

# Intercultural Horizons

## Volume IV



# Intercultural Horizons Volume IV:

*Identities, Relationships and  
Languages in Migration*

Edited by

Eliza J. Nash, Nevin C. Brown  
and Lavinia Bracci

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Identities, Relationships and Languages in Migration

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## FOREWORD

This volume contains a representative set of papers given at the fourth and fifth Intercultural Horizons conferences organized by the International Center for Intercultural Exchange (Siena, Italy), now known as the Foundation for Intercultural Exchange, in partnership with IPSL, the State University of New York at Geneseo, Siena College and SIETAR-Italia. The fourth conference was held in New York City (USA); the fifth conference was held in Cagliari (Sardinia), Italy. The two conferences were part of an on-going series initiated by the International Center in 2011 that have brought together educators and practitioners in the fields of intercultural education, civic engagement and related issues. The 2014 conference, titled “Currents in Community Development, Civic Engagement and Intercultural Competence,” was an extension of topics addressed in our initial conferences and drew a particularly strong response from North American educators and postsecondary institutions. The 2015 conference, which was titled “Identities, Relationships and Languages in Migration,” shifted our focus to connections between intercultural competence and the increased prominence of migration (particularly in the Mediterranean region) as a concern for educators in the fields of intercultural education and civic engagement.

Given their locations on either side of the Atlantic, the two conferences drew presenters and attendees from a quite different range of institutions and nations. The New York conference featured presentations primarily from university and community college faculty members drawn primarily from the United States, while the Cagliari conference attracted both presenters and attendees from a more diverse set of nations primarily though not exclusively in Europe. Both conferences alternated between keynote presentations by international and intercultural education leaders such as (in 2014) Eric Hartman (now at Haverford College) and Virginia Held (City University of New York, Graduate School and Hunter College) and (in 2015) Sonia Forasiepi (Amnesty International-Lombardia, Italy) Xenia Chrysoschoou (Panteion University, Athens, Greece) and Robert Bringle (Indiana University –Purdue University Indianapolis), as well as a series of concurrent sessions in which academicians and practitioners in the field offered theoretical analyses, case studies and other perspectives.

Papers included in this volume reflect a diverse array of research, case studies and theoretical reflections on intercultural studies, civic engagement and varied perspectives on migration issues in the Mediterranean region. We have organized the papers in two chapters reflecting the primary themes we had announced in the calls for proposals for the two conferences: Curricular Models and Strategies for Intercultural Education and Learning (Chapter 1) and Interculturalism, Identity and Tourism (Chapter 2). The reader will find that several of the papers address a variety of intercultural topics beyond their specific chapter designations. For example, the migration papers include what we hope will be interesting perspectives on connections between broader migration themes and the development of tourism, particularly in shaping external perceptions of national character and history.

As with the earlier volumes in this series, we hope that the papers contained herein, and the issues they raise, will be of interest to a broad audience both within and beyond the academy: college and university faculty members doing research on intercultural education/communication, service-learning and related issues and/or overseeing student programs in these areas; college and university administrators responsible for initiating and overseeing intercultural and service-learning initiatives on their campuses; educators and staff members involved in programs and initiatives to integrate immigrants and other cultural newcomers in a second culture or nation; and students enrolled in intercultural and service-learning courses and/or seeking careers in these fields. We hope as well that some of the papers will be useful to persons who serve as intercultural mediators, including trainers and coaches involved in intercultural studies in business and other non-academic settings.

The International Center for Intercultural Exchange, through the recently-formed Foundation for Intercultural Exchange, will continue to sponsor Intercultural Horizons conferences. It is our hope that readers of the current volume will be inspired to join us for these continued conversations about topics of central importance to intercultural communication and education.

There are a number of institutions that we wish to thank both for their support of the ongoing series of Intercultural Horizons conferences and for their assistance with the 2014 and 2015 conferences. These include: State University of New York at Geneseo (USA); Siena College (USA); SIETAR-Italia; IPSL, and Sardinia Italian Studies.

Eliza J. Nash, Nevin C. Brown, Lavinia Bracci  
Co-Editors, July 2016

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **CURRICULAR MODELS AND STRATEGIES FOR INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING**

Six papers are included in this first chapter, five taken from the 2014 Intercultural Horizons Conference in New York City (USA), the sixth (by Laura Tarabusi) from the 2015 conference in Cagliari (Sardinia), Italy. The first three papers, all by scholars and practitioners from two- and four-year postsecondary institutions in the U.S. city and/or state of New York, discuss a variety of curricular strategies and innovations (including the use of service-learning) to improve intercultural, civic and/or global learning outcomes on the part of undergraduate students. In the cases provided in the papers by Meghmala Tarafdar, Elizabeth DiGiorgio and Isabella Lizzul (Queensborough Community College – City University of New York) and Karen Steinmayer, Amy Ramson, Julie Trachman and Lisanette Rosario (Hostos Community College – City University of New York), there is a particular concern for developing effective strategies for students attending two-year institutions who themselves are multicultural and/or those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Moving to a four-year institutional context, the paper by David Baecker, Michael Baumgardner, Sybillyn Jennings, Shealeen Meaney and Tonya Moutray (Russell Sage College) discusses the “World Series” sequence of introductory courses designed to integrate intercultural experience in the general education curriculum, with a particular focus on women undergraduate students. Two additional papers continue the focus on curricular strategies in four-year postsecondary institutions. The fourth paper, by Jill Bowman, Emily Ferlis, Amber Hill and Barbara Ingber (Virginia Commonwealth University, Virginia, USA) reviews the “VCU Globe” initiative which focuses on developing intercultural skills within a community context. Among other effects, the program has helped the university increase both domestic and international student retention as well as significantly increase the size of the university’s English Language Program (ELP). The following paper, by Monica Schneider, Julie Rao, Fatima Rodriguez

Johnson, Susan Norman and Diantha Watts (State University of New York, College at Geneseo) describes the design, implementation, and assessment of The Real World Geneseo (RWG) program, a comprehensive, experiential program in which students learn, interact, and confront issues of diversity in a supportive, structured environment. The final paper in this chapter shifts the focus to Italy; the author (Laura Tarabusi, New York University-Florence [Italy]) reviews the groundwork for a research project on the impact of the study abroad experience in higher education on Intercultural Communicative Competence.

# ENHANCING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH CIVIC AND GLOBAL LEARNING PROJECTS

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## **Introduction**

When students interact with people from different backgrounds and communities, the unfamiliar dynamics of the interaction often result in communication barriers. These barriers can be addressed by developing personal attributes and intercultural skills based on mutual respect and understanding. As global interconnectedness continues to enlarge the scope of our lives, more and more individuals and organizations are connecting worldwide in a broad range of contexts and purposes: personal, social, academic, professional, or humanistic. A sensitive responsiveness towards international concerns, social injustices, and human rights issues has been gaining attention in the educational curriculum. With worldwide opportunities rising to extraordinary levels of intersectionality, employers have been seeking professionals with intercultural skills and knowledge of diverse cultures for traversing the complex landscape of a global workforce. Fostering the growth of intercultural skills is essential for an emancipatory worldview of globalization as a viable road to economic growth, essential for sustainable development, and crucial to the ideological goals of advocacy coalitions. A productive communication and meaningful intercultural encounter—which is grounded in one’s basic respect for varied perceptions of the world—entails an ability to navigate the differences that stem from diverse belief systems, backgrounds, and experiences.

At Queensborough Community College—one of the 23 colleges of the City University of New York (CUNY)—the student population of 16,000 is comprised of nearly equal numbers of Asians, African-Americans,

Caucasians and Latinos, representing 143 nations of birth and 84 native languages. Located in the diverse county of Queens, the demographics of the campus and the local community provide our students with a unique setting for interacting and communicating with an amazing assortment of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, and multi-faith individuals from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The college enthusiastically embraces its role as a diverse, urban community college and supports numerous opportunities for students to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to become more receptive and understanding about cultural differences while addressing the challenges represented within a pluralistic society.

Queensborough faculty from across the disciplines have designed innovative projects that give students a chance to work on a community-based problem, undertake a service-learning initiative, or work collaboratively with their peers in analyzing global issues from multiple perspectives. In the 2007 report, *College Learning for the New Global Century*, published by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U), the National Leadership Council for Liberal Education and America's Promise (LEAP) identified several innovative educational practices that have been beneficial in higher education. George Kuh (2008) described the positive effects of high-impact activities as measured by the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE). The survey shows that first-year students and seniors who participated in learning communities, service-learning, study abroad, student-faculty research, and senior capstone experiences demonstrated substantial gains in learning and personal development. Kuh's report highlights "deep approaches" to learning: integrating diverse perspectives, interacting with faculty and peers outside of class, analyzing course concepts, and evaluating the value of information. These activities have been nationally reported to increase student critical thinking skills, preparation to work in a diverse society, greater academic success, and leadership skills.

Inspired by Kuh's findings and national studies, Queensborough has integrated the "high impact educational practices" in its institutional model and has consistently supported the planning, design, and implementation of seven practices that stimulate "deep" learning while offering our faculty and students many opportunities for enriching the curriculum and utilizing the best practices for engaging students. In 2006, Queensborough was selected nationally as one of eight colleges to develop service-learning initiatives that were part of American Association of Community College's *Broadening Horizons* initiative. Queensborough received the *Teagle Foundation* grant (2013-16) that supports the college's efforts to

help students develop a commitment to civic and moral responsibility for diverse, equitable, healthy, and sustainable communities. The goal of this three-year national project, *Student Learning for Civic Capacity: Stimulating Moral, Ethical, and Civic Engagement for Learning that Lasts*, is to better position community colleges to stimulate sustained student moral, ethical, and civic engagement for learning that will increasingly matter to them as they take leadership roles in the local, national, and global communities. Queensborough, along with five other community colleges across the nation, has been inviting faculty from multiple disciplines to incorporate pedagogies that enable students to engage in dialogue and experiences that can expand students' disciplinary knowledge to ensure an impact on societal issues.

Queensborough's high impact practices are instructional modalities that help our students learn skills and competencies, rather than just content or information. The programs in Academic Service Learning (ASL), Global Diversity Learning (GDL), and the *Teagle Foundation* project have established shared goals concerning academic content as well as the expected outcomes in student capabilities and skills while engaging in local actions with a global impact. The community-based organizations in the local area provide many opportunities for intercultural encounters while the structured reflection activities encourage students to explore their own ethical and democratic commitments related to the diversity of human experience. The global learning projects stimulate our students to develop the knowledge, skills, tools, values, and commitment to understand globalization, appreciate diversity, and recognize critical global challenges—while becoming aware of the interdependence of communities, cultures, and nations.

A number of compelling studies and policy statements in the United States explain the importance of developing intercultural competence. The Partnership for 21st Century Skills—an advocacy coalition of educators and business, community, and government leaders—has identified global awareness as one of the six core skills that all students need to acquire (along with communication skills; thinking and problem-solving; interpersonal and self-direction skills; financial, economic, and business literacy; and entrepreneurial and civic literacy). The partnership defines global awareness as “the ability to understand global issues; learn from and work with people from diverse cultures; and understand the cultures of other nations” (Reimers 2009).

Scholars have emphasized the need for promoting students' intercultural skills in order to stimulate their understanding about local and global issues, to enhance their “ability to interact with ‘others,’ to accept

other perceptions of the world, to mediate between different perspectives, [and] to be conscious of their evaluations of difference” (Byram et al., Eds. 2009). Intercultural competence, according to Byram (1997), consists primarily of three components: 1) *knowledge* about “social groups” which involves being conversant with elements such as beliefs, historical relationships, cultural values, and other representative characteristics; 2) developing *skills* of interpreting, relating, and discovering unique socio-cultural realities of diverse people; 3) engendering positive *attitudes* such as openness, empathy, tolerance, readiness, and curiosity about issues that may be unfamiliar from one’s own. Positive attitudes (or dispositions) also help in alleviating the negative effects of prejudice, intolerance, or misunderstanding among people from diverse backgrounds. The fundamentals of critical thinking, personal development, and respect for people and cultures have been identified as the key to enhancing intercultural competence that empowers students not only to deal with differences, but also to realize their own potential for transformation.

While the *knowledge*, *skills*, and *attitudes* help in developing students’ awareness and a deeper understanding of diverse cultures, Kubota (2004) argues that pedagogical strategies can help in raising consciousness about unfair social practices and enable learners to interrogate issues of inequality, race, gender, and class in the local and global community. She believes students can become active agents of social change when the educational framework familiarizes learners with the experiences of disadvantaged groups and their socio-economic realities.

## **Intercultural Competencies and Civic Engagement**

The concept of civic engagement—encompassing varied interrelated practices and philosophies such as service-learning, community-based research, participatory action research—has been gaining a considerable impetus on college campuses. Several scholars suggest that educational programs focused on civic engagement should foster knowledge of differences in culture, abilities, and religious background (Dudley et al. 1999). Learning about the contributing factors of socio-political and economic disparities resulting in marginalization of certain groups supports students’ knowledge and understanding of inequality and injustice (Ibrahim 2005). By developing research skills and critical reasoning about causes of injustice, students are able to imagine possibilities or alternatives for a shared future (Jansen et al. 2006). Diverse populations in the local community offer opportunities to foster intercultural development, reciprocal tolerance, and negotiation skills

across differences (Volet 2001). In describing specific examples of student engagement, Redlawsk, Rice, and Associates (2009) identify a wide range of specific research skills that students ought to develop, such as designing and implementing surveys and questionnaires, thematic representation of issues, and impact analysis. Group participation and bridging of differences stimulate new ideas, possibilities, and solutions.

Civic engagement promotes ideals such as social justice, equal opportunity, and legal equality and recognizes that social cohesion is based on the key question of “how do we live with others?” (Jansen et al. 2006) for improving our shared lives. The development of efficacy within an individual grows out of active participation and responsibility to both the self and others (Haste 2004). By infusing the intercultural skills in the curricula, Queensborough faculty are striving to accomplish several goals: 1) create an awareness of local/global issues; 2) empower students to work in cross-cultural contexts; and 3) promote students’ self-development by mindful responsiveness towards human relations. Since these goals explicitly signify personal, social, and cultural transformation we are motivated to foster meaningful connections between a transformative curriculum and the learning that strengthens student success.

## **Civic and Global Learning Project for Students in Art Courses**

Implementing the high impact practices GDL and ASL in the Studio Art course created ideal conditions in which students could explore global issues related to their course content, while also developing and employing the skills and attitudes that can foster personal, civic and moral responsibility. GDL enables students to explore a topic from multiple perspectives, while ASL provides a real world context in which to do so. The implementation also posed a unique set of challenges. Since students enrolled in a drawing course are not typically given reading and writing assignments, the project needed to tie together Human Rights Education (poverty and homelessness), the service-learning community partner, and the particular topic of the discipline, in this case, portraiture, in a manner that is visually compelling and that makes clear connections among all three components. The synergy of the three components is ideal for achieving GDL’s three outcomes: awareness, engagement, and transformation.

“Picture Me in College” is a portrait project that has offered Queensborough students the opportunity to work with children from two local nonprofit transitional housing facilities since 2010. Both programs provide child-centered services, including after-school programs, daycare,

and enrichment programs for homeless children. One provides housing and employment assistance for parents, while the other provides similar services, including job training and employment assistance to formerly incarcerated women and counseling, visitation, and mentoring programs for children of currently incarcerated mothers as part of their highly successful program to break the intergenerational cycle of incarceration.

Students are informed at the start of the semester that a service-learning project is planned for the class; however, students are always offered the option of alternative projects should they prefer not to participate. Pairing the Queensborough drawing students into teams, two drawing students for every child, has been helpful in boosting the confidence of the drawing students and has ensured full participation. Students have the option of creating an entire portrait design from start to finish or of sharing the project with their partner, with one student drawing the child and the other providing the design elements.

The project begins when the children are welcomed into the drawing class and thanked for giving the Queensborough students an opportunity to learn to draw portraits of children. Following a brief introduction about college for the benefit of the visiting school children, students begin talking with the children, and, as an ice-breaker and crucial part of the project, make note of the children's preferences in terms of favorite books, subjects in school, movies, colors, animals, flowers, etc. The children are shown a variety of books containing portraits of presidents, leaders, writers, and artists, and are asked to choose a pose inspired by the books or any pose that makes them feel special or confident. The choice of pose is entirely up to the children. The drawing students then create a simple pencil portrait while the children visit over the course of two classes. When the children return for a celebratory third visit, they are surprised to find that the classroom has been decorated with their portraits, which are no longer simple pencil drawings, but have been transformed into colorful posters with design elements that highlight each child's individuality, interests and goals. The culmination of this celebration is a graduation-like experience in which the children are given their posters, rolled up and tied with ribbon to resemble a diploma. The children are further surprised when they are given keepsake boxes in which reduced versions of the posters have been set within the frame-like lid. Each keepsake box is stocked with a set of encouraging quotations that have been selected for the children by the Queensborough students. The quotes focus on the theme of triumphing over adversity and achieving life goals. The children are invited to fill the keepsake boxes with mementoes about their dreams for the future. This feature of the project is of crucial importance in that it

encourages the children to envision a positive future and to begin to see college as the most likely path to achieving it. The Queensborough students also receive a full set of the encouraging quotations, which may also serve to inspire them as navigate their own life challenges.

The “Picture Me in College” project allows Queensborough students to get to know and care about children who are grappling with poverty and homelessness. The project thrusts the students into the role of mentor to the children, and helps them to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes, including the empathy needed to address this pressing global issue. The project starts with a discussion in which students are asked to help identify the risk factors that can contribute to poverty and homelessness. Their list is then compared to the findings of social agencies in the field to assure that students have a comprehensive awareness of the major risk factors that can lead to homelessness.

Students begin to acquire knowledge through visually oriented charts and maps that illustrate the extent of poverty locally, across the nation, and globally. Students are genuinely surprised to discover that the school district in which Queensborough is located had a homeless student population between 1.9% and 5.4% in the 2013-14 academic year (“The Atlas of Student Homelessness in NYC” 2015). A map using proportional circles provides students with a clear idea of the extent of homelessness in the US (“A Portrait of Family Homelessness in America” 2012). Maps that indicate the extent of child malnutrition across the world are also a visually striking means of identifying impoverished populations (Maps: Global Subnational Prevalence of Child Malnutrition” 2015).

Students are particularly interested in charts that reveal the relationship between education levels, income, and protection against unemployment (“Employment Projections: Earnings and Unemployment Rates by Educational Attainment” 2014). Such charts inform students that attending some college puts them several steps above the lowest paid employees in the nation, and that completing their Associate Degree can place them a step higher in income level, employment and protection from unemployment. The “World Happiness Report” (Helliwell 2014), which ranks countries by the happiness levels of their citizens, enables students to develop a more complex understanding of the factors that contribute to wellbeing around the world and the six key factors that the editors have identified. Having a sense of social support in times of trouble, for example, ranks second as a major factor contributing to human happiness, and awareness of this fact helps students to understand the importance of the support that the community partner provides to the children, and the importance of the support that they themselves will be providing to the

children directly through service-learning. Another key finding of the World Happiness Report is that the prevalence of generosity in oneself and others ranks fifth as one of the key six factors that contribute to personal happiness. This factor is especially relevant to students who are about to share their effort and skills through service-learning.

The visually oriented charts and maps foster thinking from local, national, and global perspectives, and the reflection assignment, which is an integral component in the project, is both formative and summative of this important learning outcome. It asks students to explore the priorities indicated by citizens across the world who have taken part in the United Nations My World 2015 global survey and to compare the priorities of citizens in the US to those of two other countries, each with different economic and development levels. The survey presents sixteen issues and asks participants to rank them in order of priority. It also allows participants to add an additional issue that they think ought to be included in the survey (“My World. The United Nations Survey for a Better World” 2015).

The UN’s My World 2015 survey is unprecedented in scope, visually stimulating, and user friendly. Students are able to vote, if they wish, and to view the survey results for a range of issues. The “My World Analytics” section of the survey allows users to see how the citizens of any country, region or continent ranked 16 global issues in order of importance. Students can also compare the survey results by economic and development levels (designated as low, medium, high or very high Human Development Index or HDI). In addition, the survey allows users, with the click of a mouse, to see how the priorities shift depending on the age group, gender, or education level of the voter segment selected. Students are asked to explain why they have chosen a particular issue to explore and how they would explain the differing priorities among the countries, age groups or genders that they have chosen to explore. Students are encouraged to write from their own experience, interview someone from the countries under discussion or to use books, articles and videos from reliable sources. Because of the diversity of Queensborough students and their many countries of origin, students have a wealth of personal experience and acquaintances to draw upon and they often choose topics of personal interest. The following reflection resulted from a question that the student held for some time regarding the quality and cost of food in her native South Korea compared to food in the US. The assignment allowed her to delve more deeply and to propose explanations for the differing results by country and age groups:

Even though Korea is much smaller in economy than America, they were providing its citizens better food at lower costs than America. While I was in Korea, food was abundant and cheap. The food was cooked deliciously with great effort. Every meal was prepared with great care and lots of nutrition was added through many different fresh ingredients. Yet, when I came to the states, too many foods were prepared in haste with less nutrition, unless it was expensive and non-affordable to many Americans. Food in the supermarkets was disguised as delicious food with sweeteners, mostly high-fructose corn syrup. No wonder affordable and nutritious food is the number three concern for all Americans who participated in the survey. And yet, especially for Americans, age group between 31-60, it is even ranked higher at second. Both younger people in the ages between 30-45 and older people between in the ages 46-60 would place this matter at second. This is also telling me these age groups who are most actively involved in economic productivity are more concerned either with an affordability and/or actual nutrition of the food than any other age groups.

The reflection assignment enables students to develop analytical reasoning by comparing the priorities of citizens around the world and developing empathy towards the differences in priorities. The open-ended reflection assignment allows students to choose the issues, countries, regions, or population segments that most interest them. The survey serves as an investigative tool for students who find results that are predictable, puzzling, or startling, and then dig deeper in search of explanations. Students are given a metacognitive prompt to explain their thinking process in choosing the areas, issues, or population groups that they have chosen to explore. One student noted the personal connection to the prompt:

Being a young woman in college, I thought it would be interesting to view the similarities and differences of priorities between women my age with the same amount of education in the U.S alongside women from the Dominican Republic.

The survey also allows students to test their assumptions about the issues when comparing how education was ranked by voters in the US, Afghanistan, and Cuba:

“A good education” made the top three for all three countries. This didn’t surprise me because it is extremely hard to live in this world and be illiterate. My grandparents on both sides of my family were immigrants from Puerto Rico. The men, both my grandfathers, had somewhat more of an easier time integrating. My grandmothers, however, weren’t that good at speaking English. One of my grandmothers had never gone to school

and to this day still struggles with reading and writing in English. Her spoken English isn't that bad, but that is only because she was exposed to it from her children and grandchildren. When growing up she was the person in charge of the household, including cooking and cleaning, and there wasn't much time for anything else. My own family history motivated me to be the first to go to college because I saw the struggle that my grandparents and parent experienced and knew that I didn't want to face the same outcome. With a good education, you are not only able to understand others, but also grasp ideas larger than yourself. Education enables you to see the world around you in another light.

While students were also given pre and post GDL surveys, the reflection assignment proved to be the most valuable assessment tool. The assignments were scored against a rubric that measured the categories of Skills, Empathy and Attitude on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 indicating a response that was "completely lacking" and 4 indicating a response that was "Excellent." Examples of an "Excellent" response follow:

**Skills:** Student is able to draw conclusions and offer possible explanations of survey results, giving specific examples from their own experience or the experience of others.

**Empathy:** Student is able to imagine issues from other perspectives and offer possible explanations and concrete examples.

**Attitude:** Student displays understanding of how perspectives are affected and shaped by experience and circumstance.

The students in the drawing course were introduced to artists—such as Brazilian born American artist Vik Muniz—whose work is directly concerned with poverty. As documented in the award-winning film *Wasteland*, Muniz addresses the issue of poverty by working directly with individuals living in extreme poverty, allowing them to take part in the making of art, and to benefit from the proceeds when the resulting works were sold.

Global artist Kehinde Wiley was also relevant to the issues discussed throughout the project. His visually stunning portraits break down perceptions of race and class, while celebrating the intrinsic value of his subjects. The "Picture Me in College" project expands students' understanding of the course concepts in drawing and portraiture by allowing them to learn about the differences between adult and child proportions, but more importantly, on a deeper level, it also raises awareness of the psychological implications of portraiture.

A video of a presentation by and about the artist Lily Yeh and her "Barefoot Artists" foundation, which brought healing and development to broken communities in north Philadelphia and Rwanda was highly effective in helping students to understand the transformative power of art:

During class we saw some artwork from an artist named Lily Yeh, who used her artwork to show the poverty in the poorest neighborhoods in Rwanda. When she visited the city of Gisenyi in West Rwanda, she saw so much poverty and became involved in the Rwanda healing project. It was very inspiring to see how others help those in need. Lily helped a lot of these people to start earning money in different ways. Before Lily Yeh's Barefoot Artist[s] organization helped out Rwanda, they were struggling a lot. This course has helped me gain perspective on the subject of homelessness so much because we were able to see how many countries are in poverty and to see countries in which we are working to make it a better place.

While the GDL reflection assignment provided an effective qualitative assessment tool for the purposes of building an effective GDL course, students taking part in the Teagle, GDL and ASL projects also took part in the College's pre and post service-learning survey. Since the students scored highly in many areas related to academic performance and civic engagement, it is worth noting that the survey showed a 100% positive response to the comment "I am more confident working with others as a member of a team." In addition, 89% of students showed a positive response to the comment "I'm more confident understanding the values of people different than me." These responses can be viewed as important first steps in becoming civically engaged and culturally competent individuals. The shared goals of GDL, ASL, and the *Teagle Foundation* funded project promoted an expanded understanding of the problems of poverty and homelessness while encouraging students to appreciate the importance of their own educational opportunities. Students experienced the positive impact they can have as individuals working one-on-one with children in need and, on a larger scale, by participating in society as informed citizens. Most importantly, students in an art course are reminded that art and the creative spirit are powerful tools that can instill hope in the most challenged children and make a difference in their own lives and in the world at large.

### **Multiple Perspectives: The Local and the Global**

As part of a national study of civic engagement in community colleges initiative, students in a massage therapy program participated in a service-learning project with a community partner that serves homeless families. This project aimed to help students in developing intercultural awareness while honing their massage therapy skills and exploring disparities in health care. In keeping with the learning outcomes of GDL, students

collaborated with each other to research the topic of poverty, poor health and access to health care at the local, national, and global level. Students of diverse backgrounds collaborated to prepare a PowerPoint in which they shared their knowledge of practices and attitudes regarding health in their ethnic communities and described how this increased awareness enhanced their practice and interactions with future clients.

The GDL learning objective for the course was to enable students to look at the issues from multiple perspectives and to identify how one's position or grounding can shape perspective of a key global issue. Through written reflections, students articulated their awareness of the topic of 'health disparities', researched the issue through various sources, including website access to the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (United Nations, Human Rights, Office of the High Commissioner 2016) and the World Health Organization (World Health Organization 2016), and presented their findings as part a group in a PowerPoint presentation that also included their shared experiences of how their growing cultural awareness will enhance their practice and interactions with clients. The mission statement of the OHCHR gave the massage therapist a framework against which to examine the deficiencies of today's health care system:

The right to health is relevant to all States: every State has ratified at least one international human rights treaty recognizing the right to health. Moreover, States have committed themselves to protecting this right through international declarations, domestic legislation and policies, and at international conferences (OHCHR 2016).

Students traveled to the community partner, a large transitional housing facility in a nearby community, where they were given an introduction and tour of the facility, and they learned about the various factors that contribute to homelessness. The opportunity to provide massage therapy in a setting with so many challenged families and individuals provided a backdrop against which students could consider the myriad of causes and consequences of homelessness in the local, national and global perspectives, and reflect on solutions on an individual and policy level.

Another course, Practicum 2, integrated GDL in order to prepare students to treat clients with clinical conditions. Working under direct supervision, students assessed conditions and developed treatment plans for clients utilizing both Western and Eastern massage techniques. Treatment plans were charted and outcomes were evaluated. Students were encouraged to demonstrate professionalism and good communication skills

with their patients. By working in reciprocal community partnerships with diverse clients, students learned about the languages, cultures, and stories of individuals in neighborhoods other than their own. They also realized that everyday challenges like poverty, discrimination, unemployment, limited access to health care and to healthy food, and inadequate public education are also global problems that cannot be addressed solely at the local level.

The massage therapist must appreciate the importance of intercultural awareness, for it will be a part of every aspect of their professional lives and it is a crucial skill for health care providers who will deal daily with diverse communities. From a social and public health perspective, intercultural competence is required for reducing disparities in the health of people of diverse racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. The integration of GDL and service-learning encourages intercultural discussion and reflection. The project sought to foster thoughtful discussion and reflection on the importance of intercultural competence to the profession and the individual therapist. It is not surprising that student reflections revealed a deep understanding of the complexities of the range of socio-economic realities of their clients.

Eastern and Western massage therapy practices were both used in the project, and the beliefs underlying both approaches also serve as a model to understand different cultural conceptions of health. Eastern massage therapy practices are based on an energy-based point of view, in which healing involves attaining optimal energy flow and balance, whereas the Western approach addresses the physical body and obvious signs and symptoms in various parts of the body. The Eastern approach involves not looking only for signs and symptoms that have already manifested, but looking for signs of imbalance in the body that can lead to the development of disease. Looking at this dichotomy helps students to become aware of the different cultural understandings of health that a diverse clientele may have. In the weeks leading up to the service-learning project, students were given a reflection assignment that asked about their understanding of cultural competence. Students also watched videos related to the UN Millennium Goals that showed health disparities around the world. (United Nations, “We Can End Poverty, Millennium Development Goals,” 2015). The reflection questions included:

- Why should I care about cultural differences?
- What does it mean to be culturally competent?
- What is culture?

- How will being culturally competent help me as a health care provider?

Prior to the service-learning, each student prepared a single PowerPoint slide that detailed his or her understanding of what it meant to be a culturally competent practitioner. After participating in the various High Impact Practices, including the service-learning project, each student then contributed a post-project PowerPoint reflection to that same slide. Although many students had general ideas regarding cultural competence prior to the GDL/ASL project, the post- reflection shows a greater level of understanding:

I don't think that there is a formula to becoming culturally competent. In my experience I have found a few steps helpful in becoming more understanding about people different from me:

1. Reading about ethnicities and cultures that I am unfamiliar with.
2. Exposure to new cultures – immersion in a neighborhood, exposure to the food, music and religious gathering places.
3. Seeking out collective experiences where one can share the foods, music, religious or cultural practices of an unfamiliar group.
4. Asking questions about a person's experience/differences from my own culture. Having a genuine curiosity and respect for the variations in thoughts, beliefs and practices is the most important way to gain trust and entrance to one's belief system.

The student's post-project reflection demonstrates how a general openness and acceptance of difference had deepened into a true understanding of the particular perspective of another group. While nearly all students acknowledged that cross-cultural dialogue is beneficial and necessary for a healthy society, some noted how the absence of such dialogue can be dangerous. The following example of a pre-project reflection reveals an acknowledgement of differing cultural perspectives with regard to health and healthcare practices:

The vast differences between Eastern and Western thought are important to understand, especially in massage, which utilizes techniques rooted in both traditions. In general, you could say that Western thought makes THINGS the object of its studies, while Eastern thought concerns itself with ENERGY and its ability to flow freely, regarding issues of health, wellbeing, etc. Understanding the difference in ways of thinking between cultures is probably the KEY to developing intercultural competence.

The following reflection reveals an awareness of sensitivity to client's cultural backgrounds:

I think we have to be sensitive to individual's cultural backgrounds when asking about the health of our client. Many of them may not have a grasp on the language or an understanding of their medical condition or physical issue. They may not have access to good medical care for many years. When asking/interviewing, it is better to focus on what the client describes as their concerns and symptoms . . .

Student reflections explicitly acknowledge a growth in compassion and empathy toward those from another culture and the consequences of intercultural ignorance:

I think that the lessons on cultural sensitivity have served us well. We learned to be more patient and understanding of those from backgrounds different from our own. We also learned how to approach and work with individuals who are in unfamiliar circumstances.

\*

The experience also taught us compassion and understanding in working with individuals of different [cultures] from our own.

\*

It is usually ignorance of other cultures that breeds prejudice, intolerance, and lack of acceptance for its people and practices. . . . With greater knowledge of the nature of other cultures, greater acceptance, and even compassion for that culture would naturally follow.

Student reflections were assessed using a rubric that measured **Metacognition Skills, Empathy and Attitude** as follows on a scale from 0 for "Completely Lacking," 1 for "Underdeveloped," 2 for "Good," and 3 for "Excellent." The criteria for "Excellent" in each category are as follows:

**Metacognition Skills:** After video viewing and ASL, student is able to note changes in perspective or demonstrate heightened awareness, and give multiple examples of change and awareness of the impact of poverty and lack of health care on human lives.

**Empathy:** Student is able to imagine the impact of poverty and the lack of health care and give multiple examples of the impact.

**Attitude:** Student is able to identify ways in which culture plays a role in health care, and give multiple examples.

In addition to this assessment tool, in the spring of 2015, students taking part in the GDL/ASL project also took part in the College's service-learning pre and post surveys. The post survey found a 100% positive

response with regard to the statement “I’m more confident working with others as a member of a team.” A 100% positive response was also found with regard to the statement “I’m more confident understanding the values of people different than me.”

One student noted the following, when asked about change brought about by the project:

One way I see change in myself is becoming aware. I was so naïve or ignorant of the magnitude of poverty not just across the world but how it was so close to home. I feel that education and exposure are so important in opening my mind to issues and being aware of [what] goes on around me. I find this exposure allows me to be less selfish and see the world more in terms of others.

Improving intercultural skills is a multifaceted, complex, developmental process that can be facilitated by intentional exposure, first-hand experience, and structured reflection. By engaging students in civic and global learning as community-based projects, educators can evoke curiosity and passion for intercultural experiences and assist students in dissolving their own cultural stereotypes. The US Department of Education, in collaboration with the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U), has affirmed that we are at a “crucible moment” where we must make “democracy and civic responsibility... central, not peripheral” in our institutions of higher learning (2012). The Lumina Foundation is piloting a “degree qualifications profile” where “civic learning” and “engagement with diverse perspectives” have been listed as key areas of learning across all types of postsecondary degree programs (“The Degree Qualification Program” 2014). The high impact practices at Queensborough support student learning by promoting integrative views and ideologies within the contextual framework of disciplinary knowledge. As Martha Nussbaum writes in *Cultivating humanity: A classical defense of reform in liberal education*, “The world around us is inescapably international,” while emphasizing the imperative to educate students to be “citizens of the world” (1997), and develop intercultural competence to widen the scope of their lives and to make a difference in the interdependent world of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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