White Paper: Global Learning

Sophia Abbot, Natalie Larson, Kiara Hines, and Alonzo Cee

Elon University

Global Learning

Historic efforts around global learning emerged intentionally just after the turn of the 20th century (Nair & Henning, 2017). Then called international education, these efforts focused on cross-cultural understanding for the sake of diplomacy and national security. Global learning has continued to develop since then, but Whitehead (2017) attributes the last ten years with a particular "maturation" in focus on global learning (p. v). A couple of social factors account for that: employers have begun to push for students' engagement in global learning (Whitehead, 2017), technology has made connection easier and more necessary, and the problems of the world have grown bigger and more complex (Lock, 2015; Whitehead, 2017). It is within this context that many colleges and universities are making global learning a priority.

Throughout this history, global learning has commonly been understood as study abroad. However, an overwhelming majority of the U.S. population has never traveled overseas, and even among undergraduates, less than ten percent participate in travel abroad programs (Smith, Smith, Robbins, Eash, & Walker, 2013; Whitehead, 2016). Colleges and universities are increasingly adopting study away programs, which involve domestic travel and study to give students local opportunities for connecting with new communities (Sobania, 2015), but even in these cases, financial and logistical barriers can prevent equity in student access to this form of learning. Given this data, it is imperative that we consider global learning possibilities in on-campus curricular forms.

Definitions

Colleges and universities define global learning (both on and off-campus) broadly, but the vast majority use their intended learning outcomes as their definition. Perhaps the most common aspect of global learning involves students understanding and appreciating different cultures, yet there are many other qualities that can contribute to global learning. The

Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U) offers a VALUE rubric that consolidates the expected outcomes of global learning. The AAC&U VALUE rubric breaks down goals for global learning into six dimensions: global self-awareness, perspective taking, cultural diversity, personal and social responsibility, understanding global systems, and applying knowledge to contemporary global contexts. Based on the other VALUE rubrics, this rubric is intended to be assessed across benchmarked levels rather than in a single experience all at once (Whitehead, 2016, p. 29).

Many colleges and universities have developed their own language beyond that used within the VALUE rubric. We looked at the AAC&U student learning outcomes for certain institutions that incorporated a "global focus" ("Student Learning Outcomes," 2019), and coded their descriptions of global learning goals to get a stronger sense of institutional similarities and differences regarding this pedagogy. We have synthesized these themes in Table I and analyzed key themes below.

Global Communities. One of the most popular components that institutions of various sizes include in their respective definitions of global learning include an understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence of global systems; however, the emphasis that is placed on those interdependencies is articulated differently across institutions. While many institutions use broad and general terminology to define interdependence, there are a few that explicitly outline expected connections to global systems such as the local community, institutional entities, academic curriculum, and/or co- and extracurricular activities.

Critical thinking. Many institutions with global education programs not only include critical thinking as a key characteristic but describe the ways that their respective programs are intended to foster this skill amongst their students. For instance, California State University-San

Marcos asserts that students will learn to "become self-interrogating about their place in the world and the impact of the United States on rest of the world" (Nair and Henning, 2017, p. 10).

Moral / Ethical / Civic Engagement. It is important to note that engagement in this context is more than simply showing up to class or completing required coursework. Many institutions greatly emphasize the importance of engagement in global education and believe it to be an integral facet of their curriculum. This instills a sense of responsibility on the student to be well-informed about local and global systems and seek information about challenges and issues that exist in society to achieve cultural consciousness. Phrases that institutions are using to further drive the importance of engagement include "participating productively and responsibly" (Kennesaw State University) and "becom[ing] effective members of diverse communities" (Michigan State University).

Table I
Themes in Stated Learning Outcome Goals

Common themes	Dichotomous Language
Lifelong Learning	Awareness & Appreciation
Diversity	Competence & Preparedness
Global Communities	Knowledge & Understanding
Application of knowledge	Perspective & Engagement
Moral / Ethical / Civic Engagement	
Critical Thinking	

Most interesting, perhaps, is the way institutions embrace active or passive language to convey how they intend for students to address these common themes. We lay out some of these differences in column II of Table I. A potential result of this language could be the difference between students who have knowledge, awareness, and perspective (passive relationship) versus students who have understanding, appreciation, and engagement (active relationship) within global challenges. Additional research is needed to confirm whether these linguistic differenced impact the campus culture around global learning and students' subsequent engagement.

Characteristics of Global Learning Programs

As the wide range of definitions allude to, there are a number of ways universities incorporate global learning into their ethos and practice. We have tried to limit our review of the literature to programs and research focused on on-campus curricular global learning elements given our focus on equity and inclusion. Within these limitations, however, we do see strong case studies that can give us a sense of global learning in action.

Certain institutions have come to understand their diverse student populations as an opportunity to integrate global learning extensively into the curriculum. These curricular programs have been developed at Florida International University (FIU) in Miami and Montgomery College in Washington D.C. At FIU, students are required to take at least two courses that relate to global awareness, global perspective, and global engagement. These courses exist across the campus and the college assesses their students learning through campus-based assessments and the Global Perspective Inventory ("About the GPI," 2019). At Montgomery College, global learning curriculum was developed by faculty who participated in their Global Humanities Institute, which involved course redesign and course development. This allowed the institution to integrate curriculum with clearly defined and intentional learning outcomes for their diverse students (Whitehead, 2017).

At smaller scales, several recent case studies have offered examples of ways technology can be thoughtfully incorporated into the classroom to facilitate cross-cultural dialogue, problem-solving, and learning (e.g. Forden & Carrillo, 2014; Lock, 2015). Forden and Carrillo, for example, connect students in a U.S. class and an Egyptian class to collaborate on a social psychology project using Facebook as a discussion and collaboration tool. Lessons for classroom-level embedding of global learning can be found in such cases.

Outcomes of Global Learning

Isolating the effects of curricular on-campus global learning is difficult. In research articles and measures ostensibly about global learning broadly, we see instances in which the language of "study abroad" is used interchangeably with "global learning" (e.g. Wandschneider et al., 2015; and Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, & Pascarella, 2015). This implies a bias in the literature towards conceptions of global learning as study abroad and study away. In a review of the literature, Kilgo, Ezell Sheets, and Pascarella (2015) found that "diversity and global learning" were linked to gains in active & critical thinking, social responsibility, civic engagement, and intercultural competency. In the authors' own large-scale survey, these published findings were echoed, but more specific: "study abroad" had a modest effect on intercultural effectiveness, and a significant positive effect on socially responsible leadership (Kilgo et al. 2015). We caution readers from conflating study abroad data with on-campus curricular effects.

However, we find more relevant data if we look to studies on "exposure to diversity" and cross-cultural learning, rather than global learning specifically. In one strong example, a study examining large survey data from the University of Michigan and a national sample of college students sought to understand the impact of exposure to diversity in a range of forms which they break into three broad categories: informal interactional diversity, classroom diversity, and diversity events/dialogues (Gurin, Dey, Hurtado, & Gurin, 2002). They find all three have significant positive impacts on white students' active thinking. For African American students surveyed in the Michigan data, only classroom diversity had a statistically significant effect on learning outcomes, though events/dialogues and informal interactional diversity did have a statistically significant relationship to intellectual engagement. The results provide a theoretical grounding using Erik Erikson's theory of identity development to argue for diversity in higher education as well as support for making sense of difference in identity (Gurin et al., 2002).

Researchers continue to seek to understand how students from different backgrounds and perspectives engage with global learning initiatives. Global learning requires students to engage in learning across and of differences; a student's identities can impact their experience in this process as well as their resulting intercultural competency development. Considering much of the existing research is rooted in a Western perspective, how students from different cultures engage with the learning outcomes as well as how impactful it is can vary greatly (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012; Deardorff, 2009). Therefore, an intersectional approach, considering the interconnectedness of students' various social identities, is important to make sense of these complex cases (Peifer, Chambers & Lee, 2017).

Alexander Astin's Input-Environment-Outcomes (I-E-O) model provides a useful framework to not only understand how an individual student's characteristics and experiences may impact their development of intercultural competence, but also within the context of their specific institutional environment (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). A study conducted by Peifer et al. (2017) found that the self-reported intercultural competence of white students entering a majority-minority institution (MMI) was higher than their white peers attending a predominantly white institution (PWI). This difference was attributed to the relatively higher levels of intercultural competence students of color have given their lived experiences entering college. Based on this example, less diverse institutions are presented with a greater challenge for their students to develop cultural competency given fewer identity differences within the student body itself.

Assessment

Assessment of global learning and intercultural competence has and continues to be challenging at individual, programmatic, and institutional levels. As previously discussed, the definition of global learning as well as the desired outcomes can vary greatly between

institutions. Two studies, conducted by Deardorff (2006; in Deardorff 2011) and Hunter, White, and Godbey (2006; in Deardorff 2011) found that definitions were created as a result of discussion among faculty without consolation of literature (Deardorff, 2011). This leads to a significant challenge in conceptualizing and situating assessment of global learning in an applicable and productive framework (Deardorff, 2011; Fantini, 2009; Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009). Currently, traits such as critical thinking, attitudes of respect, openness and curiosity, and emotion regulation, have been associated with the learning outcomes of global learning and help us conceptualize global learning assessment efforts (Deardorff, 2009; Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009).

By considering these traits, multiple frameworks have been developed to lay additional groundwork within global learning assessment, including Deardorff's Process Model of Intercultural Competence, Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, King and Baxter Magolda's Intercultural Maturity Model, and Cross's Cross-Cultural Continuum (Deardroff, 2011). The Process Model of Intercultural Competence specifically utilizes the assessment of the previously mentioned attitudes, knowledge and comprehension of cultural self-awareness and cultural understanding, and skills of listening, analyzing, and interpreting to directly measure the level of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2009; Deardorff, 2011). Furthermore, over 44 external tests have been identified as possible tools of global learning assessment; however, many include or specifically focus on measuring proficiency of a foreign language which is not a sufficient measure alone for cross cultural competency and global learning (Fontini, 2009).

With any quality assessment efforts, the selection of the tool should include consideration of program implementation, available resources, connections to the curriculum, and the original goals and objectives of the program (Fantini, 2009). As intercultural competence has been

determined to be a continuous, developmental process over the course of a student's collegiate experience and beyond, students should be prompted to reflect on their own growth at various points throughout the curriculum (Deardorff, 2009; Deardorff, 2011). This can be accomplished through diagnostics or pre-tests to establish a common foundation of knowledge along with the implementation of formative tests to determine progress made over time (Berardo & Deardorff, 2012; Fantini, 2009). As a result of the complex nature of intercultural competence assessment, Deardorff suggests a multi-method, multi-perspective approach, including qualitative and quantitative information gathering throughout the assessment process (Fantini, 2009; Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009).

In addition to the previously stated lack of consensus in definitions and outcome goals, assessment of global learning also faces challenges of sampling and design because it can take place in varied and multiple settings. Finally, the cross-cultural nature of global learning is itself a challenge for assessment and research to understand the outcomes for different student populations (Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009).

Implications

While more research is needed, initial research on global learning is promising and implies that if done thoughtfully, global learning can support students' critical thinking, civic engagement, cross-cultural understanding, and appreciation of the world around them. Global learning is at its heart about connecting across, understanding, and valuing diverse perspectives. We thus see multicultural education (both K-12 and post-secondary research, e.g. Banks, 1997; Nieto, 1992; and Tatum, 2007) as offering lessons especially relevant to curricular embedding of global learning practices (Charles, Longerbeam, & Miller, 2013). As campuses make both diversity and global education priorities, we encourage them to consider ways the two areas can cross-inform and mutually support each other.

References

Association of American Colleges & Universities (2019, January 20). *Student learning*

   outcomes. Retrieved from: https://www.aacu.org/global-learning/student-learning

Banks, J. A. (1997). *Educating citizens in a multicultural society.* New York, NY: Teachers

   College Press.

Berardo, K., & Deardorff, D. (2012). *Building cultural competence: Innovative activities and*

   models. Stylus Publishing, LLC.

Charles, H., Longerbeam, S.D., & Miller, A.E. (2013). Putting old tensions to rest: Integrating

   multicultural education and global learning to advance student development.

   Journal of College and Character, 14(1), p. 47-58.

Deardorff, D. K. (2009). Implementing intercultural competence assessment. In D. K. Deardorff

   (Ed.) The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence (477- 491). Thousand

   Oaks, CA: Sage

Deardorff, D. K. (2011). Assessing intercultural competence. *New Directions for Institutional*

   Research, 2011(149), 65-79.

Kilgo, C. A., Ezell Sheets, J. K., & Pascarella, E. T. (2015). The link between high-impact

   practices and student learning: Some longitudinal evidence. Higher Education,

   69(4), 509-525. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.elon.edu/10.1007/s10734-014-9788-z

Fantini, A. E. (2009). Assessing intercultural competence: Issues and tools. In D. K. Deardorff

   (Ed.) The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence (456-476). Thousand

   Oaks, CA: Sage

Forden, C.L., & Carrillo, A.M. (2014). Integrating global learning into a psychology course

   using an online platform. Psychology Learning & Teaching, 13(3), p. 270-278.

Gurin, P., Dey, E.L., Hurtado, S., Gurin, G. (2002). Diversity and higher education: Theory and impact on educational outcomes. Harvard Educational Review, 72(3), p. 330-366.

Iowa State University (2019). *About the GPI.* Retrieved from http://www.gpi.hs.iastate.edu/

Lock, J. V. (2015). Designing learning to engage students in the global classroom. Technology, Pedagogy, and Education, 24(2), p. 137-153.

Nair, I., & Henning, M. (2017). Models of global learning. Washington, D.C.: AAC&U.

Nieto, S. (1992). Affirming diversity: The sociopolitical context of multicultural education. White Plains, NY: Pearson.

Patton, L. D., Renn, K. A., Guido, F. M., Quaye, S. J. (2016). Student development in college: Theory, research, and practice. (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass

Peifer, J., Chambers, K., & Lee, E. (2017). Examining the role of structural diversity in intercultural competence. International Research and Review, 7(1), 1-10.

Smith, D. E., Smith, M. O., Robbins, K. R., Eash, N. S., & Walker, F. R. (2013). Traditionally under-represented students' perceptions of a study abroad experience. NACTA Journal, 57(3), 15-20.

Sobania, N. (2015) Putting the local in global education. Sterling, VA: Stylus

Tatum, B. D. (2007). Can we talk about race?: And other conversations in an era of school resegregation. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.

Trinh, A.N., & Conner, L. (2018). Student engagement in internationalization of the curriculum: Vietnamese domestic students' perspectives. Journal of Studies in International Education, 23(1), 154-170.

Van de Vijver, F. J. R., & Leung, K. (2009). Methodological issues in researching intercultural competence. In D. K. Deardorff (Ed.) The Sage Handbook of Intercultural Competence (404-418). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Wandschneider, Elizabeth., Pysarchik, Dawn. T., Sternberger, Lee. G., Ma, Wenjuan., Acheson, Kris., Baltensperger, Brad., ... & Wang, Felix. (2015). The Forum BEVI Project: Applications and Implications for International, Multicultural, and Transformative Learning. Making Sense of Beliefs and Values: Theory, Research, and Practice, 407.150-228.

Whitehead, D. M. (2016). Global learning: Key to making excellence inclusive. In D. M. Whitehead (Ed.) Essential Global Learning: A Compilation of Seminal AAC&U Articles about Global Learning (22-27). Washington, D.C.: AAC&U.

Whitehead, D.M. (2017). Global learning: Shifting from an option to a priority. In I. Nair & M. Henning (Eds.). Models of Global Learning (v-vi). Washington, D.C.: AAC&U.

Sophia Abbot is the 2018-2020 Center for Engaged Learning Graduate Apprentice. She studies student-faculty partnerships, high impact practices, and their intersections with the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

Natalie Larson is the 2018-2020 Graduate Apprentice for the Division of Business, Finance, and Technology. She examines organizational structures in higher education.

Kiara Hines is the 2018-2020 Graduate Apprentice for Career Development in the Student Professional Development Center. She advises undergraduate students on elements of professionalism such as resume writing, interviewing, and networking.

Alonzo Cee is the 2018-2020 Graduate Apprentice for the Center for Leadership. He supports student leadership development opportunities and outreach initiatives, while also facilitating leadership education workshops.