

Why Cultural Education?

"I call on schools, teachers, students, parents, and community leaders to promote understanding of our nations and cultures by encouraging our young people to participate in activities that increase their knowledge of and appreciation for global issues, languages, history, geography, literature, and the arts of other countries."

— President George W. Bush

(From an address given at International Education Week, 2001)

We live in a Global Community

Since 1991, the number of students participating in study abroad programs has more than doubled, from 71,154 annually to 154,168 in 2001. These numbers have not been dampened by the September 11th attacks—45 percent of programs report an increase in student international travel since 2001.

—Institute of International Education

"Open Doors Report 2002: Americans Studying Abroad."

In 1999, there were a record 24.6 million U.S. resident travelers going to overseas destinations, an increase of 7 percent from 1998. Travel overseas has increase for the last consecutive eight years.

—U.S. Department of Commerce

International Trade Administration Office of Tourism Industries

Nearly 600,000 international students study in the United States every year: India is the leading place of origin for international students followed by China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan, Canada, Mexico, Turkey, Indonesia, and Thailand.

—Institute of International Education

"Open Doors Report 2002: Americans Studying Abroad."

Cultural and Geographical Illiteracy: A Snapshot of the Issues

- Only 23 percent of U.S. high school students can name at least four countries that officially acknowledge possessing nuclear weapons.
- Only 1 in 7 (13 percent) American high school students can locate Iran or Iraq on a map, despite the almost daily presence of these countries in the news.
- More than half—56 percent—of high school students are unable to locate India, home to 17 percent of the people on Earth.

—National Geographic—Roper 2002 Geographic Literacy Survey"

(Prepared by Roper ASW for National Geographic Education Foundation, November 2002)

"...When given a map of the United States, 16 percent of eighth graders could not locate the Mississippi River, and one-third of fourth graders could not identify the state where they live. The state where they *live*. Only a quarter of high school seniors showed proficiency in geography. Overall achievement for 12th graders has not changed since 1994. This is the fourth straight NAEP report that shows scores for high school seniors have remained flat."

—Secretary of Education Ron Paige

(Remarks to the National Assessment of Educational Progress' Press Conference on Geography, June 21, 2002)

The Role of Education in Eradicating Cultural Illiteracy

"As Americans begin to reevaluate our assumptions about the impact of international relations on our daily lives, we realize that the task of diplomacy belongs not only to governments, but to individuals as well. Each of us is an ambassador when we interact with our global neighbors. Thus, giving our children a solid education, which includes the skills they will need to succeed in a global context, is essential."

—Secretary of Education Rod Paige

(From an address given August 2002.)