

Teaching Globally, Learning Locally

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Demographic pressures, natural resource demands, environmental challenges, rapid technological change, economic integration, new security threats, and other transnational issues invite global engagement on the part of colleges and universities. As educators and citizens, faculty and administrators should want their graduates to possess the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to effectively communicate and collaborate across cultures in an effort to address pressing global issues.

This special issue of the *eJournal of Public Affairs* focuses on how colleges and universities are preparing students to effectively engage in global issues and how they can educate globally competent citizens. A large and increasing number of campuses include global engagement and/or educating globally competent citizens as integral elements in their mission and vision statements. Many campuses also have “pockets of excellence” related to global and international activities but lack coordinated and comprehensive strategies for global engagement and global-competence education.

Being “global” implies that one’s engagement involves not only local and regional communities but national and worldwide communities as well. The National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement in the United Kingdom describes public engagement as “the myriad of ways in which the activity and benefits of higher education and research can be shared with the public. Engagement is by definition a two-way process, involving interaction and listening, with the goal of generating mutual benefit” (<http://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/what>). Thus global engagement can be thought of as interaction between universities and global communities that generates mutual benefits for all parties.

Within the college or university context, a primary contribution that campuses can make to global communities is to educate globally competent students who will go into those communities prepared to address their pressing needs. In a globalized world in which economic, social, cultural, and political boundaries are diminishing, it is essential that college and university graduates be globally competent. In a previous issue of this *eJournal*, Hartman (2014) provided a number of definitions of global citizenship (<http://ejournal.missouristate.edu/2014/04/educating-global-citizenship/>). For the purpose of this issue, a globally competent citizen will be defined as a person who

possesses the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to understand the world and work effectively to improve it.

The articles and other resources in this special issue focus on how campuses can be globally engaged and educate globally competent citizens—broad and ambitious goals that can only be achieved if many aspects of the educational system itself are oriented toward these common concerns. A number of promising initiatives are highlighted in this *eJournal* issue.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities (AASCU) recognized the importance of educating globally competent citizens through a variety of activities comprising its Global Engagement Initiative. Part of the American Democracy Project, the initiative has provided professional development activities, created a faculty toolkit, developed a national blended-learning course, and adapted the course as an eBook. Dennis Falk, Jen Domagal-Goldman, and Keisha Hoerrner describe key elements of this initiative in our first article, “The AASCU Global Engagement Initiative: Educating Globally Competent Citizens.” They offer a detailed historical description of AASCU’s efforts to provide colleges and universities with mission-specific programs, expose students to relevant, powerfully-framed research, and offer teaching faculty updated materials and approaches for classroom and virtual delivery. The article captures the breadth of this initiative’s accomplishments, but we think several takeaways truly stand out. First, the collaborative nature of the initiative represents a key development in higher education’s innovative partnership model—working with independent think tanks for new research and with new and traditional media to advance learning through evolving trends in communication. Second, the products themselves demonstrate the value-added efficiencies of collaborative multidisciplinary scholarship to design courses and materials that can effectively engage students in potentially life-changing learning experiences.

We follow with “Assessing AASCU’s Global Challenges Blended Model Course” by Shala Mills and Jian Sun. Providing evaluative focus on the Global Engagement Initiative described in the lead-off article, the authors report on emerging data on the course model that forms the core of the initiative. Early results suggest the course is successful in delivering on key learning objectives articulated in the blended course. In particular, the early assessment data indicate that the course is effective in increasing students’ knowledge about important global trends and in educating students about ways in which they can become

globally engaged citizens. The article also provides valuable recommendations for improving the assessment instrument in order to enhance data collection aimed at increasing the quality and effectiveness of the blended model course.

Education-abroad experiences have long been viewed as the best way for students to become engaged and competent global citizens. Being directly exposed to different cultures, new perspectives, a wealth of art and artifacts in galleries and museums, and the challenges of interacting in unfamiliar situations provides ample opportunities to develop global knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Our third article contributes to this long-running conversation in a bold way. In “Study Abroad and Moral Development,” Andrew Johnson and Danielle Hathcock consider how these experiences facilitate the personal growth that nourishes global competence. Situated at the intersection of developmental psychology and international learning experiences, this research contributes to two research traditions at once, presented in the blended voice of a philosopher and a licensed professional counselor.

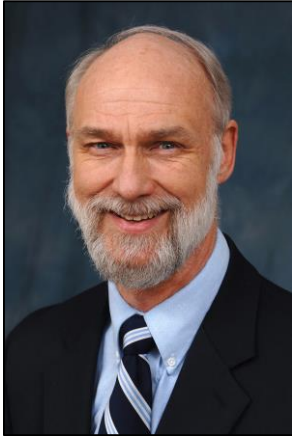
Closing out the peer-reviewed scholarship in this issue, we are delighted to continue the *eJournal's* commitment to research that embodies creative expression with academic purpose. In his short film, David Syring explores how an international service-learning experience provided students with an opportunity to participate in local development projects with sustainable purpose. In their own voices, students describe both the projects and the meaning they drew from the work, reflective expressions that are characteristic of experiential learning yet connected to learning about sustainable practice. Syring has provided valuable context for the film in an introductory essay about the program.

Teaching and learning are grounded in materials that elevate concepts, encourage debate, and create space for reflection. Thus, this issue also presents a special section of review essays for your consideration. We have included three reviews, each of which assesses the value of a different body of material. With a focus on online educational resources, Steven Elliott-Gower and Yohannes Woldemariam explore how to use the increasingly popular phenomenon known simply as *TED Talks*. Delivered by innovative theorists and applied practitioners, these regularly updated presentations—generally no more than 18 minutes long and hosted on an easily searchable website—have made *TED Talks* an effective classroom tool for learning and discussion. The authors here provide the direct links to specific talks and review them for learning about global issues. Our

second review essay is provided by Brett Whitaker, who looks at a more traditional collection of materials: the second edition of *The Global Studies Reader*, edited by Manfred Steger. Because Steger employs problem-centered “prisms” rather than approaches defined entirely by a particular discipline, Whitaker is able to assess both the merits of the framing device as well as the individual essays included in the volume. Finally, Melissa Hendrickx explores the perspective and value of a humanities-based approach to building global competence in students through encounters with fiction. Hendrickx reviews four novels in relation to each other, and in relation to learning objectives of globally-oriented courses.

As guest editors of this special issue on global engagement, we encourage you to absorb the research published here, and to consider how you might use the materials related to teaching and learning in global engagement initiatives at your own institution. The challenges facing humanity on a planetary scale are also problems for the individual citizen. The *eJournal of Public Affairs* is committed to a full and robust conversation about public life and higher education, and we are grateful for their support of this issue dedicated to the exchange of ideas, experience, and scholarship aimed at the development of citizens who can understand their world in wholeness and connection.

Author Biographies



Dennis R. Falk is Distinguished Teaching Professor in the Department of Social Work at the University of Minnesota Duluth. He taught a course on Global Issues in a variety of formats over the past twenty-five years. Denny's research interests include defining and promoting globally competent citizenship. He served as the lead AASCU Global Engagement (formerly Seven Revolutions) Scholar for six years, co-editing *Educating Globally Competent Citizens: A Toolkit* and helping to lead twelve workshops that use this toolkit as a foundation. Denny was a major contributor in developing the *Global Challenges* online national blended course.



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