

What are the four literacies of global citizenship?

To tackle key global challenges ranging from education and health to the environment and geopolitics, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly has adopted 17 baseline sustainable development goals (SDGs). These SDGs serve as a framework for countries to identify and help solve pressing international challenges.

The concept of “global citizenship” brings people together to address the SDGs and other issues beyond their borders. As part of a growing discipline known as global citizenship education (GCE), secondary schools across Canada have started to incorporate contemporary world issues into their curricula. As a field of study, GCE strives to equip students with knowledge, skills, and values necessary for an increasingly interconnected world.

To develop responsible global citizens, educators can take greater steps to emphasize critical thinking and literacy in four areas: media and information, health, ecology, and democracy. This enhanced focus will help students make informed choices by considering several perspectives, evaluating multiple sources of information, posing high-level questions, and promoting evidence-based dialogue. Definitions and sample units for each literacy are provided below.

Four literacies of global citizenship		
Literacy	Objectives	Sample Units
Media and Information Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find and evaluate information Distinguish facts from opinions Verify the reliability of sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to the media landscape, research process, and critical thinking Print media versus digital media Navigating through misinformation and disinformation The ethical use of information
Health Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make informed health decisions Evaluate global, federal, and local public health guidelines 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to personal and organizational health literacy Navigating and evaluating online health information Responsible and shared decision-making on health and wellbeing Pandemic prevention/preparedness
Ecological Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and act on environmental issues at home and abroad Prepare ecological citizens through climate change education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Environmental ethics Responsible consumption and production Energy conservation
Democratic Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand and participate in civic affairs Develop the civic skills and competencies of a responsible citizen in a democratic society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liberal democratic governance and values Civic rights and responsibilities Civic engagement and participation Challenges to the liberal democratic order

Schools can embed these literacies across several subjects by developing a whole-school approach among school/district level administrators (e.g. principals/vice principals, pedagogical consultants, directors/assistant directors of educational services), teachers, students, parents, and other community members. A whole-school approach encourages teachers across content areas to collaborate more readily on interdisciplinary lessons. It also promotes student participation outside the classroom (e.g. extracurricular clubs, community cultural events, global certificate projects, international service-learning activities, study abroad programs).

Ministries of education can facilitate these objectives through additional global citizenship-related competencies and revised curricular standards. Other GCE resources and curricula from international organizations (e.g. UNESCO, Oxfam) also can enrich the learning experience. Aligning curricula to these four literacies will help the next generation of students solve future global challenges.

For online resources and references please visit:
www.edcan.ca/facts-on-education

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