Education goes global today as technology changes our world

Global education and 21st-century skills aren’t just catchphrases.

Monica M. Veto, director of the Gilmour Academy Lower School and Montessori Preschool said in the school’s magazine, “Because our students are heir to a world that is growing more connected through technology and travel, it is crucial they become more internationally minded. They must develop 21st century skills to become the kind of global leaders who address the key challenges posed by globalization.” Lower School teachers are developing projects that are international in scope, with the theme, “with an eye on the world.”

For instance, in social studies, students are learning about foreign currency and how stocks are traded in other countries, and elementary school students raised funds to help bring clean water to villages in Kenya.

According to Global Education scholar Dr. Merry Murryfield on outreachworld.org, “Global education prepares young people to understand and interact within a culturally diverse and broadly interconnected world. Its content includes the study of world cultures and religious, world literature, the interconnectedness of world history, global issues, global economics, technological, environmental, and political systems, non-state global actors, and cross-cultural communication skills.”

Learning outside of the classroom is a critical component of a 21st century education.

There are few experiences that can replace living among and with students from vastly different cultures, said Chagrin Falls Superintendent Steve Thompson.

The district’s International initiative, “Bridge to the World Project” is intended to help students and staff develop greater cultural intelligence and acceptance and further increase global awareness in students, grow in confidence and independence, stretch beyond their immediate horizons, and prepare them to love, work and participate in the global economy. Mr. Thompson said.

The thrust of the project is to create opportunities for our students and staff to experience diverse cultures by living abroad. Last year students went to China and then hosted students from their sister school back at home. This summer Thompson said.

Learning beyond the walls of University School has become an integral part of the curriculum, according to Nicole Lawrence, director of community and international partnerships.

This year, boys will travel to Ireland to study conflict resolution and learn how a country that has healed itself through its art and culture, she said.

Students at University School travel on community service missions under the guidance of Hope for Honduran Children, an organization founded by Shaker Heights powerhouse Karen Godt.

Students also travel to Australia to study environmental sustainability, Ms. Lawrence said, and have the opportunity to experience China’s culture. The school currently is hosting two students from China for their junior and senior years, she said.

Hathaway Brown’s Center for Global Citizenship, under the direction of Joe Vogel, who has visited more than 50 countries, offers overseas learning trips that young women don’t often have the opportunity to experience — places like India, El Salvador, Spain, Germany, Canada, Turkey, France, Peru, Japan, and Australia.

The Center also oversees Hathaway Brown’s Global Scholars Program, a four-year course of study examining different regions of the world, global leaders, important issues and politics. For instance, students studied and developed policy positions on Mexico and the drug war, Egypt as a key ally of the West, and Cuba after the Castros, Tamanan Square, and the tribal areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

As our world grows more connected through technology and travel, schools incorporate a more global curriculum with unique opportunities for their students of all ages.