

NEW HORIZONS
IN INTERNATIONAL
EDUCATION

NAFSA
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Annual
Conference
& Expo


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**The Challenges of Assessing Global
Learning in Teacher Preparation**

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Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



- Assessment is often the last thing thought about

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Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



- Assessment is often the last thing thought about – like here – it's the last session, you're all tired, want to get out of this room, and are ready to move on to the keynote.
- But, assessment should be considered and built into the program (or course or experience) from the outset so you are sure that you are getting what you expect out of the experience.

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Some initial caveats:

- Global learning is often identified as a desired outcome of a general university education and increasingly so in teacher education. Yet, these learning outcomes tend to be poorly defined and not well-integrated into the curriculum.

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Some initial caveats:

- For most students who participate in study abroad, the one experience often cited as most critical for global learning, the experience is often not well integrated into their specific area of study.



Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



- **Defining Terms.** Although there may be considerable interest in promoting global learning, there is no single, unanimously accepted definition of the term.
- Generally speaking, we're referring to efforts that address the integration of international, intercultural, or global dimensions into education.
That's pretty broad, and problematic, especially because it does not emanate from any particular disciplinary base.



TableTalk



How are **you and your institution or program** defining global learning – and how do you know if you are achieving your goals?



Global learning has been defined as:

- . . . a critical analysis of and an engagement with complex, interdependent global systems and legacies (such as natural, physical, social, cultural, economic, and political) and their implications for people's lives and the earth's sustainability. Through global learning, students should (1) become informed, open-minded, and responsible people who are attentive to diversity across the spectrum of differences, (2) seek to understand how their actions affect both local and global communities, and (3) address the world's most pressing and enduring issues collaboratively and equitably.

(AAC&U Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility initiative, 2014)



Global learning has been defined as:

- the knowledge and skills people need to understand today's flat world and to integrate across disciplines so that they can comprehend global events and create possibilities to address them. Global competencies are also the attitudinal and ethical dispositions that make it possible to interact peacefully, respectfully, and productively with fellow human beings from diverse geographies (Reimers, 2009).



Global learning has been defined as:

- the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that students acquire through a variety of experiences that enable them to understand world cultures and events; analyze global systems; appreciate cultural differences; and apply this knowledge and appreciation to their lives as citizens and workers" (Olsen, Green and Hill, 2006).



Global learning has been defined as:

"...the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance."

(Boix-Mansilla and Jackson, 2011)



Global Learning

- Those are all broad – and complex**, addressing such concepts as:
 - global self-awareness,
 - perspective taking;
 - cultural diversity;
 - personal and social responsibility;
 - understanding global systems; and
 - applying knowledge to contemporary global contexts
- We really must be clear on what we expect from a particular course, program, degree or experience that aims to enhance global learning...**



Global Learning

- **Those are all broad – and complex**, addressing such concepts as:

...and we must understand that these goals and objectives will not be achieved in just one course, let alone one experience. We've got to think developmentally and programmatically!

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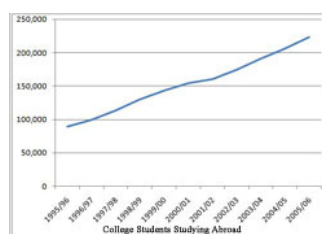
Global learning can occur at home or abroad

- International education can be “cross-border” or “at home.”
 - Cross-border refers to mobility of people, programs, providers and projects (and includes faculty-led study abroad, overseas internships and student teaching).

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Growth in Study Abroad

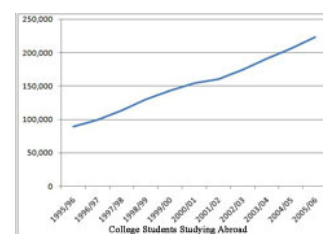
- The United States has seen a steady increase in students studying abroad, from:
 - 50,000 in 1985-1986, to
 - 140,000 in 1999-2000,, and reaching
 - 289,408 in the 2012-2013 school year



opendoors®

Growth in Study Abroad

- Yet, in most institutions, the percentage of students who study abroad remains low – below 10%.
- **Participation of education majors is among the lowest of all majors, and has been consistent at 4.1% of the total number for ten years!**



opendoors®

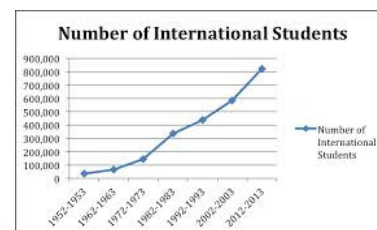
Global learning can occur at home or abroad

- International education can be “cross-border” or “at home.”
 - Cross-border refers to mobility of people, programs, providers and projects (including branch campuses and development projects).
 - “Internationalization at home,” refers to the international and intercultural learning that occurs for all students through curricula, co-curricular, and extracurricular opportunities.

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Growth in International Students

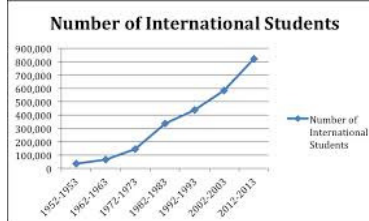
- The U. S. has seen a steady increase in international students, reaching an all time high of 886,052 in the 2013 – 2014 Academic Year.
- University campuses are among the most internationally diverse communities anywhere (except perhaps airports)!



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Growth in International Students: But Little Intercultural Interaction

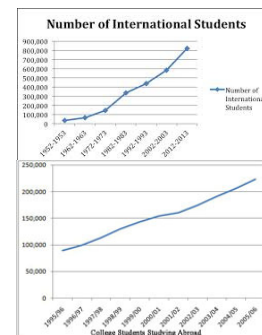
- But just because students are having more international encounters **does not mean that intercultural learning is taking place.**
- Domestic and international students rarely interact across cultures, at home or abroad, in meaningful ways!



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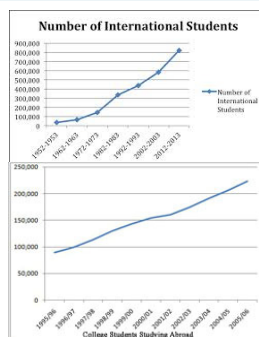
Growth in International Students: But Little Intercultural Interaction

- We're educators – not travel agents! For most of us, it's not just a numbers game.
- Increasing numbers tells us nothing about what is gained or learned by any individual.



Growth in International Students: But Little Intercultural Interaction

- More and more, we are being asked about performance outcomes –
What is the impact?
What is gained?
Why is this important?



Some of what I've said over the years (and what I've learned):



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- Cross-cultural training (intercultural education) can have a significant impact on people's experiences and on what they are able to do.
 - High school exchange students who received cross-cultural training upon arrival in their host country were better able to:
 - mediate cross-cultural interaction and were thus better adjusted;
 - apply intercultural concepts to their subsequent intercultural interactions; and,
 - solve their interpersonal problems.

• Cushner, K. (1989). Assessing the Impact of a Culture-General Assimilator. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 125-146.



Some of what I've said over the years (and what I've learned):

- Intercultural training strategies that go beyond mere information giving to engage students actively in developing empathy or an insider's view of another culture have a greater effect on people's perceptions and behavior.

• Cushner, K. (1992). Creating Cross-Cultural Understanding through Internationally Cooperative Story Writing. *Social Education*, Vol. 56, No. 1, 43-46.



Some of what I've said over the years (and what I've learned):

- "Developing the knowledge and skills necessary to enhance international understanding requires significant immersion experiences in cultures other than one's own....In this study, fifty overseas student teachers report increased cultural awareness, improved self-efficacy, and enhanced global-mindedness as a result of student teaching overseas."

▪ Cushner, K. and Mahon, J. (2002). Overseas Student Teaching: Affecting Personal, Professional and Global Competencies in an Age of Globalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, Vol. 6, No. 1, 44-58.



Some of what I've said over the years (and what I've learned):

- "...Student teaching abroad sets the stage for people to engage in meaningful relationships, thus opening up opportunities that may otherwise not occur....The lived intercultural experience is the critical element in gaining a meaningful understanding of other cultures as well as one's own place in an interconnected world.

▪ Cushner, K. (2007). The Role of Experience in the Making of Internationally-Minded Teachers. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 1, pp. 27-40.



Some of what I've said over the years (and what I've learned):

- The majority of these studies – and many others – tend to be **self-reports or analysis of student interviews, journal reflections or focus-group discussions**, with little or no objective analysis of the impact beyond student report.



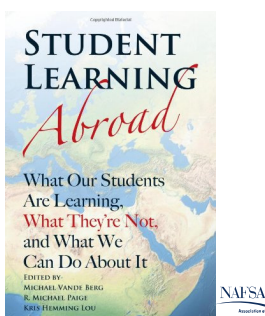
Some of what I've said over the years (and what I've learned):

- The majority of these studies – and many others – tend to be **self-reports or analysis from qualitative interviews, journal reflections or focus-group discussions**, with little or no objective analysis of the impact beyond student report.
- Those in the field of study abroad know that it is simply far too easy for students to have an international experience that focuses on surface or objective-level elements of culture without it resulting in significant intercultural change.



Assumptions made about the impact of study abroad: (Vance Berg, Polyz, Fall 2011)

- **Assumption #1:** Students learn effectively while abroad simply by being exposed to new and different cultures – commonly referred to as the **Immersion hypothesis.**



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Assumptions made about the impact of study abroad: (Vance Berg, Polyz, Lou, 2012)

- **Assumption #1:** Students learn effectively while abroad simply by being exposed to new and different cultures – commonly referred to as the **Immersion hypothesis.**
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- **Assumption #3:** Because most students say they are learning effectively while abroad, it makes sense to focus more on getting more students abroad than on working to improve the teaching and learning that takes place.



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- **Assumption #2:** Reports from returning students that they have been “transformed” provide evidence that being immersed in the experience is, in fact, effective.
- **Assumption #3:** Because most students say they are learning effectively while abroad, it makes sense to focus more on getting more students abroad than on working to improve the teaching and learning that takes place.
- **And hence we've seen a meteoric rise in the number of students studying abroad!**



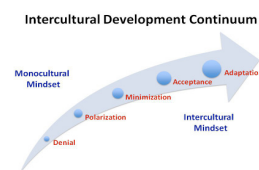
Georgetown Consortium Study (2009)

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- In one program only -- **students enrolled in a course that had intercultural components before, during and after the experience** gained 8.08 pts. on the IDI – statistically significant gains.
- Findings challenged the traditional "sink or swim," or the immersion assumption!



We (COST) wanted to see the impact of overseas student teaching on intercultural competence as measured by the IDI

- We tracked 62 students in three groups.
 - Treatment 1: 8-15 week overseas student teaching (n=35)
 - Treatment 2: 8-15 week overseas student teaching with reflective thought questions provided every 2-3 weeks (but no action was required with these; n=19)
 - Control: Stay-at-home student teaching (n=8)

Cushner, K. and Chang, S. (2015). Developing intercultural competence through overseas student teaching: Checking our assumptions. *Intercultural education*,



Conclusion

- The results indicate that the student teachers' intercultural competence as measured by the IDI did not change significantly:
 - as a result of an overseas student teaching experience of 8-15 weeks;
 - as a result of an overseas student teaching experience of 8-15 weeks when provided with reflective questions every 2-3 weeks throughout the experience; nor
 - as a result of student teaching in a local domestic setting.

Cushner, K. and Chang, S. (2015). Developing intercultural competence through overseas student teaching: Checking our assumptions. *Intercultural education*,



TableTalk



So, what's going on?????



TableTalk



So, what's going on?????

Probably a Lot!

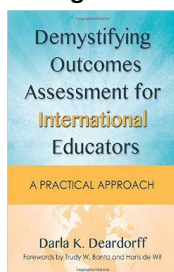
What messages or lessons are evident to you?



Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



Some of what we're learning....



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Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



It's complex and multifaceted, and includes

- more than simply numbers that are easy to measure (e.g., number of students in study abroad); and
- more substantial issues such as intercultural competence, which is, by its very nature, typically not well-defined in the institutional context.

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Our objectives must be clear so the assessments are appropriate, and so that the specific experiences offered to students are aligned with those objectives.

- If the main institutional objective is economic and/or numbers driven, then an emphasis on student learning outcomes is misaligned!

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Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



It's developmental – and takes time.

- Global learning – and especially the development of intercultural competence -- unfolds over time. This has implications for assessment as:
 - students start at different places,
 - outcomes may appear later, therefore making assessment an on-going, long term process; and
 - faculty are at different places in terms of their intercultural experience, knowledge, interest and competence.

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Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



- It is **experiential**, occurring through extended and impactful face-to-face encounters facilitated by guided and critical reflection of the experience **that emphasizes more than simply the acquisition of knowledge,**

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Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



- but the ***application of learning that is evident through performance. We should be asking:***
 - ***So what?*** Why was the learning important?
 - ***Now what?*** What actions will students be able to do?
 - Performance-based assessment measures become increasingly important due to the experiential nature of culture learning.

From Dearhoff, 2015



Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



- It **must be intentional and strategic** – both for the teacher as well as the student.
 - Students need to be cognizant of terminology, concepts and key theories so they can reflect upon their experience in meaningful ways, and can speak of specific impacts – rather than being able to get away with statements such as “It changed my life!”
 - This requires more than international experience alone – requiring faculty to have sufficient knowledge of intercultural concepts and theories.

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Unique Challenges in Assessing (Global) Learning



- Pre-Post test surveys alone seem to be insufficient to determine what’s really going on; and
- No one measure exists capable of assessing all that we are interested in learning.

From Dearhoff, 2015



Unique Challenges in Addressing Global Learning in Teacher Education



We must consider this from three vantage points:

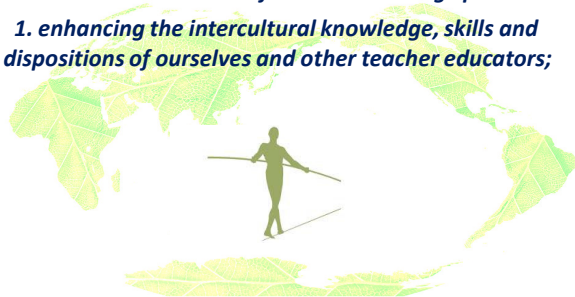


Unique Challenges in Addressing Global Learning in Teacher Education



We must consider this from three vantage points:

- 1. enhancing the intercultural knowledge, skills and dispositions of ourselves and other teacher educators;*



Unique Challenges in Addressing Global Learning in Teacher Education



We must consider this from three vantage points:

- 1. enhancing the intercultural knowledge, skills and dispositions of ourselves and other teacher educators;*
- 2. transferring this to teacher candidates; and*



Unique Challenges in Addressing Global Learning in Teacher Education



We must consider this from three vantage points:

- 1. enhancing the intercultural knowledge, skills and dispositions of ourselves and other teacher educators;*
- 2. transferring this to teacher candidates; and*
- 3. helping teacher candidates learn to convert this to curriculum they can teach to their students*



Unique Challenges in Addressing Global Learning in Teacher Candidates



- **There is often a disconnect between the culture of the family and the culture of the school.** The majority of teachers in schools in many nations are relatively homogeneous and represent the majority culture of that nation. For instance:
 - In Australia, ≈ 90% are Anglo-Celtic Australian, monolingual, and 65% female.
 - In England, ≈ 90-95% of teachers are white; 75% female.
 - In New Zealand, ≈ 80% European/Pakeha; 10% Maori; 70% female.
 - In the USA, ≈ 85% are European American and middle class and ≈ 65-70% female.

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(Banks, 2006; Sleeter, 2006; Cushner, McClelland and Safford, 2015)

TableTalk



What are you working on?
How will it be assessed?

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References and Resources

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