



Learning to live in an interconnected world: What schools, teachers and parents can do

This chapter provides a synthesis of the results of the PISA 2018 global competence assessment. It describes how the concerted efforts of schools, teachers and parents can promote global knowledge, skills and positive attitudes among adolescents. The chapter highlights the holistic nature of global competence and the need for a comprehensive education policy in this field.

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The backdrop to 21st-century education is our endangered environment. Growing populations, resource depletion and climate change compel all of us to think about sustainability and the needs of future generations. At the same time, the interaction between technology and globalisation has created new challenges and new opportunities. Digitalisation is connecting people, cities, countries and continents in ways that vastly increase our individual and collective potential. However, the same forces have also made the world volatile, complex and uncertain.

In the social and economic sphere, the questions turn to equity and inclusion. People are born with what political scientist Robert Putnam calls “bonding social capital” – a sense of belonging to our family or other people with shared experiences, cultural norms, common purposes or pursuits. But it requires deliberate and continuous efforts to create the kind of “bridging social capital” through which we can share experiences, ideas and innovation, and build a shared understanding among groups with diverse experiences and interests, thus increasing our radius of trust to strangers and institutions. Societies that value bridging social capital and pluralism often tend to be more creative, as they can draw on the best talent from anywhere, build on multiple perspectives, and nurture creativity and innovation. Yet there is growing disenchantment with the values of pluralism and diversity, as is visible in shifting political landscapes, including the rise of inward-looking populist parties.

Algorithms behind social media are sorting us into groups of like-minded individuals. They create virtual bubbles that amplify our views and leave us insulated from divergent perspectives; they homogenise opinions while polarising our societies. Tomorrow's schools will need to help students to think for themselves and join others, with empathy, in work and citizenship. They will need to help students develop a strong sense of right and wrong, a sensitivity to the claims that others make about us, and a grasp of the limits on individual and collective action. At work, at home and in the community, people will need a deep understanding of how others live, in different cultures and traditions, and how others think, whether as scientists or artists. Whatever tasks machines may be taking over from humans at work, the demands on our knowledge and skills to contribute meaningfully to social and civic life will keep rising.

While digital technologies and globalisation, not to speak of pandemics, can have disruptive implications for our economic and social structure, those implications are not predetermined. It is the nature of our collective responses to these disruptions that determines their outcomes – the continuous interplay between the technological frontier and the cultural, social, institutional and economic contexts and agents that we mobilise in response.

In this environment, the Sustainable Development Goals, set by the global community for 2030, describe a course of action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all. These goals are a shared vision of humanity that provides the missing piece of the globalisation puzzle, the glue that can counter the centrifugal forces in the age of accelerations. The extent to which those goals will be realised will depend in no small part on what happens in today's classrooms. Education will be key to reconciling the needs and interests of individuals, communities and nations within an equitable framework based on open borders and a sustainable future, and it will be key to ensuring that the underlying principles of Sustainable Development Goals become a real social contract with citizens.

Schools need to help students learn to be autonomous in their thinking and develop an identity that is aware of the pluralism of modern living. At work, at home and in the community, people will need a broad comprehension of how others live, in different cultures and traditions, and how others think, as scientists, mathematicians, social scientists and artists. Not least, the ability to read and understand diversity, and to recognise the core liberal values of our societies, such as tolerance and empathy, may also be one of the most powerful responses to extremism and radicalisation.

These considerations have led PISA to include global competence in its assessment. To do well on this assessment, PISA expects that students can combine knowledge about the world with critical reasoning. PISA also examines to what extent students understand and appreciate the perspectives and worldviews of others, and surveys students' disposition to adapt their behaviour and communication in order to interact effectively with individuals from different traditions and cultures.

The PISA 2018 assessment provides a comprehensive picture of the knowledge, skills and attitudes that 15-year-old students need to live in an interconnected and complex world. The results highlight the multidimensional nature of global competence and the need for a comprehensive approach to nurturing these skills. As the findings show, schools, teachers, parents and the wider environment all have a role to play. Any successful approach to promoting knowledge, skills and attitudes in this area will require the simultaneous development of competencies under each of the four dimensions of global competence, at school, at home and well beyond.

One of the most interesting findings in this report is that certain activities, such as learning at school, contact with people from other cultures and learning other languages, are positively associated with a variety of skills, including the ability to examine local and global issues, perspective taking, intercultural communication and, ultimately, the ability to take action for the betterment of the societies we live in. Moreover, all of these skills and attitudes are positively correlated with each other. Hence, the context that educators set for the development of one skill or dimension might positively shape the development of other skills or dimensions.

This chapter offers a synthesis of the findings, focusing on policies that have the potential to promote the acquisition of global skills, knowledge and positive attitudes. In particular, it sheds light on the roles of teaching and learning at school, the home environment, contact with people from different backgrounds, and inclusive and fair school environments, and on the need for a curriculum and a whole-school approach geared towards achieving those goals.

ARE STUDENTS LEARNING ABOUT GLOBAL ISSUES AND INTERCULTURAL RELATIONS AT SCHOOL?

Findings from the analyses of PISA 2018 data (as reported by students) show the existence of large differences across countries and economies in participation in global and intercultural learning activities. On average across OECD countries, students reported engaging in about five learning activities at school (the maximum being ten). This number varies substantially between countries and economies. Students in Albania, Baku (Azerbaijan), Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Indonesia, Jordan, Peru, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand reported engaging in more than seven activities, while students in France, Hungary, Israel, Latvia, the Russian Federation (hereafter “Russia”), Scotland (United Kingdom) and Slovenia reported engaging in fewer than five. The most common activities students engage in are those that involve direct learning and instruction at school (as opposed to activities that involve teamwork), discussion, participation in cultural events and following the news on the Internet or by reading newspapers. Students’ reports were confirmed by those of their school principals. According to school principals, the most common learning activities were learning about the beliefs, norms, values, customs and arts of diverse cultural groups and learning about different cultural perspectives on historical and social events. The least common activities were celebrations of festivities of other cultures and student exchanges with schools from other countries.

The findings also show that, across many countries/economies, students’ attitudes and dispositions are positively associated with the number of learning activities in which they are engaged (as reported by students). Students engaged in a larger number of global-competence-related learning activities tend to report more positive attitudes and dispositions than students who are engaged in fewer activities. Therefore, integrating a range of activities into learning environments can help foster intercultural understanding.

School principals were also asked whether global issues (public health, climate change, poverty, migration and conflicts) and intercultural understanding (communication with people from different cultures, openness to intercultural experiences and respect for cultural diversity) are covered in the curriculum. Findings show large differences in coverage of such topics between countries/economies. Those where global issues are commonly covered in the curriculum include Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Russia. By contrast, countries and economies where such topics are rarely covered according to school principals, include Baku (Azerbaijan), Bulgaria, Israel, Italy, Kazakhstan and Moldova.

Coverage of global issues in the curriculum was positively associated with related students’ dispositions. For instance, the strongest associations were between coverage of climate change and global warming in the curriculum and students’ awareness of this issue. The next strongest associations were between: 1) coverage of causes of poverty in the curriculum and awareness of the topic; and 2) coverage of migration and the movement of people and awareness of the topic.

Moreover, school principals reported that intercultural understanding was covered in school curricula, with Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Thailand and Ukraine among the countries with the largest proportion of students attending schools where those topics are included. The most common topics covered are respect for cultural diversity, critical thinking and knowledge of different cultures. Incorporating intercultural learning topics in the curriculum was correlated with students’ attitudes in only a few countries/economies, and the associations were mostly weak. This indicates that inclusion of global and intercultural topics in the curriculum is not enough. Inclusion in the curriculum should translate into effective learning activities in the classroom.

In general, the findings show a positive relationship between exposure to global and intercultural learning at school (as reported by students) and students’ attitudes and dispositions. However, substantial variations between countries/economies exist in participation in these activities. In some countries/economies, global and intercultural topics are not in the curriculum or covered by learning activities. To foster positive dispositions, schools could develop a comprehensive approach to global and intercultural learning through which students are systematically exposed to the relevant learning activities. This in turn requires the development of an adapted curriculum, teaching materials and practices, and the provision of professional development opportunities for teachers focusing on teaching for global competence.

DO ALL STUDENTS HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES TO LEARN GLOBAL AND INTERCULTURAL SKILLS AT SCHOOL?

An important question is whether students are equally disposed to benefit from those policies within each education system. Promoting an educational policy or practice can exacerbate inequalities if students’ exposure to this practice is curtailed by factors beyond their control, such as gender, socio-economic background or immigrant status.

The analyses in this report confirm the presence of important inequalities in access to learning opportunities and hence in students' global and intercultural skills, attitudes and dispositions. Findings show that, on average across OECD countries, boys were more likely than girls to report participating in activities in which they are expected to express and discuss their views, while girls were more likely than boys to report participating in activities related to intercultural understanding and communication. For instance, boys were more likely to learn about the interconnectedness of countries' economies, look for news on the Internet or watch the news together during class. They were also more likely to be invited by their teachers to give their personal opinion about international news, to participate in classroom discussions about world events and to analyse global issues together with their classmates. In contrast, girls were more likely than boys to report that they learn how to solve conflicts with their peers in the classroom, learn about different cultures and learn how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues. These gender differences could reflect personal interests and self-efficacy, but they could also reflect how girls and boys are socialised at home and at school.

The findings also show that advantaged students have access to more opportunities to learn global and intercultural skills than disadvantaged students. This finding holds true in half of the participating countries and economies, with large differences observed in Australia, Canada, Hong Kong (China), Korea, Macao (China), New Zealand, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Chinese Taipei. Moreover, large socio-economic gaps were observed in participation in certain learning activities: 1) learning about different cultures; 2) participation in classroom discussions about world events; 3) analysing global issues together with classmates in small groups; and 4) learning how people from different cultures can have different perspectives on some issues. However, contrary to expectations, in many countries/economies, disadvantaged schools were more likely to offer such learning opportunities, but within those schools, advantaged students seem to take greater advantage of those opportunities.

When it comes to students' skills, attitudes and dispositions, the findings show clear socio-economic gaps in favour of advantaged students. These gaps hold true in most countries/economies for all nine attitudes and for performance on the cognitive test. Furthermore, in most countries and economies, girls were found to have higher awareness of global issues, greater ability to understand different perspectives, greater interest in learning about other cultures, greater respect for people from other cultures, more positive attitudes towards immigrants, greater awareness of intercultural communication, and greater agency regarding global issues. On the other hand, in a majority of countries and economies, boys were more likely to show higher cognitive adaptability than girls.

Fewer gaps in outcomes were observed between immigrant and native-born students in countries/economies with more than 5% immigrant students. In some countries and economies, immigrant students reported higher awareness of global issues than their native-born peers, greater self-efficacy regarding global issues, greater ability to understand different perspectives, higher interest in learning about other cultures, greater respect for people from other cultures, higher cognitive adaptability and more positive attitudes towards immigrants. This finding suggests that a more multicultural background may be more conducive to global and intercultural understanding.

Similarly, more multicultural classrooms could create a culturally rich environment that helps both immigrant and native-born students learn about one another. Some of the results align with this hypothesis. In some countries, having more than 10% immigrant students in a school is associated with more positive attitudes towards immigrants. However, this was true only in long-standing immigrant destinations, suggesting that the positive association may be conditional on successful integration policies.

In general, the analyses show the presence of different sources of inequity in access to learning opportunities and in students' outcomes. The most prominent source remains inequity related to students' socio-economic status. Disadvantaged students are less exposed to global and intercultural learning activities and report less positive attitudes than their advantaged peers. However, students attending disadvantaged schools are more likely to be exposed to those learning opportunities. At first glance, this may seem like a paradox. However, what it means is that lack of access to learning opportunities does not result from lack of opportunities in disadvantaged schools, but rather from within-school mechanisms that result in lower engagement among disadvantaged students. Thus, when school curricula, educational practices and materials are developed, educators should keep in mind that not all students are predisposed for global and intercultural learning. Those who come from disadvantaged backgrounds may be facing particular challenges and may require that content or teaching approaches be better adapted to their needs.

Furthermore, girls reported more positive attitudes than boys in most countries and economies, while they participated less in learning activities requiring expressing and discussing their views and more in activities requiring interpersonal skills, such as resolving conflicts. While achieving equal participation among boys and girls in all learning activities is of some concern, fostering positive attitudes among boys and bridging the gender gap seem more important issues.

ARE SCHOOLS AND TEACHERS READY TO TEACH THE SKILLS FOR LIVING IN AN INTERCONNECTED WORLD?

Successful integration of global and intercultural learning into school curricula and lessons requires teachers who are committed and well prepared to create a school culture that supports global and intercultural learning. Teachers in 18 countries and economies participating in PISA 2018 responded to three sets of questions focusing on opportunities to promote global and intercultural learning at school, teacher preparedness and teacher confidence in teaching these topics.

The findings show that global and intercultural topics are included in lessons to a varying degree. For instance, teachers commonly include critical thinking, respect for cultural diversity, knowledge of other cultures and openness to people from other cultures in their lessons. By contrast, intercultural communication and foreign languages are not as commonly integrated into lessons. Variations were also observed among participating countries and economies. Albania, the Dominican Republic, Malaysia and the United Arab Emirates showed the largest proportion of students enrolled in schools where teachers promote all five intercultural skills. The ability of teachers to choose and promote particular topics in their lessons depends on the intended curriculum but also on how much autonomy teachers enjoy in implementing the curriculum.

Although teachers do tend to integrate some intercultural topics in their lessons, few of them had attended relevant professional development activities in their teacher development programmes, and even fewer had done so in the previous 12 months. Across all 18 participating countries and economies, the most common activities were training on conflict resolution strategies, the role of education in confronting discrimination and teaching about equity and diversity. By contrast, fewer teachers received professional development on teaching in multicultural or multilingual settings, second-language teaching, or teaching intercultural communication skills, and even fewer participated in such training activities in the previous 12 months.

The lack of professional development on teaching in multicultural settings is reflected to some extent by teachers' self-reported need for training in certain areas, such as teaching in multicultural and multilingual settings, teaching intercultural communication, teaching second languages and teaching about equity and diversity. Across the 18 countries/economies taking the teacher questionnaire, the greatest need for professional development was expressed by teachers in Brazil, Chile, the Dominican Republic, Korea, Malaysia, Morocco, Panama and Peru.

However, most teachers reported that they are confident in their ability to teach in multicultural settings. In fact, more than 80% of students attended a school whose teachers reported a high degree of self-efficacy, as measured by five statements: "I can cope with the challenges of a multicultural classroom"; "I can adapt my teaching to the cultural diversity of students"; "I can take care that students with and without migrant backgrounds work together"; "I can raise awareness for cultural differences amongst the students"; and "I can contribute to reducing ethnic stereotypes between the students". Teachers in Albania, the Dominican Republic and Panama reported the highest levels of self-efficacy regarding teaching in multicultural settings.

Teachers play an important role in promoting and integrating intercultural understanding into their practices and classroom lessons. Analyses of PISA data do not show a lack of confidence in teachers' ability to do so or an unwillingness to promote these topics. The main challenge seems to be the lack of adequate professional development opportunities in this field. Just as students need to acquire intercultural skills, so do their teachers, and professional development should seek an appropriate balance between a focus on the core curriculum and these broader issues.

Furthermore, professional development for teaching in multicultural classrooms does not have to be conceived as a separate activity or an additional burden for teachers. This could be integrated into existing training opportunities by updating the scope and content of professional development programmes.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE SCHOOL IN PROMOTING AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT?

A positive school climate can make a great difference in students' lives. When asked about the most important criteria they consider when choosing a school for their children, parents cite safety, a good reputation and a pleasant environment. Schools with safe, respectful and caring learning environments protect students from engaging in maladaptive behaviours, such as truancy, smoking, drinking, drug use, and other risky behaviours (Gase et al., 2017^[3]). A positive climate can even mitigate the pervasive and strong link between socio-economic status and academic achievement (Berkowitz et al., 2016^[2]). PISA 2018, Volume III examined a number of factors related to school environment, such as students' sense of belonging, disciplinary climate, bullying and truancy. This volume examines perceptions of discrimination at school and teachers' egalitarian beliefs in association with students' intercultural skills knowledge and attitudes.

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In PISA 2018, school principals were asked about their teachers' attitudes regarding multiculturalism and fairness. A very high proportion of students (more than 90%) attended schools where principals reported positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers on all four statements included in the questionnaire. On the scaled index, principals in Belarus, Iceland, Ireland, Poland, Russia, Scotland (United Kingdom), Singapore, Spain, Ukraine and the United Arab Emirates reported the highest levels of positive multicultural beliefs among their teachers, while those in Baku (Azerbaijan), Hong Kong (China), Jordan, Korea, Lebanon, Morocco, Peru, Saudi Arabia, Chinese Taipei and Viet Nam reported the lowest levels of these beliefs.

Another set of questions asked students about their perception of discrimination by teachers at school. Those questions focused on teachers' attitudes towards people from other cultural groups. The PISA measure of discrimination at school could be seen as both individual and institutional, as discrimination can be the act of one teacher or a reflection of a more institutional problem. Moreover, the statements focus on traditional forms of discrimination as they reflect generalised attitudes about a group of people or a particular culture.

Students in Baku (Azerbaijan), the Dominican Republic, Morocco, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Thailand reported the most perceived discrimination at school, while those in Costa Rica, Iceland, Ireland, Korea, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Viet Nam reported the least. Across OECD countries, the proportion of students who reported that their teachers have negative attitudes towards particular groups of people varied between 12% and 15%.

Negative and consistent associations were observed between students' perceptions of discrimination in their school and students' perspective taking, respect for people from other cultures, attitudes towards immigrants and awareness of intercultural communication. Interestingly, perception of discrimination at school was less correlated with the knowledge aspects of students' dispositions (i.e. awareness of and self-efficacy regarding global issues) and more with intercultural attitudes towards people from other backgrounds. Students who perceive discrimination by their teachers towards particular groups, such as immigrants and people from other cultural backgrounds, exhibited similar negative attitudes.

This finding highlights the role of teachers and school principals and perhaps the broader school climate in countering or perpetuating discrimination by acting as role models. Students are likely to emulate the behaviour of their teachers. If teachers normalise discrimination and if discrimination becomes an institutional problem, then students may develop discriminatory attitudes towards those who are different from them. By contrast, when teachers do not exhibit discriminatory attitudes and set clear rules about intercultural relations, then students may become aware of what constitutes discriminatory behaviour. Teacher support could also act as a protective factor for students who are at risk of being victims of discrimination. In general, even if one or a few teachers do have discriminatory attitudes, if the majority of teachers and school principals take action against discrimination and if school regulations are clear on the matter, then discrimination would not go beyond being an individual contained issue.

HOW CAN PARENTS PROMOTE GLOBAL KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES?

Parents play an important role in their children's lives. Through socialisation and enculturation, they shape their children's outlook on life, their attitudes and belief systems. Global and intercultural attitudes are no different. Parents who are tolerant are likely to raise children who are tolerant as well. Those hypotheses are supported by PISA 2018 results.

In PISA 2018, parents in 14 countries and economies were asked questions that mirrored those in the student questionnaire. One set of questions focused on awareness of global issues, another on interest in learning about other cultures and a third on parents' attitudes towards immigrants.

The findings show that the parents of students in Croatia, Germany, Ireland and Italy were more aware of global issues than the parents of students in Brazil, Chile, Hong Kong (China), Korea, Macao (China), Mexico and Panama. Students' awareness of global issues was also found to be positively associated with levels of awareness of global issues among parents across all participating countries and economies, even after accounting for students' and schools' socio-economic profile.

As for interest in learning about other cultures, parents in Croatia, the Dominican Republic and Germany reported the greatest interest, while parents in Hong Kong (China), Italy and Macao (China) reported the least interest. In all countries except Panama, students' interest in learning about other cultures was positively associated with their parents' interest in doing so. Furthermore, a positive association was found between parents' attitudes towards immigrants and those of their children across all 14 countries and economies that collected data from the parents' questionnaire.

In general, analyses of data from the parent questionnaire confirm the importance of parenting and the home environment in promoting global and intercultural interests, awareness and skills. Parents and teachers can play important and complementary roles in developing a positive intercultural and global outlook among adolescents. Parents can transmit knowledge about global issues and also act as role models in defining their children's behaviour. Parents who show interest in other people's culture,

tolerance towards those who are different from them and awareness of global issues that affect us all are likely to raise children who share those attitudes. This, in turn, will help schools cultivate a climate that embraces those positive attitudes.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE BROADER ENVIRONMENT BEYOND THE SCHOOL?

Contact with people from different cultures has the potential to stir curiosity, open minds and create understanding. Students in PISA 2018 were asked whether they have contact with people from other countries in different settings: at school, in their family, in their neighbourhood and in their circle of friends.

On average across OECD countries, 53% of students reported having contact with people from other countries in their school, 54% in their family, 38% in their neighbourhood and 63% in their circle of friends. There were substantial variations in those proportions between countries. The proportion of students who reported having contact with people from other countries at school ranged from 70% to 78% in Albania, Germany, Greece, Italy, New Zealand, Panama, Singapore, Switzerland, Chinese Taipei and the United Arab Emirates, while it ranged from 20% to 30% in Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Turkey and Viet Nam. Those results reflect several factors, such as the proportion of first-generation immigrants in a country/economy, student mobility and the degree of interconnectedness between that country and the rest of the world. Those results were mirrored by findings for other settings where contact with people from other countries takes place, such as the family, the neighbourhood and the circle of friends.

Furthermore, contact with people from different countries has the potential to create understanding about those countries, their cultures and traditions. This hypothesis is aligned with the results from PISA 2018. In general, having contact with people from other countries at school (and in the family, neighbourhood and circle of friends) is positively, weakly to moderately, associated with students' intercultural skills and attitudes towards living with others. The most notable associations were found between having contact with people from other countries at school and students' self-efficacy regarding global issues, cognitive adaptability, interest in learning about other cultures, respect for people from other cultures, ability to understand different perspectives and understanding of intercultural communication.

Those positive associations may suggest that contact between people of different origins and cultures could foster understanding and mitigate prejudice. In multicultural societies, contact arises naturally at school and beyond. However, in less diverse countries or in education systems that are highly stratified, educators may have to make special efforts to ensure that their students benefit from cultural exposure. Examples for that are student-exchange or study-abroad programmes that offer an immersive experience of another culture. However, these programmes tend to be expensive, and their benefits are limited to those taking the programme. In the digital age, educators may overcome these limitations by partnering with foreign schools and using online platforms to organise collaborative activities based on the shared interests of their students. These activities could cover topics of global or intercultural relevance, but could also focus on introducing students to other cultures and traditions. Engagement with the local community is another method of introducing students to the diverse cultures existing within reach of their school. This may involve visiting a community centre, a place of worship or a local market.

HOW CAN MULTILINGUAL SKILLS PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL UNDERSTANDING?

Speaking multiple languages is a valuable skill that improves employability and fosters a range of abilities that extend beyond the realm of language proficiency. It has the potential to promote social cohesion and intercultural dialogue by opening the door to a range of content, including literature, music, theatre and cinema. By doing so, multilingualism brings down barriers and gives young people direct access to content that would otherwise be inaccessible.

Learning foreign languages has become a major goal for many education systems around the world. This is reflected in the PISA results when comparing the multilingual skills (i.e. the ability to speak more than one language) of students with those of their mothers and fathers. Students who reported that they speak two or more languages tended to have multilingual parents. However, in most countries, the proportion of multilingual parents was smaller than that of multilingual students. This shows some intergenerational transmission of multilingual skills from parents to children, but also a clear trend of rising multilingualism over time that goes beyond simple intergenerational transmission.

The largest proportions of students who speak several languages were observed in Croatia, Estonia, Hong Kong (China), Latvia, Macao (China), Malta and Singapore, where more than 90% of students reported that they speak two or more languages. Those countries and economies are mostly small but well connected to the rest of the world. By contrast, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Korea, Mexico, Scotland (United Kingdom) and Viet Nam had the smallest proportion of multilingual students. If multilingualism is rare, it may be because of a lack of learning opportunities at school.

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Furthermore, language-learning opportunities are widely available across the countries and economies that participated in PISA 2018. On average across OECD countries, 50% of students reported that they learn two or more languages at school, 38% reported that they learn one foreign language and only 12% reported that they do not learn any foreign language at school. The largest proportion of students (more than 20%) who reported that they do not learn any foreign language at school were observed in Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and Scotland (United Kingdom). By contrast, in 42 countries and economies, more than 90% of students reported that they learn at least one foreign language at school. The proportion exceeds 99% in Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Ukraine, where foreign language learning is ubiquitous.

The associations between speaking two or more languages and students attitudes were positive in almost all countries and economies. This reflects the fact that language learning could contribute to improving attitudes, but also that students who have positive global and intercultural attitudes tend to engage in learning multiple languages. Speaking two or more languages was positively associated with awareness of global issues, self-efficacy regarding global issues, cognitive adaptability, interest in learning about other cultures, respect for people from other cultures, positive attitudes towards immigrants, awareness of intercultural communication and the ability to understand the perspectives of others.

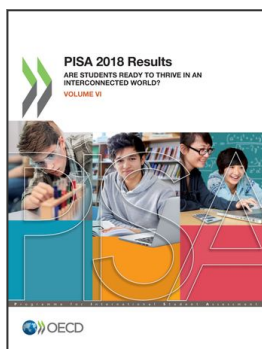
Positive associations between speaking multiple languages and students' attitudes and dispositions were mirrored by positive associations between learning multiple languages at school and the same attitudes and dispositions. The associations held even when the sample was restricted to monolingual students who learn languages at school other than their mother tongue.

In conclusion, the findings support the hypothesis that learning multiple languages has the potential to broaden students' horizons and to improve their global and intercultural attitudes. Promoting language learning at school could be a tool that educators use to introduce their students to cultural content from around the world. While students are mastering a foreign language that they would eventually use in their professional lives, they could be exposed to different cultural content, such as literature, poetry, music and cinema that will improve their intercultural understanding.

In conclusion, the countries and economies that are likely to be successful in fostering global knowledge, skills and attitudes among their students are those that combine a number of factors. These include learning opportunities for students, an adapted curriculum, teachers who are prepared for teaching global competence, availability of opportunities to learn foreign languages, availability of opportunities to have contact with people from other cultures and, finally, a positive and inclusive school environment.

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