

# ORBIT

## On Becoming a Global Citizen

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## ORBIT

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## NOTES FROM THE DIRECTOR

This issue of *Orbit*, on Global Citizenship, is the first issue of the magazine to be published under the auspices of OISE/UT — the newly created Faculty of Education at the University of Toronto. This new Faculty will bring together the U of T's teacher certification programs and lab schools (UTS and the Institute for Child Studies) with OISE's graduate studies programs and research and field development initiatives (there are seven mini-OISE's, or Field Centres, throughout the province). The new OISE/UT is the largest faculty of education in Canada.

As an OISE/UT publication, *Orbit's* goal will continue to be to foster dialogue between teacher educators and academics, classroom teachers and school administrators, and Ministry and school board personnel on topics of central practical significance for Ontario education. On *Becoming a Global Citizen* builds on this *Orbit* tradition. A wide array of researchers, administrators, and practitioners share their observations and experiences in order to examine global interdependency in a world where international and regional differences are still a prominent concern. We hope in this way to make a contribution to the work of educators in school systems who are attempting to prepare students for responsible participation in the life of their local, national, and global communities.

A special thanks to Guest Editor Carole Ann Reed for helping to bring this *Orbit* issue to fruition.

Michael Fullan  
Dean

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# Students with Disabilities and Global Education

By **GARY BUNCH**

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and **ANGELA VALEO**

Teacher, Metropolitan Toronto Separate School Board

**G**lobal education advances the position that all members of any community, be it nation, city, village, or school, need to work together for the betterment of humankind (Greig, Pike, & Selby, 1989; Jones, 1993; Pike & Selby, 1988). *All* is construed to signify that no difference traditionally seen as separating members of a community should be permitted to interfere with collaborative effort, whether the difference be one of ability level, culture, gender, or race. Vestal (1994) cites Leestma's elements of global education which begin with:

1. Unity and diversity of humankind: a concern with the commonalities of all people, with the fact that certain basic human concerns and needs are shared by all men and women.
2. International human rights: basic to human dignity and the achievement of the individual's potential. (p. 14)

Such a position melds comfortably with that of those whose particular concern for the betterment of humankind is inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classrooms of community schools. Global education's focus on the unity and diversity of humankind and on human rights and dignity ring with familiarity and meaning for advocates of inclusive education. These are the very things which have been held away from individuals with disabilities by educational systems across the globe.

## Global Education and Ability Level

A review of representative literature on global education, however, suggests a disparity in implementation of the philosophy of diversity described by Vestal. Diversity of ability level does not attract the attention granted culture, gender, and race. A search of the educational database ERIC revealed 6,146 entries dealing with global educa-

tion. Only 18 emerged when terms such as disability, special education, exceptional-ity, or handicap were paired with global education in the search. The journal *International Education* published eight articles treating topics around disability between 1983 and 1996. A check of the indices of a range of other publications elaborating aspects of global education indicated much more concern around culture, gender, and race issues than with issues around ability

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level. In most instances considerable discussion was given over to the former areas, whereas ability level received passing attention or no mention at all.

## An Explanation

Such findings were not unexpected. Only recently has education turned its attention to inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms of community schools. Developed countries have been content with their practice of assigning students identified as disabled to full-time or part-time segregated educational placements. Advocacy for placements in regular classes for all or the great majority of students with disabilities is a recent and controversial movement in many developed countries. The mind set of the majority of educators (and politicians) is one of comfort with established structures and discomfort with the idea of rocking a boat which is not overtly sinking. Similarly, recent concern in many developing countries has been the need to offer education to students with disabilities at all. Educators have documented the struggle in many countries to provide

any level of education to this group.

Taken as a totality, the global picture for students with disabilities is one of provision of segregated education, or of little to no education of any kind. Those jurisdictions with segregated facilities are satisfied with them. Those just initiating an educational offering are patterning themselves on the familiar model of segregated facilities and specialist teachers.

## Obstacles to Equitable Participation

For a variety of reasons, the voices of those concerned with disability have not been heard as clearly as those of other groups calling for recognition, acceptance, and equity of place in the struggle of humankind to move into the future in accord with a new and progressive philosophical vision. These reasons may be best seen in the model of education for students with challenging needs adopted by many developed countries and being emulated by many others.

Years ago, faced with the challenge of educating students whose challenges had previously kept them out of school, educators developed a model based on separate schools, separate classes, and specialist teachers, all designed to meet the specific educational needs of such students. At the time, provision of education for all children was a great leap forward and promised to heighten achievement and acceptance of students marginalized by society, and definitely not accorded many basic rights. Bunch (1994) described the evolution of society's educational interactions with students with challenging needs, referring to this stage of proliferation of special education as "Inclusion by Disability: The Segregated System." To many, the growth of a segregated special education system paralleling the system for regular students appeared to carry with it basic human rights, to dignify the status of those with disabilities, and to include them in the process of advancement envisioned in movements such as global education. It was a forward looking movement and a promising experiment for its time.

Unfortunately, educators tended to rest on their laurels. Though a variety of telling analyses of segregated education suggest that this model has not achieved its promise and that more can be done, many educators resist moving toward more progressive models. Greig, Pike, and Selby (1989) review a variety of obstacles to



# Historical Memory, Violence, and Civic Education

By **CLAUDIA EPPERT, CHRIS HILLER, SHARON ROSENBERG, JULIE SALVERSON, FLORENCE SICOLI, and ROGER SIMON**

Testimony and Historical Memory Project,  
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The aim of civic education is to assist students in acquiring the knowledge, skills, and values they will need to help create and preserve a just and compassionate society. While guidelines seldom define what is meant by this, teachers often presume that possibilities for justice and compassion are enhanced when young people develop the ability to act for the public good as citizens of a diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world. Supporting students in their study and practice of civic education includes helping them consider which historical memories are important to share, and why, and how a practice of remembrance might be carried out. Hence, civic education should involve students in exploring what it means to remember and what to do with memories in order to make them active and alive, not merely objects of collection.

Helping students to study and participate in the formation of historical memory means creating a classroom context in which students become informed about how and which public memories are offered and by whom they are legitimated. Equally important is teaching that encourages students to ask: What is it that we should remember and why? How, as a group or class (with diverse histories and identities), might we remember together? Such study does not presume that each member of diverse classrooms, communities, or a society would or should remember the same events in the same way. It does, however, assume that certain moments attain a critical importance so that their re-presentation, or as Toni Morrison (1987) puts it, "re-memory," informs both one's personal identity and the commitment to others necessary for securing a just and compassionate communal life.

While the historical consciousness of Canadian students cannot and should not

be reduced to memories of violation, there are human-initiated, catastrophic events whose legacy we still live both as Canadians and global citizens. These events seem to demand a place in our collective remembrance. They encompass genocide, displacement, subjugation, and systemic violence, the memories of which continue to rupture contemporary notions of justice and compassion. The study and retelling of such events can and often does inform both the judgments and commitments necessary to preserve and enhance democratic life. In this sense, memory is called forth in the struggle against injustices as it is perceived to establish a living relationship between the past and the present. What is at issue is not only the necessary

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acknowledgment of, retribution for, and redress of past injustices, but an attempt to insure that such injustices and atrocities will not be repeated.

Historical memory in this view does not merely provide exemplars for a discussion of human rights. No doubt, the study of genocide and systemic violence are important topics for understanding the necessity of democratic institutions that check the use and abuse of power. Such studies also provide ample opportunity for students to consider the importance and meaning of concepts fundamental to democratic citizenship such as prejudice, discrimination, obedience, loyalty, rights,

and responsibilities. However, historical memories of such events are more than exemplars for the study of democratic values. Such memories may also function as a basis from which a community's ethical vision of itself is given its substance and legitimacy. If one's concern is working with students to deepen their understanding of and commitment to an ethical vision of justice and compassion, the question of what to remember and why must be seriously addressed on its own terms.

Studying and attempting to work through which memories are important for a community to remember is not a matter of establishing or reviving an identity anchored in a singular civic consensus. Rather it is to explicitly proceed from an awareness that history is not closed or ordained by textbooks and that the inevitable, competing claims on historical memory fundamentally reflect the structure of open societies. Thus, the explicit consideration of how historical memories have been and should be restated and preserved provides an opportunity to clarify and reconstruct one's identity-forming remembrances within a historical consciousness incompatible with uniformly pre-established shared identities. As well, such considerations would include attempts to clarify how and why particular claimed memories have been historically dominant while other less well known memories, despite being previously excluded, are now being reclaimed.

This said, we must underscore the fact that memory in itself provides little guarantee against repetition of injustice. In particular, remembrance of practices of genocide and systemic violence have the potential for reiterating and reinforcing divisiveness among social groups. Such remembrance may also play a role in organizing one-dimensional identities which license people to engage others in relations of exploitation, dominion, or indifference. Thus, *how* events of violence and violation are publicly understood and remembered can have considerable impact on the communal commitments our society is able and willing to maintain.

## The Testimony and Historical Memory Project

The recognition of the importance of how systemic violence is to be remembered is the basis for the work of the Testimony and Historical Memory Project at OISE/UT. Our purpose is to learn more