

What makes a course internationalized?

Hilary E. Kahn (hkahn@indiana.edu)
IU Center for the Study of Global Change

Course internationalization is a process where international/global/intercultural components are integrated into course content, teaching methods, resources, assignments, and measures of assessment. There are a variety of approaches to how to internationalize a course, from the addition of a module or assignment that is international in scope to a complete course re-design where the entire course is structured around the learning and assessing of global/international/intercultural student learning goals. This guideline aims for the middle ground in these approaches, where instructors can fairly easily internationalize their teaching, content, and assessment while simultaneously teaching toward global learning outcomes.

Learning Objectives: An international course, at a bare minimum, must be structured such that it achieves and assesses at least one global/international/intercultural learning objective. Ideally, however, it should be aligned such that it achieves and assesses more than one global learning objective such that the course is oriented to global/international/intercultural learning outcomes that cross student knowledge, development, attitudes, skills, and actions.

Selected examples: students will be able to...

- Explain cultural/national differences and interpret the contexts that shape and give meaning to them
- Effectively interact and communicate interculturally
- Analyze and evaluate the forces shaping international events, both in the past and present
- Understand the global context of his/her chosen profession
- Retain deep and contextualized knowledge about at least one culture and/or nation beyond the US
- Demonstrate willingness to act upon knowledge and attitudes, both at local and global levels
- Recognize oneself and one's culture through the perception of others

Teaching Methods and Resources: An internationalized course should not only be international in content but should utilize instructional methods and means of assessment that introduce a variety of perspectives, provide alternate paradigms of learning, allow for student reflection, encourage dialogue and discussion, facilitate encounters with difference, and create an environment that inspires advocacy, engagement, and curiosity. Interactive technologies and social media can be used to craft learning environments that promote global dialogue, multiple viewpoints, and encounters with difference.

Content: An international course should ideally have a minimum of 25% International/Global/Intercultural content. International topics can be provided through case studies, resources, readings, assignments, newspapers, presentations, films, lectures, blogs, explanation of various concepts, examples of skills in practice, discussions, dialogue with international colleagues and students, various forms of experiential learning both abroad and with international communities in the U.S., etc.

Assessment: Ideally, multiple forms of student learning evidence, whether written assignments, oral presentations, papers, classroom assessment techniques, portfolios, group work, reflection, or classroom debates and discussions, will be specifically designed to evaluate whether students are achieving the stated global/international/intercultural learning objectives. Authentic course-based measures of learning can be

complemented by standardized instruments used to more broadly assess international awareness, intercultural understanding, and global responsibility through various modes of student learning and development.

Transparency: Students should be informed, in the syllabi and/or on the first day of class, of the global/international/intercultural learning objectives respective for the specific course. The clear articulation of these outcomes will not create a normative experience but will rather create environments that reveal the international and global perspectives embedded in their various fields of professional and academic study and where learning expectations are clearly stated.

Global Learning: Pedagogy Matters

Global Learning involves:

- Breaking down the four walls of our classrooms
- Creating global communities of learning based on dialogue and collaboration
- The integration of multiple perspectives, voices, and angles of analysis
- Seeing the world through others' eyes (the platinum rule by Milton Bennett)
- Getting beyond knowledge, skills, and attitudes to learning outcomes that emphasize what we do with them
- Encouraging action, interaction, responsibility, commitment
- Knowledge emerging through international communities and collaborations
- Rethinking traditionally accepted knowledge frameworks and concepts
- Reflecting upon oneself and surroundings
- Recognizing the global in our own countries and how they are interconnected with the world
- Anchoring global understanding in students' lives, practices, and perceptions
- Creating encounters of difference
- Utilizing both sides of our brains
- Discerning the connections as well as what is connected
- Making connections, finding meaning, and digging below surfaces
- Moving seamlessly between the general and the particular

Any course or form of teaching and learning can be internationalized

- By revealing how the discipline is taught differently across the world
- By showing how the field/profession is impacted by world issues
- By problem-solving global and international challenges
- By integrating international content
- By turning your class into an international learning community with multiple perspectives, with international voices, with global resources
- By emphasizing the complementarity of global learning outcomes with professional or disciplinary goals

Factors to Consider

- What kinds of teaching techniques might best suit international learning objectives and the accompanying evidence and means of assessment?
- What situational factors might impact achievement of global learning goals?
- What activities might promote self-reflection and cross-cultural understanding?
- What are my student demographics?
- What learning styles do my students reflect?
- What resources are available for classroom instruction?

Sample Resources of Strategies for global learning

- Review syllabi and your readings. Are they really international? Where are the international voices?
- Comparative articles to discuss key concepts, problem-solving approaches, and ways of thinking within your discipline
- Inviting students with learning abroad experience to relate their experience to course content
- Creating case studies that involve decision-making and problem-solving situations that are cross-cultural in nature
- Encouraging students to use themselves as informants to examine their personal beliefs, assumptions, and knowledge about course content;
- Recognizing international students in the class as contributing to international dialogue
- Integrating mediated resources (film, music, video clips, Internet) within your discipline that present different perspectives from those of most of your students
- Identifying community-based resources that would help students experience course content from a different point of view.
- Foreign Newspapers
- Encouraging all students to notice differences between and among themselves as well as different ways of approaching understanding and problem-solving;
- Designing opportunities for students to use whole body/multi-sensory modalities to learning the content;
- Creating activities that call upon learners to self-reflect (journals, portfolios);
- Designing activities that pull students out of their academic/cultural 'comfort zones.' (Mezirow calls these disorienting dilemmas.)
- Use more visual methods, visual journals,
- More group work so that students hear multiple points of view
- Assigning multiple readings so that students can argue multiple points of view and teach others about other perspectives
- Using interactive technologies (Skype, videoconferencing, Google Hangout) to engage in global conversations, with scholars, activists, citizens, anyone from around the world.
- Do student-to-student conversations with classes around the world.
- Consider field trips to local sites where individuals are involved in international practices and are conscious of their connections to the world
- Using debates or deliberation to have students to learn how to resolve conflict and overcome and work through differences.
- Get students to create strategic plans or action plans that may implement and apply some of their knowledge in their own classes, campuses, communities, etc.
- International Service Learning
- Curriculum Integration of Study Abroad
- Collaborative Teaching
- Shifting roles and identities
- Co-curricular connections