

Advancing Global Competence Through Faculty Collaboration

Increasingly, education abroad offices are trying to foster global competence among students who study abroad and collaborating with faculty can have a positive impact.

EDUCATION ABROAD PROFESSIONALS know that developing global competence should be one of the goals of study abroad. But improving students' global competence is difficult—if not impossible—if it is done in a vacuum. Working with faculty as partners to improve students' global competence through study abroad can make the goal easier to achieve.

It's important to remember that global competence is not one-size-fits-all across higher education institutions.

"Global competence can mean different things to different people," says Nick Gozik, director of the Office of International Programs and of the McGillicuddy-Logue Center for Undergraduate Global Studies at Boston College. "I believe that the most important task is to define global competence for the context of one's particular institution and purposes. Whatever definition is used, the idea of preparing students for an interconnected and diverse world could not be more important. It is crystal clear

how necessary it is for our students to be competitive and adaptable in a global workforce."

Collaborating with faculty in creative ways can help students become more globally competent after they study abroad.

Enable Faculty to Improve Their Own Global Competence

One way to approach this matter is to provide faculty with opportunities to increase their own global competence, says Joe Hoff, interim dean of international education



at the University of Richmond. “We provide funds for research abroad, and we host faculty workshops where we discuss the needs of international students, and ways to integrate the knowledge gained by students returning from study abroad into the classroom,” Hoff says.

Since 1989, the University of Richmond has also offered faculty seminars abroad. “We usually propose the locations, and the faculty have to write proposals to be accepted,” Hoff says. “They have to explain how they will use what they learn to internationalize their curriculum, and/or to learn about our partner institutions in the places they’ll be going, how they can establish relationships with the faculty there, or do collaborative research—things like that. Also, we want them to learn about how study abroad works. If we have a partner in the country we’re going to, we want our faculty to meet with them while they’re there, and learn about how the exchange operates.” A fringe benefit is facilitation of interdisciplinary communication. “One of our institutional goals is to offer more interdisciplinary courses, through first-year seminars or special topics courses,” says Hoff. “And one of the outcomes of these seminars is that faculty who normally probably wouldn’t talk to each other do, after having the experience of traveling together.”

Providing faculty with training aimed at helping them better understand their own cultural values and biases can also be productive. At the University of Minnesota, the

use of assessment tools is an integral part of this process. “We have given many of our faculty-led program leaders the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), and we’ve discussed intercultural frameworks such as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) with them,” says Christine Anderson, assistant director of curriculum and program development in the University’s Learning Abroad Center. “We work with them on their facilitation skills, on how to debrief critical incidents, how to guide students in understanding their own value systems in order to better understand host country locals, and how to develop programs that will enhance students’ opportunities for interacting with people in the host country.”

In addition to home institution-based programs, there are other resources designed to help faculty develop and improve their intercultural communication skills, as well as learn how to instill and encourage the development of these skills in their students. “The Intercultural Communication Institute in Portland offers a series of summer workshops,” says Kris Hemming Lou, director of international education at Willamette University and one of the editors of *Student Learning Abroad: What Our Students Are Learning, What They’re Not, and What We Can Do About It*. He adds, “There is also the Workshop on Intercultural Skills Enhancement (WISE) Conference at Wake Forest University.” WISE was developed by a steering committee led by Steven Duke, executive director



of global student/faculty development, research, and risk management at Wake Forest, and author of *Preparing to Study Abroad: Learning to Cross Cultures*. “In 2008 as we began developing cross-cultural engagement courses for our students, a group of faculty came forward and said, ‘We’d like something for ourselves.’ So we developed a workshop, and three years ago we turned it into a conference,” says Duke. According to Duke, the conference is experiencing robust growth.

Each year Winston-Salem State University sends several faculty members to WISE. “They learn how classroom teaching is different from teaching abroad, and how global competence can be integrated into their curriculum,” says Joti Sekhan, director of international programs and professor of sociology at Winston-Salem. “Through WISE they obtain a broader perspective on their role as educators.” She adds, “As we prepare students to be actively engaged and successful in a global environment, teaching cannot be limited to texts, assignments, and in-class activities. WISE gives faculty the chance to interact with faculty, staff, and administrators from around the country, and to engage with transformative teaching and learning practices.”

The Center for Global Programs and Studies at Wake Forest has also worked with its campus Teaching and Learning Center to offer faculty learning communities and discussion groups on study abroad.

“We offered them to the whole campus, and advertised them to faculty going abroad in the next two years, as a way to help them develop greater awareness of the deep learning that can come with guided reflection,” says Duke.

The group met four times in the fall and four times in the spring, an hour and a half each time. Discussions were based on readings from Student Learning Abroad and Documenting Learning with eportfolios. “A faculty learning community is an excellent resource for bringing people up to speed on what research has shown, and where best practices are around the country in

regards to cross-cultural learning,” Duke says, and adds, “The faculty really loved it. They reported that it was a very worthwhile experience. And those who had returned from teaching abroad after participating in the discussions said that they’d gotten to know their students a lot better in applying the things they’d learned.”

Wake Forest has also funded faculty to participate in CIEE (Council on International Educational Exchange) and the Institute for the International Education of Students (commonly known as IES Abroad, based in Chicago) faculty development seminars. “They do an intensive academic seminar abroad, and then they come back and reflect on what they’ve learned, but also how they can incorporate what they’ve learned into their classes,” says Duke.

In January 2014 Woodrow Hood, director of film studies at Wake Forest, participated in a CIEE seminar called “The Business of Bollywood,” held in Mumbai. “I was hoping to get deeper insight into film production in India,” Hood says. “Having never been to India before, or studied Hindi film, I never felt I could incorporate teaching Indian films in my courses. I had no direct cultural experience to draw from, or any real instruction from experts in the area. I hoped the seminar would give me enough expertise that I could start incorporating new material into my classes and introduce a more well-rounded global perspective in my Intro to Film course.”

During the seminar, Hood had the opportunity to participate in one-on-one

discussions with top Indian filmmakers and attend lectures. He also made a short film. “The mix of theoretical and practical learning was brilliant, and far exceeded my expectations,” says Hood. “But it’s not just the seminar. Being in Mumbai, experiencing the wealth and poverty and cleanliness and filth, the super-contemporary and almost medieval, gave me a much bigger picture, a glimpse of the story of humanity as it manifests itself in that culture.” The seminar exposed Hood to “all sorts of nuances...and that’s what I’ve brought back to my teaching. Not just better understanding of the modes of film production, but a way of seeing Indian film that is richer, deeper, and more meaningful.”

Boston College has also been looking for ways to better train faculty for teaching abroad, says Gozik. “We run lunchtime sessions for faculty leading programs abroad. It’s almost impossible to find a time when everyone can attend. So we haven’t gotten large numbers of people, but the faculty who’ve come have a strong interest.” They’ve held sessions on health and safety, intercultural competence, marketing, and other topics. The health and safety session is required for all faculty going abroad; the others are optional.

“We’ve been trying to get a sense of what kinds of needs are out there, and what kind of interest there is among faculty. So we let them talk about some of the concerns they’ve had, and let other people who have been running programs for a while talk about what they’ve done,” Gozik says.

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Create Credit-Bearing Courses for Before, During, and After Study Abroad

Some schools offer credit-bearing classes specifically designed to prepare students for study abroad; support and guide them while abroad; and help them process what they’ve learned on return. At Willamette, all students going on study abroad for a semester or more are required to take a one-credit course, “Maximizing the Study Abroad Experience.”

“Research has shown that studying abroad alone is not enough for students to develop their intercultural skills,” says Lou. “We need to combine the experience with facilitated, guided reflection. The course is based on the principle that it’s important to intervene in the experiential process to help stimulate and guide reflection.” Students going on short-term programs are not required

Richard Powers, a senior lecturer in the Business Law Department of Boston Colleges Carroll School of Management, has participated in the sessions and says they are invaluable. “As faculty, many of us have a tendency to focus too narrowly,” he says. “By prompting us to think more broadly, these sessions have provided us with fresh in-

sights about what might be important from a student’s point of view. We also have the opportunity to learn from each other about what’s worked, and what hasn’t.”

Plans are underway for planning a workshop based on the WISE model, for Boston College faculty as well as those from nearby campuses.

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to take the course, but they are required to take the preparatory seminar that is a part of it; there is also a four-credit version that students are not required, but are encouraged, to take.

Since 2007 Wake Forest has also offered credit-bearing courses for students to develop their intercultural skills. The courses have been optional to date, but the faculty steering committee has discussed the possibility of making them required. There are three discrete courses: the predeparture course is offered for 7 weeks, 2 hours a week for 50 minutes. Given the limited number of contact hours, says Duke, “The actual amount they can learn about Italy or Spain or China in that amount of time isn’t that much in the global scheme of things. But compared with zero...” And at Boston College, an online course Gozik developed with the help of an academic innovation grant will be offered as a pilot for the first time this fall.

Help Faculty Infuse Global Learning into the Campus Curriculum

Gozik has also worked with faculty on the nitty-gritty of incorporating a more global perspective into the curriculum. He recently led a workshop in Boston College’s Lynch School of Education for faculty interested in finding ways to internationalize their courses. “We spent most of the time analyzing syllabi that they brought, discussing what kind of readings were being given, how course assignments were constructed, and how class discussions are handled,” he says.

At the University of Richmond, programs such as the Culture and Languages Across the Curriculum program (CLAC) allow students to use their foreign language skills to discuss topics in their discipline. The credits are awarded in the various departments: for example, one popular course is a CLAC biology course offered in Spanish. Others give

students the opportunity to discuss accounting practices in Korean or Japanese.

“It’s *not* a language class, and we specifically tell the faculty ‘No: we’re not focusing on grammar here, we’re focusing on fluency,’” says Hoff. “The goal is to help students become fluent in the terminology of their discipline. They’re using their language skills to talk about something that most likely they’ll have to do in their future careers.”

When possible, the classes are taught by departmental faculty fluent in the target language; when there is no such faculty available, international students may be hired to help teach the class.

“This is another wonderful aspect, because we’re utilizing the skills and expertise of our international students, and further integrating them into the academic community,” Hoff says. The benefits for students returning home from study abroad are clear. “It’s not geared just for them, but it’s especially

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helpful for them. They've studied similar things abroad in the language they've been working on. Now they can come back and do the same thing with their professors here."

Develop Events for Faculty and Students to Share Education Abroad Experiences With the Entire Campus

A full-day symposium offered at the University of Richmond for the first time in the fall of 2014 gave students returning from study abroad, as well as faculty involved in education abroad and international students, the opportunity to share what they've learned with the campus community. It not only promoted the value of study abroad to students and faculty not already involved with it, but to students returning from study abroad as well. "It was excellent as a reentry tool," Hoff says. "We had students come up to us and say 'I'm so glad I came. Listening to

my friends talk made me appreciate all that I had learned as well."

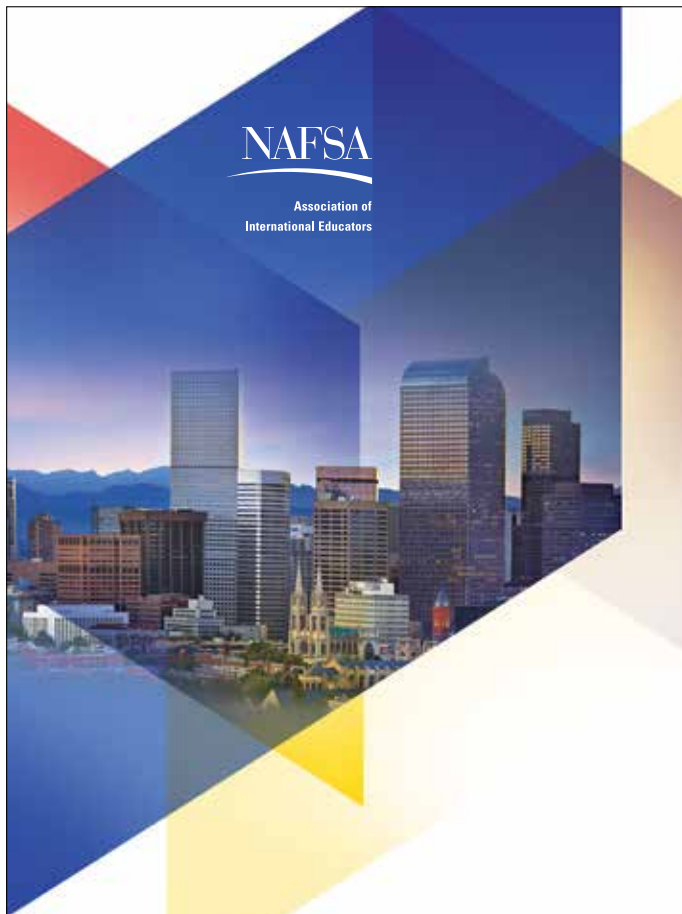
Kathleen Bailey, an adjunct associate professor in the Department of Political Science and associate director of the Islamic Civilization and Societies Program at Boston College, takes students to Kuwait on a regular basis.

"Students who are exposed to different cultures learn to appreciate different ways of looking at things, different views and solutions to common issues," says Bailey. "It stretches their minds and makes them think more creatively. I see this process every time I teach my course in Kuwait. At first students are puzzled by unfamiliar customs, and social and political practices. But, if exposed long enough and encouraged to keep an open mind, they soon develop an understanding and appreciation for a perspective different than their own. It makes them more flexible. They're able to communicate

more effectively, build new relationships, and have a positive effect on the people with whom they are interacting."

She stresses the importance and value of intercultural learning for faculty as well. "We should be mindful of the extraordinary opportunities presented in teaching abroad. Faculty should be encouraged to engage with local people, rather than concentrate solely on the academic part of the course. This might be the most impactful part of the experience, and cannot be replicated at the home institution." She adds, "We all need to get out of our comfort zones." **IE**

JANET HULSTRAND is a writer, editor, and teacher based in Silver Spring, Maryland. She has created and taught literature classes for the City University of New York in Paris, Florence, Honolulu, and Havana, as well as faculty development workshops for education abroad. Her most recent *IE* article was "Best Practices for Short-Term, Faculty-Led Programs Abroad" in May/June 2015 issue.



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