

# INDIA TODAY

## Strategies for teachers to integrate global perspectives into everyday lessons

*The integration of global perspectives in education enhances learning by promoting critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, and empathy, preparing students to be global citizens in a connected world*



By Tina Vachani



Teaching is the noblest profession in the world, and that is my strong belief.

Teaching begins with parents, who play a critical role in nurturing children, instilling essential skills, and fostering growth. As children transition to school, teachers who empower diverse learners, shape future generations, and cultivate a lifelong love of learning carry on this role. A student's motivation to learn is key to mastering new concepts and skills, and teaching global perspectives adds an enriching dimension to this journey. By integrating these perspectives, educators help students develop an appreciation for the diversity of our world, which is crucial for success in a globalized society and is also an essential part of 21st-century skills.

Today's teachers have the added support of the various digital learning applications being made available to schools to help enhance and assist in the learning process. Understanding diverse perspectives and building cross-cultural connections prepare students for success as our world becomes increasingly interconnected.

### **Some practical strategies suggested:**

#### **Real-time and active learning approach**

The current generation of learners requires a much more dynamic approach to learning. Teachers can opt for active teaching methods such as group discussions, debates, simulations, and project-based activities. Rather than using conventional approaches to learning, teachers can use much more engaging methods to improve learning outcomes and expose students to global perspectives. For example, students could research the impacts of climate change in various regions and present potential solutions. With the growing global effects of climate change, raising awareness and inspiring corrective actions for the future is crucial.

#### **Inter-cultural exchange**

Students find common ground despite surface differences. An understanding of each other's culture and customs promotes tolerance and peace. When given an opportunity, students show keen interest in interacting with fellow participants from different countries, backgrounds, and nationalities. More such opportunities must be extended to the students through exchange programs, sharing stories, photos, music, food, etc. It helps them compare and contrast cultural practices and encourages analytical thinking. An example is the 'Exchange for Change' program conducted with students from India and a neighbouring country. This initiative led to the exchanging of letters, postcards, collages, and oral histories, which finally culminated in a physical exchange. The survey conducted before the start of the program and the end depicted a sea change in the mindsets of the students, helping them overcome their misconceptions about each other's culture and leading to creating long-lasting friendships.

#### **Transcend Borders**

Teachers can highlight the contributions made by international scientists, authors, historians, and pioneers from diverse national and ethnic backgrounds, thus giving students a global perspective. Encourage students to read books featuring protagonists from various backgrounds and discuss how life experiences shape people's worldviews. Teachers can even select a world-famous personality, and in the classroom, students can research and engage in interactive discussions about the person for a deeper understanding, accompanied by videos or any other available material.

#### **Deeper understanding**

Teaching global issues like sustainability, human rights, or economic development through multiple international lenses provides richer context and analysis than a narrow domestic-only viewpoint. Educators can use literature, films, and documentaries from different cultures to expose students to diverse perspectives. This can give them international exposure and encourage them to be creative.

#### **Empathic viewpoint**

To further develop empathy and cultural competencies, teachers can involve students in activities that help them step into another's shoes. For example, assigning interviews with individuals from diverse backgrounds or incorporating role-playing exercises where students debate from alternative perspectives can help foster understanding and compassion. These activities enhance empathy and encourage students to recognize and value different viewpoints, which is a crucial skill in a diverse world.

In conclusion, integrating global perspectives into the classroom is about allowing students to actively participate and construct their own understanding of the world around them. Teachers play a guiding role by encouraging critical thinking and helping students analyze various perspectives without imposing a specific viewpoint. With creativity and thoughtful planning, educators can transform any classroom into a window to the world, equipping students with the tools they need to navigate and appreciate a diverse, interconnected society. This approach enriches the learning experience and prepares students to be thoughtful, engaged global citizens who are well-equipped for the future.

Lastly, I believe that to integrate global perspectives into everyday lessons, it is essential to redefine the Indian pedagogy of our education system. Change is inevitable, and our teachers have to adapt new learning skills to help prepare the students to be the future leaders of the world.

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*The author is the co-founder of*