



# Elon Statement on INTEGRATING GLOBAL LEARNING WITH THE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

## Higher-Impact Study Abroad and Off-Campus Domestic Study

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From 2015 to 2017, 25 scholars participated in the **Center for Engaged Learning research seminar** on Integrating Global Learning with the University Experience: Higher-Impact Study Abroad and Off-Campus Domestic Study. The seminar fostered international, multi-institutional research that investigated high-quality off-campus study as integrated, high-impact learning practice.

Although a solid body of research has investigated the interactions of the pre-, during-, and post- attributes of the campus experience with off-campus study (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige, 2009; Vande Berg, Paige & Lou, 2012; Engberg, 2013), questions remain about how off-campus study integrates with college education as a whole. The research stream has moved from single pre-post studies to notions that competency develops iteratively over many experiences (Hayward & Charrette, 2012; Hoff & Paige, 2008; Deardorff, 2014). Evaluating off-campus study requires complex methods to complement pre- and post-experience inventories. Scholarship that conceptualizes international and off-campus domestic study as global learning practices integrated into the rest of a university education can lead to higher-impact international and off-campus domestic study. Therefore, the seminar's multi-institutional research groups analyzed aspects of integrating global learning to enhance student learning and development.

This statement summarizes and synthesizes the seminar's research on:

- 1) The effect of pre-departure cultural preparations on students' intercultural competency growth,
- 2) The development of educators as leaders of off-campus study,
- 3) Individual learner factors that influence off-campus study decisions, and
- 4) Curricular, programmatic, and institutional factors that cause students to select international and domestic off-campus study as well as other global learning experiences.



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# TERMS

## Global Learning

*Global learning* has been defined in varied ways, ranging from prior exposure to multiple cultures, student experiences off campus, all the way to internationalization efforts on campus. While institutions define global learning differently, there is an emerging consensus that there are attitudes, skills, knowledge, and behaviors necessary for global learning (Deardorff, 2009; Griffith, Wolfeld, Armon, Rios, & Liu, 2016). Our research groups define global learning as a lifelong developmental process in which the learner engages with difference and similarity and develops capabilities to interact equitably in a complex world.

## Intercultural Development

*Intercultural development* also has multiple definitions and includes terms such as intercultural competency/humility/awareness/literacy/proficiency, transcultural competency, intracultural competency, etc. The seminal work on the cognitive, affective, and behavioral traits connected to intercultural competency is the ability to communicate effectively and appropriately across difference (Deardorff, 2009). Developmental researchers such as Bennett (2012) and Hammer (2012, 2015), as well as others, stress the developmental process that learners need to be globally competent. Intercultural development is a fundamental component of global learning, but the terms are not synonymous. We also acknowledge that there are other significant aspects of global learning that were not the focus of this seminar, including disciplinary knowledge and the nature of culture.

## Study Away

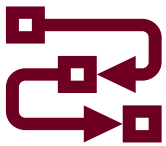
*Study away* is an encompassing term referring to university-sponsored learning experiences that occur off-campus, whether internationally or domestically. When research teams only studied particular contexts we use study abroad to refer to international contexts.





# WORKING PRINCIPLES

These working principles are based on findings from the five multi-institutional teams' research in dialogue with the existing scholarship in the field. These working principles represent the evidence-based knowledge in which participants have high confidence.



**Global learning is a lifelong developmental process that transcends location and bounded experiences.**

While the seminar specifically examined study abroad and off-campus domestic study, across teams, subjects reported meaningful global learning experiences in a variety of contexts on- and off-campus, pre-, during-, and post-college. Examples include the obvious pre-departure orientations and interventions, clubs, and coursework, as well as intercultural relationships and encounters, previous travel, campus and community events, community-based learning, etc. Getting off campus to encounter difference is a high-impact practice in various domains such as service-learning, internships, and other community-based experiences (Parker, Crabtree, bin Baba, Carlo & Azman, 2012; Mak, Watson, & Hadden, 2011; Furco, 1996; Katula & Threnhauser, 1999). Global learning is a lifelong, developmental process (Bennett, 1993; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009; Hovland, 2014) and not bounded by physical locale or discrete experience.



**A consistent, campus-wide definition of global learning facilitates cohesive institutional practice.**

While many researchers have posed definitions of global learning (AAC&U; Deardorff, 2009; Hovland, 2005), operational definitions vary widely. One seminar group consulted multiple constituents at universities and found that, even within a single university, definitions varied considerably. This was true even when the institution's mission statement explicitly included global citizenry or global learning. If universities lack cohesive definitions and articulated (and assessed) practices related to those definitions within the various programs, departments, branches, schools, etc., then global learning outcomes aren't consistent or cohesive. As such, universities need to use a consistent theory and practice of global learning, in and out of the classroom, to provide multiple opportunities for students to practice and develop global learning. Comprehensive initiatives that explicitly articulate a cohesive, institutional definition of global learning allow campus units to interpret and apply global learning in nuanced and discipline-appropriate ways.





## **The process of global learning requires intentional, explicit, integrative, and increasingly complex practice.**

Students improve their global learning knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors through quality practice. This intentional, guided practice requires interventions designed to integrate off-campus experiences with the rest of students' educations (Vande Berg, 2009; Brewer & Cunningham, 2009; Engle & Engle, 2012; Pedersen, 2009; Vande Berg, Quinn, & Menyhart, 2012; Anderson, Lorenz & White, 2016; Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, & Klute, 2012). Research teams found that a global educator's expertise, level of intercultural development, and targeted metacognitive interventions (e.g. guided reflections, in-class intercultural competency activities, etc.) can develop student self-awareness and foster change. For instance, Paige, Fry, Stallman, Josic, & Jon (2009) show that intentional, guided, quality participation and engagement with difference reduces prejudiced and ethnocentric beliefs and enhances intercultural understanding.



## **Quality, intentionally constructed global learning can lead to change regardless of setting.**

Learners in the research studies reported value in on-campus experiences, such as pre-departure orientations, co- and extra-curricular activities, coursework, sequencing of coursework, etc. Intentionally designed domestic study away and community-based education can foster intercultural growth through the same pathways that study abroad can (Sobania, 2015; Sobania & Braskamp, 2009). Educators can challenge student assumptions on- and off-campus, helping them to merge theory and practice in an applied setting, obliging students to engage with diversity and difference, integrating curriculum, and raising issues that are more difficult to see on campus (Weinberg, 2015). As Sobania (2015) argues, global learning, if done well, is simply good learning since the focus is on the learning process, not the off-campus location.







**Effective educators should take into account how learners' prior global experiences impact learning in subsequent opportunities.**

Seminar research indicates that different types of learners will have varied take-aways from the same global experience. Prior travel, language study, pre-departure classes, courses that explicitly address global learning, and involvement with multiple cultures, among other activities, have been shown to affect both students' perceptions of readiness for global learning and their actual experience during study away. Internal factors such as personality traits, desire for personal growth, interests, international heritage, family values, and so forth also matter. Educators must acknowledge the role of student identity and incorporate it into their pedagogy in order to make study away more inclusive and effective for all learners. Two research groups found that explicit pre-departure cultural preparation that is responsive to student attitudes and prior experiences affects students' perceptions of self-efficacy as well as their intercultural development and metacognitive skills in the context of study away.



**Educators are, themselves, global learners and also benefit from intentional facilitation and support at all phases of their teaching and learning.**

Educators go through similar processes and challenges to students with regard to global learning and require explicit, intentional, well-designed support. Seminar findings suggest institutions need to provide much more developmental support than they do presently. Studies of educators' roles in international and domestic off-campus study suggest that institutions must focus on educators' intercultural development in order to foster students' intercultural development (Rasch, 2001; Goode, 2008; Redden, 2010; Davis, 2014).

Yet pre-departure support for educators, if there is any, tends to focus on logistics. Substantively, support regarding re-entry for educators (and students) is glaringly missing and necessary. Transformational theory (Mezirow, 1997; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Mezirow & Taylor, 2009) stresses the importance of processing time after a disorienting dilemma that has the potential to lead to fundamental shifts in thinking. Without that support, educators and students alike can regress towards a more monocultural viewpoint (Rowan-Kenyon & Niehaus, 2011). One seminar research team found that educators who speak the language of the program destination and/or lead programs longer than thirty days actually report higher instances of negative feelings upon return, suggesting post-entry professional development programs are needed even for experienced global education leaders.

Therefore, intentional, well-designed development for educators should include pre and post international and domestic off-campus study communities of practice, reflective workshops, intercultural competency activities, etc., as well as multiple entry points and opportunities to develop global learning across their professional and personal lives.







## Ultimately, multiple, scaled, and varied integrative global learning benefits learners and institutions.

Seminar research teams document the importance of scaffolding via mentoring, prompted or guided reflections, formal intercultural competency assessments, others' observations of intercultural interactions, portfolio work, and/or structured activities that offer an avenue for integrating learning from prior and current experiences. Post re-entry reflection is also needed to help learners document and internalize their global learning growth. When institutions lack an articulated definition, an intercultural foundation, or intentional pathways for global learning, development is haphazard at best, or can cause regression, re-entrenched stereotypes, and biases (Allen, Dristas, & Mills, 2006; Bennett, 2012; Pedersen, 2009; Vande Berg et al., 2009). The various authors in Integrating Study Abroad into the Curriculum (Brewer & Cunningham 2009) and Braskamp and Engberg (2011) provide excellent examples for programmatic and institutional effectiveness at integrating global learning throughout the collegiate experience.





# ENABLING PRACTICES

Seminar research confirms that good teaching practices engender learning in off-campus contexts. For example, guided reflections, cultural preparation, pre-testing and debriefing of student intercultural competency prior to leaving campus, and course sequencing before and after off-campus experiences can make a difference.

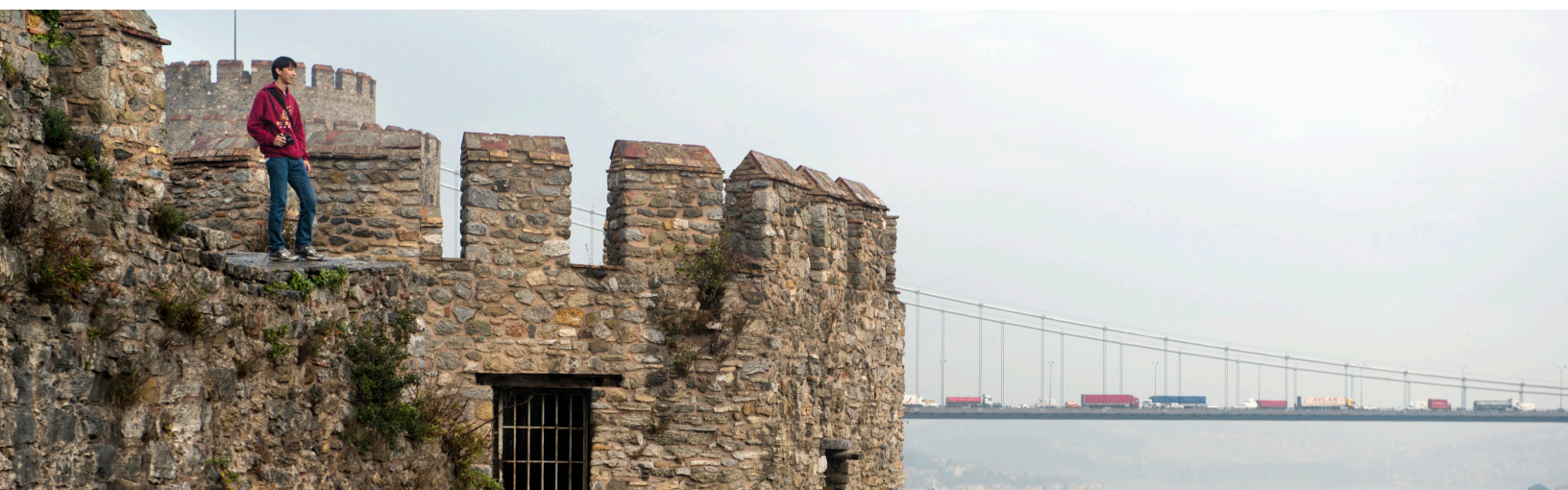
Global educators can find multiple resources offering ideas and exercises that explicitly and intentionally develop students' global learning competencies. For instance, Kate Berardo and Darla Deardorff's (2012) handbook, *Building Cultural Competence*, is an essential guide, as are Michael Paige's (2012) *Maximizing Study Abroad* and Patricia Cassiday and Donna Stringer's (2015) *52 Activities for Successful International Relocation*. These foundational handbooks help develop the skills necessary for learning-rich pre-, during-, and post-study away experiences. Seminar findings and handbooks of global learning alike suggest that skills and habits of mind should be intentionally practiced and developed, with multiple opportunities to document and reflect on changes in perspective.

## Types of activities for all global learners:

- Guided reflections encouraging the development of one's own thinking over time and across contexts
- Activities focusing on cultural lenses, biases, and social constructs in a general sense
- Readings and study on power, privilege, and oppression
- Exercises in perspective-taking, empathy, and managing ambiguity
- Interactions with members of the target community focusing on cultural values and beliefs, customs, and social constructs
- Exercises on engaging with difference and managing the emotions that may arise
- Formative intercultural assessments and debriefs

## Additional activities for global educators:

- Communities of practice (Wenger, 1999) focusing on teaching and learning off-campus
- Readings and study on recognizing and managing cultural dissonance in students



# RECOGNIZING AND STUDYING GLOBAL LEARNING VIA OFF-CAMPUS STUDY

When global learning has been clearly defined and quality practices are put into place, institutions are ready to begin a system of assessment and refinement of global learning practices that take into account the cumulative nature of global learning experiences for the learners and for the institution. Research from the seminar speaks to the power of mixed-methods analysis in tying measurable behaviors to student learning outcomes.

Seminar projects combined open- and close-ended questionnaires and analysis of student work (such as reflective journals) and then triangulated the data with standardized assessments and institutional records as ways of evaluating student experiences and how their intercultural competency develops as a result. Qualitative techniques like focus groups and interviews add important richness to the “why” dimension of research questions.

Deardorff (2006, 2009, 2014, 2015) has been a vocal champion for global learning assessment for decades. Bennett (2009), Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill (2009), Merrill, Braskamp, and Braskamp (2012), and Hammer (2015) also highlight the need for, and provide examples of, quality assessments of students’ global learning. Until recently the focus within global learning assessment has been on validated, standardized measurements such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI), and the like. The AAC&U also created VALUE rubrics, including one on global learning (<https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>) in an effort to help guide assessment. Deardorff (2015) argues that direct assessments (student writings, reflections, works, as well as field notes of observed behaviors, host-family evaluations of intercultural communication, etc.) and indirect assessments (students’ perceptions of their intercultural competency via the IDI, GPI, etc.) of student learning are both needed to have a full picture of the learning outcomes. Studies from the seminar and field find that global learning is cumulative, which suggests longitudinal studies of intercultural development are appropriate. Regardless of the type, variety and timing, one fundamental principle remains: integrating assessment that measures student learning outcomes is required.





# WORKING PRINCIPLES IN DEVELOPMENT

These principles have some evidence and suggest fruitful paths for future inquiry.

## The nature of inclusion and exclusion and its effect on global learning

What factors contribute to people seeing themselves as global learners?

What factors privilege participation in global learning?

What are the consequences of inclusivity and exclusivity in decision making?

## Role of disciplinary learning within global learning

What is the impact within global learning of contextual, discipline-specific knowledge?

## Role of social justice within global learning initiatives

To what extent can global learning initiatives contribute to social justice and equity?

To what extent can global learning initiatives reify inequitable relations?

## Connection between global learning research and other HIP research

How can research on other HIP inform global learning research?

How does involvement with local communities impact global learning in international study away and domestic study away?

## Role of language with regards to global learning

How does language proficiency intersect with global learning choices and/or experiences?

## Intersectionality of learners and educators and how it relates to global learning

How do factors such as race, gender, cultural background, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc. impact global learning access, choices, and/or experiences?



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## Citation Guidelines

Please cite this version of the Elon Statement as follows:

### APA Citation

Elon Statement on Integrating Global Learning with the University Experience: Higher-Impact Study Abroad and Off-Campus Domestic Study. (2017). Retrieved from <http://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/doing-engaged-learning/elon-statement-on-integrating-global-learning/>

### MLA Citation

Elon Statement on Integrating Global Learning with the University Experience: Higher-Impact Study Abroad and Off-Campus Domestic Study. 2017. Web. Date of Access. <http://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/doing-engaged-learning/elon-statement-on-integrating-global-learning/>.

### Chicago Citation

Elon University Center for Engaged Learning. 2017. "Elon Statement on Integrating Global Learning with the University Experience: Higher-Impact Study Abroad and Off-Campus Domestic Study." <http://www.centerforengagedlearning.org/doing-engaged-learning/elon-statement-on-integrating-global-learning/>.

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