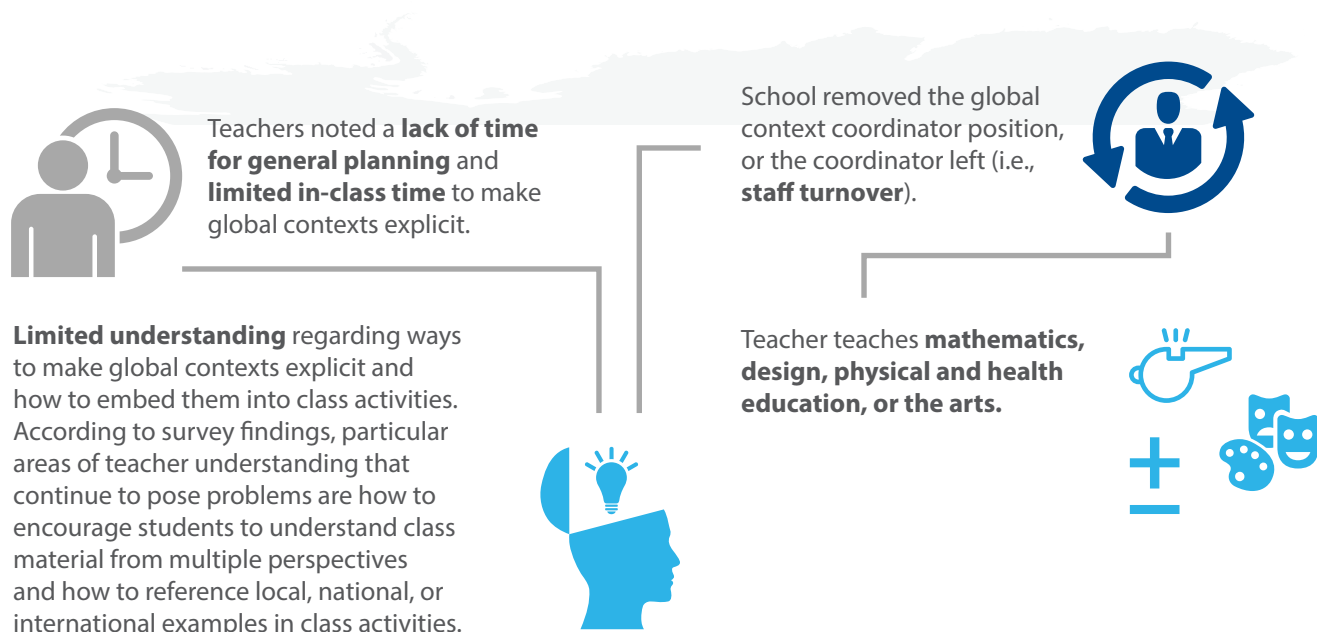
SUPPORT

to the implementation of global contexts



BARRIERS

to the implementation of global contexts



Summary

- The main supports for high quality global contexts are greater ease of integration for certain subjects, accountability mechanisms, teacher understanding, collaborative planning promoted by positive teacher relationships, teacher buy-in and adequate resources.
- The main barriers to global context are limited planning time, limited time for in-class integration, limited teacher understanding, and teacher turnover. In addition, some subjects struggle with this strategy.



Provocations

What strategies can you develop to embed global context in your teaching practices?

How can you embed international mindedness more intentionally in learning and teaching practices?

Background

In mid-2015, the IB commissioned the Claremont Evaluation Center (CEC) to lead a multi-year research project on the MYP: Next chapter's implementation and impact. The CEC study provides a wealth of data about what the implementation of the MYP curriculum looks like around the world in critical curriculum components.

Based on this multi-year research, the IB has identified three themes that categorize nine high-quality implementation strategies for the MYP:

- Collaborative strategies
- Key strategies
- Optional strategies

The IB will disseminate the CEC research findings in form of reports for high-quality implementation strategies and many other resources to support schools in further implementing the MYP programme.
