



HIGHLIGHT OF BEST PRACTICES FOR GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT AT HOME

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As technology and globalization continue to connect people all around the world, opportunities to connect with people of different backgrounds and cultures have become much more accessible. It is no longer necessary to go abroad to have a global experience. Global engagement can occur at “home” by connecting students, faculty, and staff with the diverse people, groups, businesses, and events within their local communities. Campuses became more creative during the pandemic in the use of e-service learning, Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), and working with institutions and communities worldwide. The best practices featured in this publication showcase innovative programs and techniques to think beyond the traditional global engagement experience and encourage global engagement at “home”.

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Structure and Outcomes of a Virtual International Humanitarian Engineering Collaborative Program with Workshop

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Abstract

With travel restrictions and lockdowns due to the COVID-19 pandemic, faculty at Metropolitan State University of Denver (MSU Denver), Universidad del Valle de Atemajac (UNIVA), Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (UPB Medellin), and SRH University Heidelberg organized a virtual collaborative course in the subject of “Humanitarian Engineering” for the Spring 2021 semester. This course engaged students and faculty from all four partners in a virtual workshop to solve pressing issues for vulnerable communities in the regions of the universities. This paper will report on student and faculty engagement in this online program and the contribution to global diversity, equity, and inclusion as measured by a pre- and post-workshop survey.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic presented unprecedented global shutdowns. Consequently, restrictions in travel and in-person interaction impacted traditional global engagement. While this scenario halted study abroad, it did allow institutions to advance and normalize technologies (such as Zoom) which connect us and allow for global interactions.

MSU Denver, a Hispanic-Serving Institution, has one of the most diverse student bodies in Colorado, with only 1% of students studying abroad. By adapting Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), a methodology of creating connections for both students and faculty across countries through online collaborative work and curriculum, we enable more students to engage in global experiences and cultural exchange in a cost-effective interaction. This model, developed by the SUNY COIL Center (Guimarães & Finadri, 2021), provided the blueprint for faculty from MSU Denver in the United States, UNIVA in Mexico, UPB Medellin in Colombia, and SRH University Heidelberg in Germany to organize a virtual collaborative course in the subject of “Humanitarian Engineering” for the Spring 2021 semester.

By leveraging technology, COIL helps reduce barriers for students facing marginalizing circumstances which might otherwise restrict them from international educational involvement (Guimarães & Finadri, 2021). Moreover, it allows interaction of students and faculty across distances and borders in a way that can increase global awareness and engagement.

¹ 48% students of color, 57% first generation, 28% Pell Grant recipients, 80% part-time and full-time workers

Humanitarian engineering (HE) is problem solving aimed at improving the capacity of underserved communities. Offering curriculum in this area has been documented to increase participation and retention of underrepresented and minority students in STEM fields (Adams & Burgoyne, 2014). The label “underrepresented” is contextual (e.g., a Latino student in Mexico would not be considered underrepresented but a Latino student in Denver would). For this paper we report on the particular experience of the MSU Denver students and how this COIL experience in HE encouraged participation by underrepresented populations and expanded global interaction.

Structure

This experience occurred completely on a virtual platform. Students from the four participating institutions attended synchronous lectures transmitted through Zoom. Over the course of four weeks, faculty from the collaborating institutions presented foundational content related to methodologies for implementing HE projects. After lecture material was presented, students were assigned to breakout rooms where they could work in groups on course activities. Course material linked the development of problem analysis and applied approaches to the United Nations Development Goals (UNDP) (Gupta & Vegelin, 2016). High emphasis was placed on field methods for analyzing capacity and vulnerabilities of communities. Attention was paid to issues of social justice, equity, and environmental impact for the selection of appropriate technologies (Bauer & Brown, 2014). Additionally, consideration was made for structure which encouraged inclusion of diverse thoughts from differing cultural perspectives. Understanding student demographics was also utilized by instructors to

direct the course with components that leveraged the “funds of knowledge” of participating students (Verdín, Smith, & Lucena, 2019). This methodology applies experiences and backgrounds, often in a cultural context, as part of the learning activity. In this case, student groups focused on projects to address local vulnerabilities they could identify from their personal familiarity with their communities. This was particularly valuable in the community assessment and project selection where embedded community experience of the students helped identify local issues that could be addressed through HE.

The four-week seminar was followed by a 1-week workshop consisting of 2 hours per day of activities in which students from the partnership universities worked in teams in Zoom breakout rooms to conceptualize projects that addressed problems in their communities that they identified using the methodology presented in earlier lectures. As such, the workshop facilitated a service-learning experience that connected perspectives of students from different parts of the world for projects that could assist their local communities.

Demographics of Students

Of the 22 MSU Denver students that participated in this experience, nine (40.9%) were female. Female students are generally underrepresented in engineering studies, and in the case of MSU Denver engineering programs, this level of inclusion is approximately four times the overall baseline program representation. Additionally, 10 of the students involved (45.4%) identified demographically in categories considered underrepresented in the STEM fields in the US (Chen & Weko, 2009). Seventeen of the 22 participants identified as first-generation students.

At MSU Denver there was no targeted marketing for this class. However, the course was open to all interested students, with no prerequisites. This openness removed any perceived barriers to engineering and to global education. The diversity of this program reflects the general trend in HE education which has trended towards more inclusivity than the historically technocratic and masculine culture of traditional engineering education (Litchfield, 2014).

Survey

To understand the impact of this experience, a survey was conducted pre and post workshop. The survey used a mixed methods approach to quantify outcome attributes of HE, COIL, and service projects including questions related to global engagement and participatory methods.

Students were asked to give ranked responses to questions related to these topics. The scores of the pre-course survey and post-course survey were compared using a t-test methodology for two paired sample averages. Forty paired questions were asked.

Below are results from one set of paired questions. Students provided ranked responses on a scale of 1–5:

Question 6. Other courses and means have helped me to understand the problems and needs faced by the community in which I live

Question 7. The International Humanitarian Engineering Workshop-Seminar (IHES) has helped me to understand the problems and needs faced by the community in which I live

The paired questions produced a mean T value of 2.934 with an average P value of .018. Thus, this survey indicated that awareness was gained by participants of the challenges faced in vulnerable communities in different global settings, of HE impacts on improving community capacity, and the impact this course had on global engagement.

It is recognized that the reported results are limited by the small sample size, limited scope, and theoretical nature of the projects. Additionally, only 18 of the 22 participants completed both surveys.

Table 1: t-test values for sample paired questions

Variable	Responses	Median	Standard Dev	Error
Other	18	2.7778	1.0033	0.2365
IHES	18	3.5000	1.0981	0.2588
Difference	18	-0.7222	1.5645	0.3688

T of responses = -1.9585 | Degrees of freedom = 17 | Significance p = 0.0668

Closing thoughts

This seminar and workshop showed the benefit an online platform can offer in creating opportunities for students to be involved in an international experience. This project demonstrated expansion of global awareness for participants. It attracted a significantly larger population of students categorized as underrepresented in STEM fields as compared to other engineering courses offered at the same institution. The workshop offered an opportunity for cross-cultural learning, and concepts were created that have potential to improve the capacity for low-income and/or vulnerable communities in the partnership universities' regions. Furthermore, connections were made between the students and a true international experience occurred via a virtual platform. Students have expressed that they hope to actualize some of the concepts generated in a post-pandemic setting.

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Cultural Conversations: Virtually Strengthening International Connections

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Responding to travel restrictions during the COVID-19 pandemic, the [Global Education Office](#) of Virginia Commonwealth University has developed new ways to provide meaningful intercultural experiences to students in a virtual environment. The VCU Globe Living-Learning Program has fostered increased accessibility to international partner institutes around the world through co-curricular experiences called Cultural Conversations in which participants engage in sustained and structured interactions online. This virtual programming allows for greater diversity, inclusion, and equity in global education as it provides more students opportunities to engage in ways they may not have been able to due to international mobility challenges such as cost, work, or family obligations.

Thanks to technological innovations of the 2000s, virtual exchanges have demonstrated that learning can be international and collaborative without the need to physically travel. The State University of New York (SUNY) has been a leader in globally engaged interactions, often called Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL), which are cost effective and thus can include students of any field enrolled at an institution (SUNY COIL, 2021). Diversity and inclusion are furthered through these opportunities as students examine cultural lenses, analyzing “their own identities, biases

and prejudices, and challeng[ing] existing perspectives and stereotypes [while] develop[ing] diverse personal relationships through negotiation of meaning” (Jie & Pearlman, 2018, p. 2 and 8). Students participating in COIL initiatives co-create knowledge and provide information to each other that can only be shared through interpersonal connections (Gokcora, 2021). Through online student-to-student conversations, a greater understanding of global interconnectedness can be explored as students grasp how issues in their local communities are experienced all around the globe.

These international virtual collaborations also offer professional development and international networking for faculty members. Through COIL, educators “collaborate to bring topics to the course that would have been difficult to integrate without collaboration” (Gokcora, 2021, p. 2). While still a relatively young concept on many campuses, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the growth of these initiatives, which are on track to become permanent enhancements to university curricular and co-curricular initiatives.

Cultural Conversations with Virginia Commonwealth University

With the physical distancing requirements of COVID-19 serving as a catalyst to think of new ways

to create connection, VCU Globe initiated online intercultural and intergenerational experiences in April of 2020 with a local learning community of adults aged 50 and “better,” at the [Lifelong Learning Institute in Chesterfield](#). Given the rapidity with which educational institutions went online mid-semester, linking academic credit to these interactions did not seem feasible and thus the focus centered on non-credit-bearing opportunities that would allow students of different backgrounds to interact around four accessible themes of cooking, photography, storytelling, and resilience.

Noting the success of this domestic partnership, international partners were contacted in summer 2020 with some accepting invitations to [VCU English Language Program](#) virtual Tea-Time events. With five sets of experiences to build upon from spring-summer 2020, Cultural Conversations arose in fall 2020 as intentional learning experiences to further develop the knowledge base, skills, and experiences needed to communicate across personal and cultural borders.

Since September 2020, the format has included weekly 1-hour meetings facilitated by VCU, international partner staff, or student leaders with between eight and 25 participants per meeting. As of spring 2021, there are partnerships with institutions in Japan, Mali, Mexico, Qatar, and Vietnam, with each collaboration unique to the needs and interests of the participants. In cases in which language exchange between students can readily occur (i.e., English, Spanish, and French), students share materials (often articles from local media on predetermined topics) and prepare discussion questions to learn both linguistically and culturally. In other cases (with Japanese and Vietnamese), the learning is focused more on intercultural communication and

world Englishes, along with the content of the topic chosen by students prior to each meeting. As the partnership with Qatar involves students who are high-level English speakers, conversations are able to reach deeper levels more quickly and collaborative efforts are possible, including a joint art show on diversity and inclusion and a reading group focusing on Alice Walker’s *The Color Purple*.

Gains from Virtual Exchange

In an attempt to measure student gains, reflections and survey responses have been used to gather feedback. Students have responded to open-ended questions, covering the areas of community and self-development, cultural agility, and future applications.

Most commonly reported have been benefits in the areas of inter- and intrapersonal well-being. Social connections have led to community building through weekly topical conversation topics that have included university life, holidays, careers, food, music, visual arts, literature, nature, sports, and social justice. Friendships have developed through finding common ground and by challenging previous ways of thought. One VCU student conversing with students in Mexico highlighted the “bonds [formed] through similarities with students from other countries.” To date, more than 150 VCU and international partner students have engaged in these conversations.

With the intense isolation experienced by many due to COVID-19, students have reported emotional benefits of meeting someone who is both familiar as a peer and new as a member of a different culture. The comfort and excitement have students consistently attending sessions at normally unpopular times (8 a.m. or 12:30 a.m.)

and their willingness to share parts of themselves in ways not typical of a classroom (such as through international karaoke) has been connective and uplifting. Another student engaged with Vietnam shared their growth in “confidence in communicating with other people with different cultural backgrounds.”

Reviewing responses related to cultural agility, one major theme is diversity of perspective. Students have expressed an awareness of biases that they have observed in both themselves and their conversation partners as well as the media sources which feed into their thought processes. They have commented on the importance of understanding history and the cultural systems in which one is raised so that they can approach divergent ways of thinking with more curiosity than judgment. Topics such as women’s rights, colorism, and religious practices have been examined from distinct cultural contexts so that students are asked to first explore why and how a person comes to think the way they do. Our participants have learned not only about other countries but have also reflected more on their own, commenting that it has been “really interesting to hear someone’s thoughts of America’s issues from the perspective of a person living in a different country.”

Communicative fluency is another theme that stands out as students express their thoughts on cultural agility. From stepping out of their comfort zones to being more mindful of communicating across language barriers, students have repeatedly expressed growth in this area. Several American students have been positively humbled by the multilingual abilities of their conversation partners and have been inspired to learn more. They have practiced prioritizing successful communication over perfection, skillfully using the visual and text

features of video conferencing platforms to assist with comprehension.

Beyond student development, engagement in these virtual international exchanges amidst current travel restrictions has maintained and strengthened partnerships around the world in a manner that is cost effective in terms of time and money. New relationships have also been formed. Our partnership in Vietnam began as a result of an international student who shared her experiences with her contacts in her home country. Cultural Conversations with Mali arose after VCU students expressed interest in an exchange with native French speakers. The partnership with the English Practice Club of Bamako stands out in that access to these educational exchanges is open to the community and not directly connected to a university, thus providing more opportunities for a more diverse population.

While the impact on the future of global learning has yet to be seen, VCU students have commented on how Cultural Conversations has impacted their thoughts about study abroad and future employment goals. They have expressed an increased desire to travel and get to know their new friends’ cultures. One student shared,

“I have limited my options in the past when it comes to traveling. [T]here are many more options to consider which might enrich my cultural experience.”

With respect to professional applications, students have seen how skills learned and practiced could benefit them in the future. From applying to the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program to bias awareness in the field of forensics, students expressed that their

experiences with Cultural Conversations will “carry on to [their] professional career.”

Through expanding one’s perspectives, practicing communicative fluency, building skills for the future, and developing and maintaining international community and relationships, was, as one student succinctly stated, “definitely a win-win.”

Considerations for Future Engagement

Looking to the future with a continuation of the Cultural Conversations partnerships in addition to new initiatives, several considerations are helpful to keep in mind. It is important to set realistic expectations for all and to modify programming to meet individual partners’ goals and needs, balancing social and academic intentions. Additionally, staff availability, time zone challenges (including differences in observing daylight savings time), and accessibility to technology for both domestic and international students as well as advertising and recruitment must be considered as we look to expand connections between faculty across disciplines.

Based on student feedback, we also hope to further explore engagement activities that begin with Cultural Conversations and include more collaborative project-based learning. While we must consider different attendance models (i.e., required commitments over time or drop-in participation), we hope to build in more hands-on activities so that students across cultures can apply knowledge and skills to create collaborative representations of their learning.

Finally, as we look to expand our offerings, we realize the need to modify how we evaluate program outcomes. The Association of American

Colleges & Universities (2014) has designed a Global Learning VALUE Rubric that our team would like to integrate into our existing assessment tools. The goal is to offer this assessment the first and final weeks of Cultural Conversation terms to track the growth and development of students’ cultural competence to best guide areas for our program to focus on more in the future.

How can we engage students from any discipline at any point in their college career in these meaningful and accessible Cultural Conversations around the globe? How can we maximize student learning from these types of partnerships? The Global Education Office of VCU will continue to work towards this goal and we welcome connections with you to further explore ways to virtually strengthen international learning.

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What Can One Little Center Do? Minority Students and Local Opportunities for International Engagement

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The [Center for European Studies](#) (CES) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) is an externally funded research hub that promotes understanding of contemporary Europe and the transatlantic relationship across diverse audiences. Our extracurricular and curricular offerings attract minority undergraduate and graduate students who engage in international programming on a local level before venturing abroad. This text describes these initiatives with perspectives of two individuals of color who have participated in Center offerings. They explain how specific opportunities, both in and outside of the classroom, enriched their educational experience and point to ways in which CES could do more to bolster learning. The text examines the use of technology upon which CES relies to provide support to students—a Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) class, a student-led working group (WRESL), and an informational web portal (CES Serves). The discussion is framed within the model of effective service-learning advanced by scholars Nuria Alonso García and Nicholas V. Longo who point to learning as a “layered action”

taking place on multiple levels and in different settings during one’s time as a student².

Since its founding in the mid 1990s, CES has raised awareness of contemporary Europe among its various target audiences. UNC undergraduates and graduate students attend Center events, receive funding for Europe-focused research and/or undertake language training in Europe, and pursue degrees by way of our [Curriculum in Contemporary European Studies \(EURO undergraduate major\)](#) and our [TransAtlantic Master’s \(TAM\) Program](#). CES is well poised to add layers of meaning to the Europe-focused content students encounter in classes. We are guided by the work of Garcia and Longo. Their research points to the ways an individual’s education can take shape in a variety of locations. We strive to expand a student’s educational experience within and outside the classroom. As Cremin asserted, it is possible to think “about learning as part of an ecology of education”³, which recognizes that education takes place in multiple, interconnected settings” (115)⁴.

² Garcia, Nuria Alonso and Nicholas V. Longo. “Going Global: Re-Framing Service-Learning in an Interconnected World.” *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement*, Volume 17, Number 2, p. 111 (2013).

³ Cremin, L. A. (1976). *Public Educ* (No. 15). New York: Basic Books.

⁴ Garcia and Longo.

CES facilitates students' connection to issues of concern in Europe. For instance, in the fall of 2020, our TAM students engaged in a COIL class focused on EU institutions and integration; several joint seminars with European students provided a terrain of diverse perspectives. An intercultural facilitator worked with students to confront challenges and assumptions. Class participant, Jalyn McNeal, attests:

A graduate student in TAM, I took part in a COIL class focused on European Institutions and Integration. Through Zoom, this course allowed students and faculty from UNC and Germany's University of Hannover to form a joint seminar. Students from the U.S., Sweden, the Netherlands, and Germany took part in various educational and cultural activities centered around political happenings of the U.S. and EU. Activities included discussing the implications of the 2020 U.S. presidential election on the transatlantic relationship, listening to guest speakers from both the U.S. and the EU talk about different components of transatlantic affairs, and forming groups to conduct research projects on transatlantic relations⁴. This collaboration allowed me to better understand the relevance and perception of U.S. politics abroad as well as how the transatlantic relationship influences the policies of both the U.S. and EU.

CES staff actively encourage students to study abroad in order to benefit from experiential learning settings in European cultures; however, we know students of color typically engage in study abroad opportunities at lower rates than their white peers. CES' overall student population currently fails to mirror that of UNC's campus,

where roughly a third of all students identify as racial minorities⁵. Racial minorities make up just 25% of EURO majors. In TAM, the percentage is even lower—typically just 5-10% in a given cohort. Our students of color often feel they stand out as the sole representative of a racial minority in their classes or on study abroad trips. While we do not wish to disproportionately burden students of color by repeatedly calling upon them to bring their perspectives to the discussions, our minority students do have ways of understanding academic topics and educational experiences which often escape members of the dominant culture. We value these perspectives and think all individuals learn best when a variety of viewpoints are expressed in non-competitive environments.

CES embeds international experiences into its pre-professional programming. Students then leave the U.S. to study abroad with a greater understanding of academic topics and co-curricular activities of specific interest to them. For the past several years, CES has housed a small working group called [WRESL](#) (Working Group on Europe, Refugees, and Service Learning). By way of this club, students meet regularly to discuss and plan events focused on migration. Students author blog posts on the WRESL website and document their involvement. Kellan Robinson explains:

Institutions of learning can function as vessels for transformative, experiential learning extending beyond a traditional classroom setting. This was my experience as an undergraduate matriculating through CES as a EURO major and a WRESL fellow. This faculty-supported, student-led small group serves

⁵ Please read more about Jalyn's work in the class on our Medium blog [here](#). You can read more about this COIL class [here](#).

⁶ "Data and Demographics." <https://oira.unc.edu/reports/> - accessed 3/12/21.

as a space to learn about the realities and obstacles that immigrants and refugees face both in the U.S. and Europe through group discussions and speaker events as well as through art. While my major's coursework shed light on the refugee crisis as well as immigration trends on the European continent, WRESL provided a 'pulse' to these topics. This 'pulse' equipped me with the tools and platform for deeper introspection of not only policies and statistics but also and importantly the people intertwined with these issues. WRESL helped foster an understanding of Europe as a whole and the local landscape of Paris, my study abroad destination. During my semester overseas, I volunteered at Association pour le Dialogue et l'Orientation Scolaire (ADOS), a non-profit located in La Goutte d'Or - a neighborhood with a large immigrant population, particularly from Africa. I was able to approach this volunteering experience with the unique lens of understanding Europe from a historical and modern point of view informed by CES-facilitated learning experiences.

As an expansion of WRESL, our soon-to-launch CES Serves web portal will introduce students to additional topics of relevance to the U.S. and Europe such as Education and Sustainability⁶. Equipped with an understanding of each concept, students can access information about relevant classes and volunteer organizations at UNC and in Europe. Ultimately, each featured topic will have its own working group so that students can continue to layer their learning experiences. After studying abroad, students have the opportunity to share their stories through public events and blog posts. Their testimonies motivate and inspire peers who are earlier in their educational careers.

Moving forward, we, Jalyn and Kellan, recommend structural changes within CES. First, expand the curriculum so that it broadcasts a more inclusive and accurate understanding of Europe. This includes offering courses on the Roma, Muslims, as well as other populations (ex: differently abled, LGBTQI, women, Jewish, other racialized minorities, etc.). Add coursework to provide a historical context to Europe today by highlighting Europe's colonial and imperialist history. Secondly, foster a support system for students historically marginalized in academia. For example, facilitate a program that pairs students with professors to encourage and expose them to research.

⁷ The idea for this website came from one Elon University maintains: <https://www.elon.edu/u/service-learning/volunteer-toolkit/social-issue-guides/>

{Re}Place: Pedagogies for Remaking Places and Spaces Together

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While studying abroad is often seen as a primary pathway towards global education and cultural humility, it can be impractical, inequitable, unsustainable, and questionable as a method of intercultural learning (Hartman et al., 2020; Wick et al., 2019). Meanwhile, often overlooked forms of boundary crossing—including intercultural service learning with migrants and refugees (De Leon, 2014), engagement in intentionally multicultural group work (Reed & Garson, 2017), critical service learning (Mitchell, 2007), and liberatory decolonizing pedagogies (Costanza-Chock, 2020)—have proven effective in contributing to intercultural learning. However, even these proximate forms of face-to-face global learning have become a challenge in the era of social distancing and remote instruction. Rather than conceptualizing global citizenship education as only taking place in a particular global context necessitating international border crossing, we explore how interdisciplinary, intergenerational, and interracial collaboration, as carried out through in-person campus/community partnerships *and* remote translocal connections, can foster intercultural learning. In order to contribute to critical and emerging conversations around diversity, inclusion, and equity in global education, we outline our process, initial findings, and tentative recommendations from the design

and facilitation of a cross-course community-based learning project with a local African American history organization and community center under conditions of social distancing over the fall of 2020.

Boundary Crossing Curriculum: Collaboration as Intercultural Learning

The What, Why, When, & Where: The 2020 Power and Place Collaborative was formalized during the summer of 2020. The collaborative includes the African-American Cultural Arts and History Center, the Mayco Bigelow North Park Community Center, and faculty and students from an interdisciplinary cross-course collaboration including an honors sophomore seminar entitled Place and Placing-Making, and a senior seminar in health and human services. In support of community-identified goals to center narratives from the African American community in Burlington and surrounding areas in Alamance county, the aim was to create interdisciplinary near-peer teams of students who would work together to conduct remote oral history interviews with community members and co-produce public-facing digital stories from these interviews. The collaborative interviewing and digital storytelling process, combined with walking tours of local neighborhoods, created opportunities for students to enter into

relationship with, and contribute to, the local community. This place-based experiential learning was combined with trans-local learning in the form of guest speakers, both from the surrounding region and further afield, who shared insights from place-making initiatives in their own communities.



The Power & Place Collaborative

The How: Grounded in a commitment to mutually beneficial community/university relationships, collaborative members spent the summer co-creating the curriculum, including designing assignments, sharing readings, planning the oral history interviews, and scheduling the walking tours and guest speakers.

The Fall 2020 semester began with a focus on building relationships between students and with community partners through class visits from community partners and walking tours of historically Black neighborhoods. Before beginning the work of interviewing community members, students first created their own autobiographical digital story examining how their personal sense of place has been impacted by the events of the global pandemic and/or the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests. Prior to interviewing community members, students also learned the technical tools of digital audio recording and video editing, studied the practical and ethical challenges

of community-based learning, and practiced empathetic listening and peer reviewing. These practices provided students with an opportunity to experience first hand how sharing one's story publically can be both inspirational and empowering, as well as fraught with questions about personal privacy and authenticity⁷.

Over the course of a week, students conducted oral history interviews remotely with community members who attended their interview sessions, using a laptop and microphone setup at the Mayco Bigelow Community Center. Students transcribed interviews and produced a draft script for their digital story, sharing their draft with community partners, who provided additional context and suggestions on potential themes to emphasize. In alignment with relational, co-creative design practices, students then shared a revised script with community members for feedback and suggestions. After collecting images, video, sounds, and music, students edited together their digital stories for additional peer and community feedback. Finally, students and community storytellers presented and celebrated their co-produced stories at a public screening via Zoom.

Aligned with critical race theory, this relational and iterative process developed a sense of community connection, introduced students to a critical understanding of how social constructions of race, place, and identity intersect, and demonstrated the importance of centering on Black voices. Seeking to go beyond victim narratives or understandings of place based on deficiency or lack, we drew upon McKittrick's (2011) notion of a Black sense of place

⁸ The autobiographical stories also served as a way for students in the two courses to introduce each other and form the cross-course, interdisciplinary teams they would work in to conduct the oral history interviews.

that “brings into focus the ways in which racial violences [...] shape, but do not wholly define, black worlds” (p. 947). As Delgado and Stefancic (2017) point out, “powerfully written stories, and narratives may begin a process of correction in our system of belief and categories by calling attention to neglected evidence and reminding readers [viewers] of our common humanity” (p. 51).

What did we learn? Mixed Methods Longitudinal Assessment

Given our commitment to understand how locally situated engagement mediated by technologies yields outcomes similar to and different from conventional forms of education abroad, the collaborative is also engaged in a mixed-methods, longitudinal research study⁸. The study seeks to understand how our approach to engaged learning 1) generates knowledge networks connecting students, instructors, and community partners across multiple locales, 2) impacts efforts towards deep listening and empathy, and 3) imbues a greater sense of humility, nimbleness, and resiliency⁹. As a part of this study, students were asked to complete the Global Engagement Survey¹⁰ at pre- and post-semester intervals. In order to track the longitudinal value of this approach, they

will also be asked to complete the survey two years out. In addition, we have conducted observational analyses and plan to conduct semi-structured interviews with students over the next four years.

While it is too early to share substantive longitudinal results from the GES survey, initial analysis of written reflections and our own observations have led us to believe this cross-course community-based learning project increased students' understanding of and appreciation for local place history, including the incremental and small-scale efforts that people pursue toward the broader aim of social and racial justice. As one student reflected at the end of the semester, “I was really blown away by [our interviewee's] commitment to the community and how hard she has worked to create a sense of place.” This student went on to note that this project has led her to commit to designing-with communities, saying, “I learned so much through this project and I hope to bring this knowledge to future community-oriented endeavors.”

Another student wrote that they especially valued the opportunity to break “the narrative of discussing Black geographies as placeless.” This student valued how the stories did not attempt

⁹ While there is over 25 years of evidence supporting the value of community-based learning for supporting intercultural learning, much of the research focuses on end-of-semester outcomes for students. The potential value and risks of globally and locally engaged learning cannot be captured solely through student-facing end-of-semester assessment metrics alone. Studies that track long-term outcomes for students and communities are still needed (Bennion & Dill, 2013; Hoover-Plonk & Sigel, 2015; Hill et al., 2016; Hurd & Bowen, 2021).

¹⁰ Community-based learning exists along a spectrum and carries with it a history of harm. Direct service interventions like volunteerism often fail to involve target communities in the design of their own liberatory outcomes. The field is undergoing a transformation towards more critical and creative methods of engagement, shifting away from supporting problematic service models towards relational engagement and activism (Hernandez, 2016; Kennedy et al., 2020).

¹¹ This survey was designed to provide results regarding students' cultural humility and beliefs about global citizenship and engaged global learning.

to present placed narratives within a “context of suppression and loss,” saying their oral histories engaged both “big thematic questions about race and the County” while also “celebrating the lives of our interviewees.” In this way, the collaborative storytelling process not only created opportunities for learning about and engaging with community at the local scale, but also thinking critically about broader scale issues of racial justice.

We also found that the iterative, experiential, and relational learning process of collaborating directly with community members appeared to teach students resiliency and humility and confronted them with the real-world ethical challenges of participatory research and design. One student put it aptly, saying that their “digital story is about learning and unlearning.” Another began their post-course reflection by writing, “I was rather nervous at the idea of interviewing and then telling the story of the interviewee.” However, after getting feedback from the community partners and the interviewee, and after “hours upon hours of hard work and sitting with this story,” the student reported that they “learned so much” from the process, including the strong influence that place had on their interviewee.

Challenges and Tentative Recommendations

Given that these projects unfolded in the fall of 2020, the long-term, post-course value of these practices is yet to be determined. We are committed to pursuing our longitudinal, mixed method study over the next four years in order to trace the threads that unfold. Nevertheless, we can offer some tentative lessons learned and recommendations.

Our collaboration benefitted from institutional support for community-based learning including project funding, direct support via reduced teaching loads for faculty, access to summer stipends for curriculum development, and (limited) structures for team-teaching. Even still, our participatory approach clashes with the need to have relationships and plans in place prior to student enrollment in our courses. We sought to mitigate this by involving students in the post-project evaluation and design ideation for future iterations of the partnership. Likewise, we aim to involve students from past course cohorts in these future iterations, whether as teaching assistants, interns, or undergraduate researchers. The outcomes of this long-term approach to creating scaffolded opportunities to deepen engagement with local communities will be the subject of further research.

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A Vision for Global Education Through the Global C3 Workspace for Educators

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The COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges throughout the 2020-2021 school year for educators around the world. The Global C3 hub is a new and innovative workspace that offers educators a network to connect with others through a global community to inspire inquiry-based learning in the classroom and strengthen global education. The aim is to empower global educators to infuse inquiry, technology/digital learning, and inspire citizens to take informed action.

A research case study methodology was conducted to help develop effective models for instruction in a global education classroom. The goal of the study was to understand the teacher and student learning outcomes through the implementation of an inquiry-based unit on global issues. This research study would be a blueprint for educators to better understand the effective models for inquiry-based instruction. Overall, the findings in this research can help educators and researchers use the innovative approaches to teaching and learning through global education content in the midst of a globally interconnected, diversified, and changing world.

Defining Global Education

Global education is a creative approach to learning about the world and the changes we

can make in society. It relies on active learning environments that are enriched with universal values that create awareness of global topics, and challenge others to think about the global issues. Its primary purpose is to change attitudes through inquiry and reflection in order to create a deeper understanding of human actions in the world. Global education can instill, enrich, and empower students and thereby enable them to become active, competent, appreciative, and responsible global citizens. Global education brings out the best in every student as it helps create a sense of global appreciation that urges them to make a difference in the world.

Inquiry-based Curriculum

Inquiry is a process of seeking information by questioning a topic of interest to expand knowledge and gain a deeper understanding. Students are curious about the world around them, and inquiry-based learning is the best tool to guide students through effective and authentic question-driven learning. The Inquiry Design Model (IDM) through the C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) aims at “organizing the curriculum around the foundations of inquiry: questions, tasks, and sources” (Swan, Lee, & Grant, 2018, p. 137). Using the IDM, teachers are able to facilitate students’ knowledge development, expand their opportunities to develop literacy skills, and find meaningful ways to express themselves through

argumentation. Students are naturally curious and “curiosity drives interest and interest drives knowledge, understanding, and engagement” (Grant, 2013, p. 322). Inquiry enables higher-level thinking for students, particularly when teachers provide the appropriate types of sources.

Designing a Global Education Curriculum

The author, a university-based educator and researcher, sought to collaborate with a global education teacher to develop an inquiry-based, technology-infused curriculum for K-6 classes. The global education class was taught as an elective class, and each grade had a specific framework that focused on a theme, for example: *Traveling Around the World*; *Endangered Species: Research and Study*; *International Geography: Demographics and Culture*; *Financial Literacy: Budgets, Stocks, and Business*; *World Change: See It, Feel It, Be It*.

Ultimately, the goal of this research study was to see how a global education teacher prepares students for the interconnected, diversified world and the multicultural society they are surrounded with every day. This study focused on the first-grade classroom, and as the study was conducted, students were well acquainted with the classroom procedures for participating in student-led dialogues, discussions, and projects that focused on the theme of *Traveling Around the World*.

In the curriculum, *Traveling Around the World*, students were introduced to world geography and cultural studies through a “monthly adventure” taken to a country in the world. The eight countries studied throughout the year were: Chad, Pakistan, Italy, Brazil, Canada, Australia, Russia, and China. This research study focused on one unit in the curriculum, Brazil.

The curriculum unit, Brazil, included five inquiry lessons that focused on one compelling question and five supporting questions.

- ♦ Compelling Question: How do we impact Brazil?
 - » Supporting Question #1: What is Brazil?
 - » Supporting Question #2: Why are rainforests important?
 - » Supporting Question #3: How can technology impact the rainforest?
 - » Supporting Question #4: Is the relationship between humans and the rainforest good or bad?
 - » Supporting Question #5: How can we help Brazil?

The research question for this research study was: How does a first-grade teacher implement an inquiry-based, technology-infused global education curriculum in the classroom?

Methodology

This project mainly examined how the global education teacher helped students develop as global citizens. This case study examined in this research consisted of a global education teacher and a first-grade classroom with 30 students. The case followed the teacher from the initial stages of the curriculum development through the teaching of a complete unit.

During the unit examined in this research, the teacher highlighted important information about the country and facilitated student learning about

various facts and information from numerous sources. Each unit was framed with the intent to follow the C3 Framework by integrating a compelling question, supporting questions in each lesson, and sources. Students were able to answer the supporting questions by completing formative assessments, such as discussions and other tasks. The units in the curriculum also included summative assessments, such as writing a few sentences to indicate what the students had learned.

The curriculum included multimedia materials that supported visual learning and innovative technologies incorporated in the lessons. An active learning environment was supported by technology and enriched by creating a strong connection among the various countries studied. Technology enhancements included one activity where the teacher provided a live online camera shot of a city in the focus country, as well as other educational videos that enriched students' learning. The teacher also incorporated robotics (Ozobot) that enabled a focus on the geography of the country. The use of technology was designed to help students to become more actively engaged and helped them build curiosity to learn more about the world.

The collaboration between the university-based researcher and global education teacher gave the opportunity to develop a curriculum together, as well as research the implementation of teaching a unit about Brazil. There were three interviews conducted with the global education teacher. The first interview was focused on the beginning of the unit and the implementation of the curriculum. The researcher was able to receive thorough responses about what was planned versus what will be observed when the inquiry instruction is taught and technology is incorporated within the

lessons observed. The second interview covered in-depth details on the implementation of two lessons from the unit observed, and this allowed the researcher to understand teaching through inquiry, as well as integrating technology in a global education classroom. The third interview focused more on the implementation of the entire unit overall, as well as understanding the global education teacher's reflection of the inquiry-based instruction in the global education classroom. This insight allowed the researcher to reflect on the process of implementing a global education curriculum, as well as the teacher's pedagogy through inquiry-based instruction and technology integration. The interviews gave the researcher a deep insight on the beliefs and experiences of global education on integrating inquiry-based, technology-infused instruction within a global education curriculum.

Ultimately, data were collected from three sources; interviews, observations, and the curriculum. The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and transcriptions and notes were also coded as primary data. The observations notes were carefully analyzed. The curriculum materials also were thoroughly analyzed and coding techniques were used. Following the data collection, the transcripts and data were organized into categories. As categories were developed, smaller pieces of data began to match with the categories. The findings were ultimately triangulated between observation notes, curriculum data, and interview transcriptions.

Findings

Specifically, this study focused on inquiry-based learning and technology integration in a global education unit study about Brazil, and based on

data analysis of the global education teacher's implementation of the inquiry, three findings emerged:

1. The global education teacher did not fully implement all of the elements in the unit, but after partial implementation, she was considering using inquiry in the future.
2. The global education teacher was not clear or comfortable about when to ask questions. In some lessons, she did not use the inquiry questions from the unit. She believed the questions were too rigid and above the students' level.
3. The global education teacher believed students exceeded expectations and that they responded well to the inquiry. She was happy to see that students who typically didn't participate started to respond eagerly and enthusiastically.

While the initial implementation did not go as planned, subsequent lessons were adjusted to account for what the global education teacher was learning about inquiry implementation. Her increased agency as the person responsible for implementing the inquiry lessons also seemed to empower the global education teacher, as a curriculum designer reflected toward her actions to make changes to the instructional plans. She did use additional teacher-centered pedagogical strategies at times, but there was also a steady emphasis on student engagement during the inquiry. The inquiry exercises prompted the students to think independently and critically about content, and she noticed that the students were regularly engaged in the tasks and eagerly participating in class. Students were willing to express themselves and formed

a deep understanding of the content as they communicated their knowledge through discussion during the inquiry. Students' collaboration through inquiry also positively impacted their learning and their engagement in the learning process.

Future Global Engagement

Future engagement with the global community can be a stepping stone to pursuing global engagement opportunities abroad. As research in the global education field expands, researchers and teachers can explore strategies to change the context of education. As educators develop these strategies, students would be able to develop the global competence and awareness needed to become global citizens. Educators who are willing to incorporate the [global C3 inquiries](#) into their teaching would help their students explore inquiry and the world around them, as well as create a stronger understanding of various perspectives and engage their students through meaningful learning experiences.

By collaborating with researchers and classroom teachers globally, the power of mixing research into practice would be prominent and this can positively impact classroom practice while also helping researchers develop a better understanding of the teacher's knowledge. Through collaborative relationships with researchers and teachers around the world, improving teachers' practices globally can also greatly provide effective approaches to integrating technological tools that are beneficial to teaching and integrating global education into the classroom.

Vision of the Global C3 Workspace

After the university-based researcher's work with the global education teacher, there was a drive to connect and support global educators, which resulted in creating the [Global C3 hub](#).

The Global C3 hub provides a vast amount of inquiries that are aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. It is designed to be a collaborative workspace for educators around the world who are interested in developing globally relevant C3 Framework instructional inquiries. Each inquiry focuses on a particular global knowledge through compelling questions that challenge and address a wide range of topics that allow students to think creatively, critically, and proactively.

Future research would engage more global education teachers to define their integration of inquiry-based and technology-infused curriculums into their classrooms. This will include exploring new strategies and pedagogical ways in response to the way in which education has been changed during the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, this may include creating micro-schools, expanding on virtual schooling options, small size in-person classrooms with social distancing measures, or connecting students through a world-school pod. Through collaboration with teachers and university researchers, educators will begin to develop effective strategies for helping students develop the global awareness, competency, and understanding of becoming a global citizen. Ultimately, working collaboratively with educators who are willing to incorporate the Global C3 inquiries into their teaching would help students understand our interconnected world as it will

open the opportunities for perspective-taking into students' learning journey to fundamentally take informed action in the world.

Conclusion

The collaboration between the global education teacher and researcher provided an example of merging research into practice in a way that positively impacted classroom practice while also having a better understanding of the teacher's knowledge. As we continue to understand the impact of COVID-19 on education, we can seek collaborative relationships between teachers and university-based researchers to improve both research and practice. This will help us understand more effective approaches to integrating global education through inquiry and technology to continue to strive for opportunities in taking informed action.

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Connecting the Local with the Global: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Global Education, Service Learning, and Digital Literacy for Refugee Women

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Every Saturday morning at 9 a.m. sharp, 10 student mentors and groups of refugee women from Afghanistan; Karenni, Chin, and Rohingyas women from Myanmar; and one woman from Chad logged into Zoom. Some had their videos off or hijabs covering their faces; others struggled to use Zoom in breakout rooms as they reviewed ESL lessons with their mentors. These sessions continued throughout the Fall 2020 semester. In a different part of town, refugees and student volunteers worked side by side at CIELO Community Gardens, weeding garden beds, hauling away trash, and building fences for refugee family garden plots. Despite language and cultural differences, they joked with each other and occasionally shared vegetables. At the university, students from Turkey joined class every Tuesday at 12 p.m. over Zoom, sharing stories of how they help Syrian refugees to find jobs, translate for them, and bring them food.

Crises have always moved the human story forward. Similarly, the COVID-19 pandemic has been a learning experience for faculty and students, leading to innovative ways of introducing relevant perspectives from multiple fields and cultures inside and outside of the classroom. This article describes the academic and social collaboration at the University of the Incarnate Word (UIW) between a world literature course, a

history course on global refugees, and students from Atatürk University, Turkey. Having students experience and share their understanding of global issues enabled them to actively participate in global and local discussions of issues related to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

One instance of including the global in the local was the internationalized virtual classroom. Early interactions were so effective that some UIW students commented on how much they enjoyed “being taught by” their Turkish peers. The Turkish students in turn attended without fail despite the 8- or 9-hour time difference and the misalignment of the semesters in Turkey and the United States. The U.S. students similarly appreciated how well the whole group bonded despite the online format. Almost no UIW student had met anyone from Turkey before, but by the end of the semester several commented on how they would love to travel and meet their new friends in person in the future. During the joint discussion of *The Odyssey*, the theme of hospitality prompted the thoughtful grappling with issues related to inclusion, equity, and diversity both on the global and local scale. Turkish students described cultural practices like inviting strangers into homes and offering them tea and coffee, then turning a visitor’s shoes towards the door when it is time to leave. Both

student groups traced the value of hospitality to their respective religious traditions. So, even though the class centered on *The Odyssey*, the discussion included diverse cultural and religious practices which prompted students to explore their social responsibilities as global citizens.

The second part of this project centered on the interdisciplinary collaboration between the literature class and the history class as students explored the theme of refugees through common readings and discussions from their different academic perspectives. A fruitful exercise to help them understand the complexity of this crisis was a BBC refugee journey simulation. Students completed it in groups as they used research, previous discussions from both classes, and *Cast Away* by Charlotte McDonald-Gibson as a case study to decide each step of the journey. By having to convince other group members of the best course of action and experiencing the possibly disastrous consequences of their decisions, students gained a deeper awareness of the enormity of the crisis and practiced intercultural and interdisciplinary professional communication. The e-service-learning added to that understanding by connecting them with resettled refugees locally.

Service-learning links students' course work to specific "community needs [in order to] help marginalized" or underserved populations (Ender et al., 2000). Service learning, and now e-service-learning, as a component of international education has become a way to attain intercultural understanding and educate students about global issues, diversity, and equity. At the onset of the

COVID-19 pandemic, CIELO Unity in Action¹¹ saw a disruption in their hybrid English as a Second Language Program, which included 2 hours of face-to-face instruction twice a week, as well as a computer-assisted language learning component. This program was originally created to meet the needs of highly motivated mothers who were faced with childcare and transportation barriers. With COVID it became strictly remote, except for safely visiting some of the newly enrolled mothers to teach them basic digital literacy skills. This included learning how to turn on a computer, connect to Wi-Fi, log in to Zoom, and use a cursor. CIELO Unity in Action acted as a broker in bringing in key community partners for the success of the project: the UIW Refugee Mentoring Program provided mentors both in the ESL classes and in the community gardens, the Northside Independent School District Adult Education and Literacy program provided the curriculum and instructor, and generous donors provided laptops.

The Zoom e-service-learning helped overcome the limitations of both service-learning and online learning. It freed ESL students and volunteers from place-based access and geographical constraints as some students were not in San Antonio, and the university students gained the practical experience of interacting with the resettled refugees. Teaching refugees through Zoom brought on new levels of innovation for the students as they had to assess the literacy level of refugees, their comfort with languages, and their comfort with the technology. The refugee women also learned how to use technology on their different devices and to adjust to the mentoring.

¹² CIELO Unity in Action stands for Community Interfaith Education Literacy Opportunity. It provides English classes, refugee mentoring, the urban community garden, and social enterprises for resettled refugees.

Despite challenges, it seems like e-service-learning is here to stay.

The class collaboration, e-service-learning, and community partnerships helped to educate the students on a global humanitarian crisis by collaborating with their peers in another class and internationally as they interacted firsthand with local refugee populations. Online international collaborations like these are not new, and they don't take the place of actual exchanges and travel/study abroad, but they do offer a meaningful international experience—especially to those students who are not likely to participate in study abroad—and provide cross-cultural dialogue and understanding. Students at UIW, for example, are mostly first-generation students, have children, and work full time. As a result, many have never left Texas or the United States beyond travel to Mexico. Many of them are also commuter students, which deters them from attending campus events or interactions with international students at the university. By having the international experience in their classroom, however, these same students gain exposure to other cultures and ideas both across the globe and in their own backyard; they overcome anxieties about meeting people from other cultures and start to see themselves in a global context. Even after the pandemic is under control and we are able to travel again, many of these low-stakes, low-cost, and socially engaged international experiences will continue to shape the next 100 years of global education. Especially in an environment that forces us to be physically distant, we need personal connections, and we firmly believe that the future of learning lies in effectively working towards a shared global community.

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Virtual Service-Learning & Cross-Cultural Engagement in Barcelona: Promising Practices

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In October 2020, ISEP Study Abroad launched a virtual service-learning program in Barcelona, Spain. A diverse group of students from the University of Auckland virtually volunteered at non-profit organizations, engaging with local and international communities. The program included an online seminar that helped students examine their assumptions and think critically about cultural differences, issues related to diversity and inclusion, and social justice.

Program Design and Value

The goal of this program was to connect practical experience and theoretical understanding in a service-learning program. According to Jenkins and Sheehey (2012), “service-learning allows students the opportunity to practice critical thinking skills and apply learning in real-world settings, while meeting authentic needs in communities. It presents students with real-world problems to confront, alternatives to consider, and solutions to find.” Although virtual volunteering had been available prior to COVID-19, the dramatic increase in online learning and remote work has made it more accessible and more relevant. “E-service-learning ... holds massive potential to transform both service-learning and online learning by freeing service-learning from geographical constraints and by equipping online learning with a powerful

and much-needed tool to promote engagement” (Waldner et al., 2012, p. 123).

An additional objective was to help students increase their intercultural competence, defined as the ability to communicate and behave effectively in intercultural interactions (Deardorff & Edwards, 2013). Service-learning offers a space for learning with and about diverse people in a way that is difficult to replicate in a classroom setting alone.

Virtual service-learning provides an opportunity for students who would have difficulties going abroad. According to Isabella River, at the 360 International Outbound Team at the University of Auckland’s international office: “virtual programs have minimized some of the considerable barriers to entry for students. We plan to continue virtual programming even when travel resumes to ensure we can reach more students and enable them to participate in learning abroad.”

Program Structure

The University of Auckland selected and sponsored the first cohort of student participants. When promoting the program, the international office intentionally contacted diverse student groups, including Māori and Pacific Islander networks. The selection criteria considered aspects such as identity, prior experience, and field of study. Seven

students from diverse cultural backgrounds were selected, including Māori, Chinese, New Zealander-European, Korean, and Latin American. Their fields of study were arts, business, science, law, global studies, and political science.

The ISEP Virtual Service-Learning Program is a non-credit-bearing program structured in two parts: students completed 30 hours of virtual service over 10 weeks and attended three 120-minute intercultural online seminar sessions covering intercultural competence, social justice, and professional development. ISEP's resident director in Barcelona guided the experience, and a supervisor based at the partner organization provided mentorship through regular communication and interaction.

ISEP students collaborated with and served people diverse in race, economic status, cultural origin, sexual orientation, and education. Students based in New Zealand developed diverse tasks for organizations based in Barcelona which support populations in Spain, Mozambique, and Afghanistan. The projects included supporting refugee and minoritized groups, providing humanitarian aid to impoverished communities, and overcoming the stigmatization of mental health problems. Like an internship, students gained valuable skills and experience serving populations in need. The tasks undertaken by students varied depending on organizations, projects, and students skills and interests: from designing and implementing fundraising strategies to provide clean water and sanitation to people living in extreme poverty in places like Nepal and Somalia, to grant writing of proposals to help rehabilitate nursing homes in a small island in Mozambique, from translating documents and website content from Spanish into English related

to mental health in Barcelona, to developing internal communication strategies about a climate change initiative for an international humanitarian aid organization.

One organization, Melting Pot, hosted three ISEP virtual volunteers. This organization supports and promotes people from minoritized groups, refugees, and migrants with culinary interests and talents by offering them new opportunities and training tools. Melting Pot struggled throughout the pandemic and had to find innovative ways to remain relevant. ISEP students helped the organization in adapting its projects to continue operations. They assisted in website design and social media engagement. Through this experience, students developed technical skills and learned about the challenges faced by migrant populations and refugees in Spain. Students also experienced being part of a multicultural team. One of the students stated that “aside from assisting an impactful business remain sustainable, it was also a great way to learn more about myself and a different culture.”

The experience provided mutual benefits to the organization and the students. Melting Pot's co-founder stated that the students brought a fresh perspective to the organization and the experience stimulated the organization to adjust to the virtual global reality that COVID-19 has created. With the aim of enduring this digital adaptation, Melting Pot continues to host and mentor ISEP virtual volunteers.

Findings

Students reflected on their experience in an assigned blog post, group discussion, and final questionnaire. They were asked to identify

what they learned personally, interculturally, and professionally. Prior research on service-learning outcomes shows positive effects on students' understanding of social issues, commitment to social justice, and awareness of their own stereotypes. For this program, similar competencies appeared repeatedly in the students' reflections, especially strong intercultural communication skills and self-awareness of stereotypes and biases. These competencies demonstrate that the virtual format of the program was able to develop the same competencies that traditional service-learning programs have shown.

In addition, ISEP's program enabled participants to develop valuable professional skills associated with remote work including time management, self-motivation, independence, and collaboration. One student mentioned: "through this program I definitely developed time management skills and discipline."

Students had to develop solutions and test them in a real-world setting. One student stated: "the most challenging part was finding an efficient way to fundraise despite COVID-19 because it limited some of the fundraising ideas I had, and I knew I had to overcome this by being more creative."

Participants also had to adapt their communication styles to work with people not just from different backgrounds, but also in a virtual environment that lacked some of the in-person contextual clues. One student acknowledged that "I now can consciously adapt my communication style with other people in different cultural contexts. Before this program, I was never so self-aware of the way I communicate to others."

Finally, students formed deep relationships with people from other cultures and found value in this virtual setting. "Through this program I was able to connect with people on the other side of the world... Although virtual experiences cannot fully replace real life immersion in a new culture or country, programs like this are the next best thing!" one ISEP student explained.

Recommendations for Future Practice

The COVID-19 pandemic has motivated innovative and creative solutions to study abroad. Virtual service-learning is one option that has the potential to make international engagement with local communities available to more diverse student populations. It can prepare students to succeed in a complex, diverse, and global world, and provide a critical perspective on social injustice and inequity. However, programs have to be designed and implemented to intentionally prepare students for the experience, include diverse student groups, focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the academic and reflection, and assess student competencies through multiple forms (Deardorff & Edwards, 2013).

"A consistent research finding is that a commitment to reciprocal and mutually beneficial outcomes is a prerequisite for rewarding and ongoing engagement with host communities and partner organizations." (Ziguras and Lucas, 2020, p. 227). This article has mainly focused on the impact the program has had on students. It would be relevant to further analyze the impact it had on local communities and organizations.

At ISEP we continue to offer this program, and we are committed to learning from it and to diversify and expand program participation. We

look forward to continuing to assess students' intercultural learning and understanding of their identities and the impact that the program has on local communities to measure reciprocity, intentionality, and success of the Barcelona Virtual Service-Learning Program.

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Bridging Cultural Differences in Virtual Multicultural Teams

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Introduction

With international travel restricted during the pandemic, study abroad programs in the US needed a new, sustainable approach to global citizenship education and a creative form of ‘internationalization at home.’ Many universities pivoted their programming to some variation of remote or hybrid learning models, thus discovering unique online spaces for cross-cultural collaborations between students. At WPI, the realization that in-person international travel would not occur anytime soon, we asked ourselves how we might prepare students and construct our program for productive and inclusive student engagement in intercultural learning. Inspired by the university’s support for making available various technological tools for learning, we designed an online version of our signature study abroad program and continued with our annual project-based education with a university in Thailand.

Virtual Exchange

A learning model that uses technology to connect people from all over the world is known as virtual exchange (VE) or also known as online intercultural exchange. Educational institutions such as the State University of New York’s COIL Center and DePaul University integrate this form of learning in their higher education curricula that allows students to connect globally and to help them grow

in their understanding of each other’s cultures. This approach has shown to contribute to the development of students’ cross-cultural attitudes, knowledge, skills, and awareness (Kumi-Yeboah, 2018). Yamazaki and Kayes (2004) explain that essential learning behaviors that lead to cross-cultural understanding include activities such as regularly interacting with others, expressing interest for the host culture, spending time studying the host culture, understanding ambiguous situations, and making sense of new experiences.

Project-based Learning

In conducting interdisciplinary research project work at WPI, students address open-ended problems posed by community-based agencies and organizations. At the Bangkok Project Center, groups of American and Thai students work together on issues related to sustainability, environmental protection, public health, education, or community development. This year, in harnessing available virtual exchange technologies, faculty advisors at WPI and our Thai partners structured a virtual exchange partnership that allowed for cross-cultural interactions between our students and local community organizations.

Program Structure and Intervention to Facilitate Learning

One common way to encourage collaboration between diverse peers is through group work.

Students were placed in multicultural teams of eight people (four Americans and four Thai students), and they met daily on Zoom for two 4-hour sessions of dialogue through a period of 8 weeks. Each team was supported by three faculty advisors from the US and Thailand.

The synchronous meetings were also used for project work discussions with advisors and connecting with the local Thai organizations. Advisors would periodically drop in on small-group meetings to ensure that students were comfortable and working productively together. Asynchronous activities such as email exchanges and text messages through Facebook, Line, and WhatsApp allowed for more reflection and intentional action, as well as allowing students to take breaks as needed and complete some of their work at a time that is optimal for their schedule and location.

Apart for academic purposes, Zoom was also used for student-led games and exchanges on cultural topics which ranged from Buddhism and Thai cooking to American expressions and idioms. At two points in the program, students completed self-assessments and written reflections on their group work experience. This allowed faculty advisors to identify challenges and guide students' awareness of cultural differences.

Student Reflections on Cultural Differences

In the first self-assessment exercise, students reported that cross-cultural group work can be challenging and had hinted at potential tensions between team members. Interventions by faculty advisors included facilitating the creation of a 'code of conduct' or shared rules for group work.

By encouraging American and Thai students to share openly in a safe virtual space encouraged the sharing of diverse opinions and opened up dialogues among group members. More exchanges between group members on common interest topics such as sports and movies also helped with group cohesion.

We found more positive intergroup relationships reported in the second assessment exercise. Students showed more awareness of cultural differences and modified their behavior by

- ♦ listening attentively when Thai team members are speaking in limited English
- ♦ recognizing strengths and weaknesses in each team member
- ♦ building trust by participating in common interest activities
- ♦ respecting and valuing all members of the team
- ♦ asking questions to clarify differing opinions

Maintaining respect for each other's beliefs and opinions and knowing how to maintain equity and respect in conversations are attitudes that can lead to meaningful intercultural dialogue about differences. It can also lead to curiosity about issues impacting other people's lives. As one student reported in their reflection: "...the project helped me to understand the climate there... I learned about education and environmental issues in relation to younger students." By incorporating intercultural virtual exchanges in our program, interactions with international partners provided opportunities for collaborative intercultural

communicative experiences and learning to engage with diversity and inclusion issues.

Learning Beyond Zoom

The objectives of the study abroad program at WPI align with many of the discussions of inclusion, equity, and diversity, among them openness to different perspectives and respect and tolerance for cultural differences. In a virtual environment, where there can be fewer opportunities for students to build relationships, a structured program and regular interventions can help students develop new skills. As Parkinson et al. (2009) posit, one of the benefits of cross-cultural collaboration is sharing culturally diverse knowledge and development of intercultural competence, understanding, and avoiding ethnocentrism. Leveraging technology for online global learning experiences can result in deep intercultural exchange and achieve many of the same goals that are set for engaging with the global community at home or abroad.

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Reviving the Art of Listening as a Tool for Global Engagement Through Oral History

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Abstract

Spanish in the Community is a course centered around oral history as an educational strategy, bringing relationship and lived experience into dialogue with academic knowledge through filmed interviews with members of the Hispanic community. This strategy connects students with diverse cultures, validates the human, political, and economic experiences that motivate migration, and promotes cultural humility as it places students in the position of learners in relation to those they interview. Students realize how much they have to learn from their neighbors, including family members whose stories suddenly expand beyond “we came for a better life.” Communicating in what is often their second language, students speak from a place of vulnerability, inhabiting a crucial reality of the immigrant experience. The art of listening and seeing lays the foundation for bridges between neighbors and communities across borders and multiple categories of difference. The project builds students’ intercultural competence, their confidence in engaging difference, and their curiosity about the world. Since we launched this course in 2012, technology has greatly evolved and videoconferencing that came to the forefront in response to travel restrictions now makes it easier to focus more on the people and the stories they tell than on the challenges of how to record them.

The University of Florida is in a small college town far from the Spanish-speaking cities of south Florida. In 2012, when my department chair asked me to put together a service-learning course in Spanish, the local Spanish-speaking community was mostly affiliated with the university and not much in need of service from second language learners of Spanish or even heritage speakers, most of whom were very clear that any career in Florida would necessitate an advanced level of linguistic and cultural competence in Spanish. Pondering the options, I found an eager collaborator in Deborah Hendrix, of the [Samuel Proctor Oral History Program](#), who assured me that we could launch an oral history project in Spanish. My learning objectives were for students to improve their Spanish, develop empathy by learning about their immigrant neighbors and families, get comfortable being uncomfortable, and embrace cultural humility through the art of asking questions that prompt reflection and develop the art of listening. Deborah added improved digital literacy, which students would realize through filming a 30-minute interview and then editing it down to 5 minutes and adding subtitles. The oral history project was part of a course focused on the pull and push factors of immigration from Spanish-speaking countries.

The classroom for this course is itself a microcosm of cultural and linguistic differences and

insecurities. The students enrolled come from a variety of backgrounds: many are the children of immigrants and some of those are heritage speakers of Spanish; some are second-language learners of Spanish. Apart from the few for whom Spanish is their strongest language, all of them express insecurity about their linguistic competence in that language. Having to do something important in a language one feels insecure about is a way to develop empathy; students experience in the project the reality that many immigrants live every day. They realize that effective communication does not necessarily involve flawless grammar; that the heart can at times communicate more effectively than the head.

The course content challenges the official history they have learned in school as well as the explanation given in many immigrant families that begins and ends with “we came to give you a better life,” both of which often have the effect of discouraging further inquiry. Students find themselves studying about the U.S. role in destabilizing their parents’ country of origin and suddenly they have more questions. Even students whose ancestors came on the Mayflower must come to terms with the legacy of U.S. policies in the countries whose language and cultures they have embraced.

Students thus undertake the oral history project from a place of vulnerability and uncertainty. In order to catch them before they retreat into the known, into what is comfortable, we connect them to the work that students before them have done so that they feel part of a much bigger project. They review the videos made in previous semesters and choose the topic for the video they will make from suggestions solicited from students at the end of the previous semester. Even while

they are working on their own interviews and then editing them, they have to gather six friends, acquaintances, or perfect strangers, select four 5-minute interviews from previous videos, present them, and lead a discussion about what they are learning about the immigrant experience. Even though they don’t know everything, even though they may have never discussed these issues with those gathered, they go out into the world to create a space for immigrant voices to be heard and engaged.

Another challenge that students face is group work, which can be fraught, but the oral history project can’t be done alone, so we work to form teams of three that balance linguistic, technical, and people skills. Students must negotiate varying levels of commitment even as they make complex decisions that require cultural sensitivity and ethical discernment, such as how to edit down to 5 minutes what a narrator has told in 30 minutes while respecting that person’s voice and story. At times they have to decide how to handle a story that paints too rosy a picture or one that goes off the rails into a tirade tinged by loss. They have to decide how to prepare subtitles when the speaker is shifting between Spanish and English or when a mistake is made in one language or the other. The decisions they make as a group involve parsing issues of power, emotion, and history. Interviewing a Puerto Rican who arrived months after Hurricane María in 2017 or a Colombian who fled narcoviolence decades ago or a Cuban who walked from Panama to the southern border when the “wet foot-dry foot policy” ended requires empathy and historical knowledge that we strive to develop through curricular choices and classroom practices throughout the semester.

It is now easier than ever to launch an oral history project with global reach. Technology has greatly evolved, and videoconferencing in response to travel restrictions now makes it easier to focus more on the people and the stories they tell than on the challenges of how to record them: lighting, audio, dogs barking, camera angles, the rule of thirds, etc. While there is some loss of the human warmth we experience in the presence of others, recording on Zoom is much easier than arranging a meeting of four people, hauling equipment, and dealing with so many variables, and it also allows for interviewing people in other countries.

Reviving the art of listening disrupts the drive to make the easy choices, to get the job done, to check off three more credits on the way to a college degree. Tuning in to the voices that contest the official history, that confound the national discourse about immigration, that crack open the family narrative means being willing to reframe what a student may think she knows. Listening to the voices within the team and making collective decisions means being willing to compromise. Listening to the narrators, whose accents and lexicons and difficulty with two languages reflect their own struggles and insecurities, gives students permission to transcend the fear of saying something wrong and to reach across cultural and linguistic differences to engage as global citizens. While our universities pride themselves on producing knowledge, the art of listening and the gift of attention lay the foundation for relationships, across borders, identities, and multiple categories of difference, relationships that, when harnessed to academic knowledge, may provide the horsepower necessary to pull us out of long-standing quandaries about immigration.

To view videos of some of the oral history projects we have done in this course: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SPOHP111/search?query=spanish>

To explore SPOHP resources for launching oral history projects: <https://oral.history.ufl.edu/research/tutorials/>



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