



Global Learning for All: The Second in a Series of Working Papers on
Internationalizing Higher Education in the United States

Where Faculty Live: Internationalizing the Disciplines

Madeleine F. Green
American Council on Education

Robert Shoenberg
Projects for Education

Funded by the
Carnegie Corporation of New York

ACE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION
The Unifying Voice for Higher Education

© April 2006



American Council on Education

ACE and the American Council on Education are registered marks of the American Council on Education.

American Council on Education

One Dupont Circle NW

Washington, DC 20036

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Additional copies of this publication are available for purchase online at www.acenet.edu/ bookstore, or by sending a check or money order for \$20.00 per copy, plus \$6.95 shipping and handling (for orders of more than one copy, call the number below), to the following address:

ACE Fulfillment Service

Department 191

Washington, DC 20055-0191

Phone: (301) 632-6757

Fax: (301) 843-0159

www.acenet.edu

When ordering, please specify Item #311187.

Introduction

It would be difficult to find a college or university today that is not making some effort to internationalize.

Responding to daily events in the world, prominent individuals and organizations both in and out of academe insist that every citizen needs to understand the United States' place in a world context. The interdependence of nations, their political and economic interactions, and the clashes and mutual influences of cultures and world views all require people—from the boardroom to the voting booth—to function in an informed and thoughtful manner.

This imperative has formed the basis for a major effort by the American Council on Education (ACE) to help colleges and universities advance all aspects of internationalization. Internationalization is a key strategic priority for ACE, and for the last six years, we have conducted extensive research and numerous projects involving more than 100 colleges and universities to help higher education institutions develop a comprehensive, strategic approach to internationalization. We use the shorthand expression “comprehensive internationalization” to describe a process that would lead to institutional transformation over time, built on an institutional vision for internationalization, a clearly articulated set of goals, and a strategy to integrate the internationally and globally focused programs and activities on campus.¹

Our work with institutions has corroborated how central the curriculum is to internationalization. Because the vast majority of U.S. students do not study abroad, and many of these students commute to campus and have families and jobs that keep them from attending campus events, the major venue for global learning is in the classroom. And even for those students who do go abroad or attend campus events, the curriculum is still the foundation of a college education. Thus, internationalizing the curriculum—that is, infusing international, global, and intercultural perspectives across courses and programs—is the key strategy to ensure that *all* students learn about other nations, languages, cultures, and histories, and global issues. It is a long-term process that requires the full engagement of a broad spectrum of faculty. This is no small undertaking.

Contemporary thinking about the curriculum has shifted the discussion from what faculty teach to what students learn. Accordingly, ACE's work in internationalization has emphasized global student learning outcomes—the knowledge, skills, and attitudes students need to understand the world around them, and live and work in a multicultural environment.² Our term for the international, global, and intercultural dimensions of this learning is simply “global learning,” which we use throughout this series of essays.

¹ See the first essay in the Global Learning for All series: Olson, C., Green, M., & Hill, B. (2005). *Building a strategic framework for comprehensive internationalization*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education. See also Green, M., & Olson, C. (2003). *Internationalizing the campus: A user's guide*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education.

² Olson, Green, & Hill. *Building a strategic framework*.

While there is no universally agreed-upon set of global learning outcomes, our experience working with many colleges and universities indicates that a high level of convergence exists among the lists produced by very different institutions. The challenge in articulating global learning outcomes, or any learning outcomes, is to do so in a way that allows faculty to assess for them. Well-crafted outcomes are

general enough to permit interpretation by different programs, schools, or departments (if written to be applied broadly) and specific enough to determine whether students have actually achieved them. See *Sample International Learning Outcomes* for examples of global learning outcomes that six very different institutions agreed upon as a basis for piloting an assessment approach.

Sample International Learning Outcomes

These international learning outcomes were developed by the Working Group on Assessing International Learning, a multi-institutional ACE project, sponsored by FIPSE: A globally competent student graduating from our institution . . .

Knowledge

- Understands his or her culture within a global and comparative context (that is, the student recognizes that his or her culture is one of many diverse cultures and that alternate perceptions and behaviors may be based in cultural differences).
- Demonstrates knowledge of global issues, processes, trends, and systems (that is, economic and political interdependency among nations, environmental-cultural interaction, global governance bodies, and nongovernmental organizations).
- Demonstrates knowledge of other cultures (including beliefs, values, perspectives, practices, and products).

Skills

- Uses knowledge, diverse cultural frames of reference, and alternate perspectives to think critically and solve problems.
- Communicates and connects with people in other language communities in a range of settings for a variety of purposes, developing skills in each of the four modalities: speaking (productive), listening (receptive), reading (receptive), and writing (productive).
- Uses foreign language skills and/or knowledge of other cultures to extend his or her access to information, experiences, and understanding.

Attitudes

- Appreciates the language, art, religion, philosophy, and material culture of different cultures.
- Accepts cultural differences and tolerates cultural ambiguity.
- Demonstrates an ongoing willingness to seek out international or intercultural opportunities.

(For further information about this project, see www.acenet.edu/programs/international.)

Higher Education's Response

Many higher education institutions are taking global learning quite seriously, and seek to prepare students for a world in which they will be called upon to use their global knowledge and skills as effective workers and informed citizens. Concrete actions in recent years have included introducing new general education requirements for study of global issues or non-Western cultures, putting fresh emphasis on study and internships abroad, reinvigorating and expanding foreign language study, and creating international certificates and tracks within majors. Higher education has clearly gotten the message that global learning is important, and has tried to respond.

Less clear is whether the responses have become integral to curriculum, pedagogy, or institutional culture. In some cases, institutional efforts to internationalize are too superficial and episodic to produce deep global learning. For example, most institutions with language requirements do not specify even a minimal level of communicative competence; "seat time" is still the predominant requirement. While many general education programs now require students to study at least one non-U.S. culture, a single course is only a beginning. Furthermore, the goals of such a requirement are often weakly specified, non-U.S. cultures are often conflated with minority cultures within the United States, and the

courses that meet the requirement are often taught in such a way that implications of difference are never discussed. And although the number of students studying abroad has certainly increased over the years (with 191,000 students studying abroad in 2003–04, representing an all-time high),³ most students are on short-term programs and studying in English. Participating students also are not always asked to reflect seriously on how their global sensitivity has been enhanced by their experience abroad.

In some cases, internationalization efforts are peripheral to the institution's academic core and isolated from one another. Institutions that seek to enhance internationalization frequently point to the growing number of internationally focused programs and courses, or the increase in international students or students studying abroad. These strategies are indeed essential building blocks of internationalization, but unless they are part of a larger institutional vision and strategy, their impact is limited. For example, study abroad is often poorly integrated into the curriculum so that students and faculty see it as an academic "extra" that is peripheral to the important learning of the major. Or international research collaboration may affect only a handful of students who are working with a particular professor, and have little impact on the curriculum. A final example is the isolation of different aspects of internationalization, such as the geographic and programmatic separation of study abroad and international student offices.

In other words, much of the new effort at internationalizing seems more like a mechanical add-on to what already exists than an effort to make international perspectives an integral part of the institution

and its curriculum. Institutions' general response seems to be, "We feel a real obligation to do something and we'll do what we can within the limits of our funding, the circumstances of our students, and the abilities and tolerances of the personnel on hand." Departments do not want to give up curricular space for new international and foreign language requirements. Foreign language departments cannot expand fast or far enough to introduce a serious language requirement. And more and more college students are in no position economically or in terms of family obligations to travel and study abroad.

Focusing on the Disciplines

These problems are real and difficult to resolve. But colleges and universities *can* do something more significant than most now do about changing the curriculum in general to ensure that all college students acquire global learning. The success of such efforts depends a great deal on engaging faculty members who design and teach the internationalization curriculum in an organic rather than a mechanical way. Central to accomplishing this is faculty members believing that global learning is a compelling goal that requires wide faculty participation.

A voice that can potentially persuade faculty to participate comes from each faculty member's discipline. Scholars relate strongly to their chosen fields of study and to the disciplinary associations that represent them. Thus, for many faculty members, the urgings of their disciplinary associations are likely to carry at least as much weight as their institutions' curricular goals or the pronouncements of policy makers and higher education associations. This perception suggests the potential efficacy of looking to traditional academic

³ Institute of International Education. (2005). *Open doors 2005*. New York: Author.

departments and their major programs as the key element of institutional internationalization. In his introduction to a volume of essays on the internationalization of the disciplines published more than 15 years ago, Sven Groennings aptly states: "In colleges and universities, the academic disciplines are often the gatekeepers of educational change. Because it is in the disciplines that faculties, curricula, and research are based, basic changes in the curriculum do not occur until faculty in their disciplinary and departmental arenas are ready to implement them. The harbingers of changes in the curriculum are new perspectives in the disciplines."⁴ Yet, a focus on specific disciplines has not been a major part of the recent national literature or conversation on internationalization. Nor have many institutions paid particular attention to departmental initiatives, especially with regard to the major, to enhance internationalization. Thus, with the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the American Council on Education (ACE) joined forces with four learned societies to articulate global learning outcomes for their fields and begin to develop plans of action to achieve them in individual departments. The four organizations were the Association of American Geographers (AAG), the American Historical Association (AHA), the American Political Science Association (APSA), and the American Psychological Association (APA).

Proposing a set of learning outcomes for global learning in each discipline was a central task of the project. Colleges and universities that have instituted global learning requirements have tended to define the concept in terms of course content rather than the kind of knowledge,

skills, and attitudes students should develop. Earlier ACE work with individual institutions on specifying student outcomes and devising means of assessing student achievement of them had proved clarifying and fruitful.⁵ Clear goals gave instructors a better idea of how to integrate global learning into their courses and often led to curriculum revision. Students, too, could be provided with a better rationale for course content and curricular requirements and the specific kinds of academic work they were being asked to complete.

The project, titled *Where Faculty Live: Internationalizing the Disciplines*, assumed that developing a set of global learning outcomes specific to each discipline would provide faculty with a disciplinary framework with which to focus on internationalization. Not only would instructors be inclined to listen to their scholarly colleagues, but they also would find the concepts of global learning more compelling when expressed in the terms of their discipline and illustrated by familiar content and methodology. The project served to translate the public pronouncements and institutions' general urgings into terms relevant to teachers' lives in the library and in their classrooms. As this essay will show, the differences among the four disciplines' focus on international matters are substantial and fully justify the assumption that each field of study will need to define its own goals and processes for enhancing student global learning within a set of general learning outcome expectations.

⁴ Groennings, S., & Wiley, D. (Eds.). (1990). *Group portrait: Internationalizing the disciplines*. New York: The American Forum for Global Education, p. 11.

⁵ See Olson, Green, & Hill. *Building a strategic framework*.

The Challenge of Interfering Sets

Even if faculty members are ready and willing to act on the internationalizing imperative, aspects of academic culture and certain unspoken assumptions about the nature and purposes of the curriculum get in the way of deep curricular change. These “interfering sets”—as the psychologists called those mindsets that prevent individuals from seeing beyond the limits of their assumptions—must be addressed before cogent curriculum discussions can proceed. These interfering sets are as follows:

- Faculty members’ inclination—or disinclination—to consider international perspectives is formed by the extent to which the discipline (or subfield) is intrinsically international, global, or comparative in nature.
- Academic culture often makes sharp distinctions between general education and the major.
- Faculty members frequently focus too much on covering a quantity of subject matter and too little on developing broad intellectual and conceptual skills.

In this chapter, we discuss each of these issues.

International Orientation of the Discipline

Scholars’ international orientation and knowledge varies, depending on the discipline or subdiscipline they profess. The four disciplines participating in this project provide examples of the difference in orientation. For example, geography includes

the following major subfields, which vary enormously in their international focus: human geography, physical geography, nature and society relations, and geographic information science. The same is true of psychology. Although psychology is guided by the scientific approach, and experimental psychology focuses almost exclusively on methodology, other psychologists (e.g., development, clinical, counseling) frequently examine behavior within a broader cultural context. Further, some psychologists specialize in the study of international dimensions and cultural influences on behavior.

Historians and political scientists tend to divide between those specializing in American history or government and those studying non-U.S. matters. In undergraduate teaching, Americanists in either field typically do not ask students to look at the subject matter of their courses in a global context. And even when a field is global or comparative in nature, it may be difficult for faculty to break out of a conceptual framework defined by Western paradigms and points of view. In recent years, for example, the field of history of colonized people has changed dramatically as the voices and viewpoints of the colonized are incorporated into scholarship and teaching.

Faculty members working in disciplines or fields within disciplines that are intrinsically not international or global in orientation are often ill prepared to undertake the kind of rethinking necessary to reformulate their courses and scholarship.

Faculty need opportunities to discover new resources and reflect on new approaches. Institutional support for such faculty development is key, as are easily accessible resources that the disciplinary associations could provide.

Thus, how the internationalizing discussion is framed must differ substantially from one field of study to another, even within the same discipline. In the humanities and social sciences—the fields represented in this project⁶—culture and global forces are present, although to varying degrees. This variation makes the work of promoting global learning within the disciplines a complex and highly variable undertaking.

Sharp Distinction Between General Education and the Major

Nearly all institutions make an implicit, and sometimes explicit, distinction between general education and the major. General education is for developing breadth of knowledge and some general educational skills, such as effective written communication. The major enables students to focus in depth on a particular field. The distinction between the two curriculum components is based largely on the breadth and depth of the subject matter with which they deal. Contemporary thinking,⁷ however, sees the undergraduate curriculum concerned as much with developing general educational skills—communication in various forms, analytic reasoning, dealing with unstructured problems—as with acquiring discipline-related knowledge. General education and

the major therefore have a common role in developing the knowledge, attitudes, and skills of undergraduates.

Both contemporary thinking and wide practice assign to undergraduate education responsibility for understanding and appreciating cultural diversity—both within and across national borders—to prepare students to function effectively in a nation and a world of cultural difference. In most institutions, this responsibility is assigned to the general education program. According to data from a 2001 ACE survey, 41 percent of institutions had an internationally focused general education course requirement—including slightly more than half of four-year colleges and universities and 23 percent of two-year institutions.⁸ At those institutions with such a requirement, 61 percent required that students take a course—and seldom more than one course—that deals with a non-Western culture. A course on a minority culture in American society may be either an additional requirement or part of a diversity requirement that can be met by a course on a non-U.S. culture.⁹ Often, specific courses meet multiple general education requirements, as when a political science course in comparative government meets both a social science and a non-U.S. culture requirement.

Integrating the teaching of international perspectives or cross-cultural differences into a course that also has other purposes certainly enriches student learning. It becomes problematic when such a course is the *only* experience a student has with non-U.S. culture and ways of thinking.

⁶ Psychology and geography have strong ties, however, to the natural sciences.

⁷ See, for example, Association of American Colleges and Universities. (2002). *Greater expectations: A new vision for learning as a nation goes to college*. Washington, DC: Author.

⁸ Siaya, L., & Hayward, F. (2003). *Mapping internationalization on U.S. campuses: Final report*. Washington DC: American Council on Education.

⁹ While these two kinds of courses may superficially achieve the same goal—sensitizing students to the nature of cultural difference—they are generally quite different from each other. Courses in American diversity exist within a framework of Western values, whereas courses in non-Western civilizations pose a deliberate contrast to Western values and assumptions.

International and global perspectives need to be infused across the curriculum, in both the major and general education and in multiple courses in each, if they are to take root in students' worldviews (see *Internationalizing General Education and the Major: Questions to Guide a Curriculum Review*). Acquiring global learning and awareness, like any other essential knowledge or skill, is the work of the entire undergraduate curriculum.

Focus on Coverage

Explicit attention to the many issues raised by global learning also takes a back seat to the perceived need for coverage of subject matter. And, indeed, battles rage on campus for space in the curriculum, with requirements for majors expanding (to ensure proper coverage) until they hit the wall of other curricular urgencies such as a language requirement, additional general education credits, or state policies that limit the required credit hours for a degree. Although students must master a certain amount of subject matter to be able to carry on an informed and intelligent discussion of large general issues, the drive to cover as much subject matter as possible is inconsistent with an appropriate undergraduate education. When courses are sequential, covering sufficient subject matter in one course to allow students to succeed in a subsequent one may be essential, but such sequences are comparatively rare. Engaging students in work explicitly designed to develop relevant intellectual skills and awareness in the context of the course's subject matter is in most cases more important than squeezing in another topic. Engaging students in work that demonstrates their understanding of societal differences and their ability to respond to them has a more lasting impact than covering more material.

When global learning is viewed as another competitor for precious and limited space in the curriculum—the additive approach—it stands to lose, especially beyond the addition of a single general education course requirement. If, on the other hand, global knowledge and perspectives are integrated throughout general education and the major, this integration will affect more students and create deeper global learning. The latter strategy is a much more difficult process, requiring faculty to embrace the notion of global learning and reconceptualize their disciplinary structures and their courses.

Internationalizing General Education and the Major: Questions to Guide a Curriculum Review

- Has the institution articulated a set of global learning outcomes? For all students? For some?
- Has the institution determined whether the general education curriculum enables students to achieve these outcomes? Has it determined the likelihood of all or most students achieving them? What is the evidence that they do?
- Does the institution have an international/global/intercultural requirement? Or has it chosen a different path to achieving global learning? Why has it chosen the path that it has? How well is the path working?
- To what extent have departments and interdisciplinary programs engaged in discussions of global learning? Have they articulated outcomes relevant to the major? If so, what are they? If not, why not?
- How do the courses in a program or department enable students to achieve the global learning outcomes articulated? What is the evidence?
- To what extent are the dominant models or paradigms of this discipline culturally bound? What do faculty members know about how colleagues in other countries approach the discipline?

(Adapted from Green, M., & Olson, C. (2003). *Internationalizing the campus: A user's guide*. Washington, DC: American Council on Education, p. 60.