



The Future of International Exchanges in a Post-Pandemic World

Chapter 4

The Transformational Potential of Education “Abroad”

International, Intercultural, Flexible, Bending Towards Justice

THE FUTURE OF INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

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The Transformational Potential of Education “Abroad”

International, Intercultural, Flexible, Bending Towards Justice

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Introduction

It is rare to hear an international educator question the value proposition of students participating in an educational experience abroad. Whether labeled study abroad, education abroad, global learning, or something else, professionals engaged in this work recognize that student mobility and international and intercultural engagement lead to positive transformation among students for the benefit of themselves and society. The research bears this out, by demonstrating how participation in education abroad—defined as educational activities that occur outside of one’s home country or the country in which one is enrolled as a student, and which does not, in itself, result in a degree—can help students persist towards graduation (Xu et al. 2013), develop the ability to engage with difference and work on diverse teams effectively (Farrugia and Sanger 2017), build language skills (Kinging 2011; Isabelli-García et al. 2018), become more resilient (Geeraert and Demoulin 2013), more globally minded and globally competent (Schenker 2019), more environmentally conscious, and achieve greater employment outcomes after graduation (IES Abroad, n.d.). Indeed, these results are why colleges, universities, foundations, and governments have invested in such programming over the years.

As the commitment to growing international student mobility to foment global competence and a globally competitive young workforce has evolved, a professionalized field has emerged to support good practice and push for further improvement. Originally published in 2002 and now in its sixth edition, the *Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* specify “minimum requirements, quality indicators, and a framework for continuous improvement for education abroad” (The Forum on Education Abroad 2020c, 1). Professional associations, including the Forum on Education Abroad—the organization recognized by the US government as the standards development organization (SDO) for the field—offer professional development opportunities from which to grow and develop professional practice.

In the 2018–19 US academic year, nearly 350,000 US college and university students studied abroad, marking the greatest number of students ever to study abroad in the nation’s history, following a consistent growth in participation over at least the last 25 years (Institute of International Education (IIE) 2020c). Of the top 10 destinations for US undergraduate study abroad, six of them are located in Europe, accounting for nearly half of all US study abroad. Germany ranks fifth, and saw a small downturn in participation rates, while Italy, Spain, and France increased their share of students hosted on mobility programs (IIE 2020b).

Online global learning experiences, particularly virtual exchange and Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) programming, have seen an even sharper rise over the same time period. With roots in the

early years of widely available internet (circa 1995, O’Dowd 2017), a 2020 survey from the Stevens Initiative found that at least 220,000 individuals participated in virtual exchange experiences over the course of the calendar year, with the vast majority of these being students at the undergraduate level (Stevens Initiative 2020). The most common locations for participants in these programs were outside of Europe. The responses mostly came from US institutions and reported that the US, Mexico, Brazil, Jordan, Morocco, India, China, Japan, Turkey, and Spain—the only EU nation—as the locations most frequently represented in their virtual program portfolios.

Similar to mobility programs where students travel abroad to grow and learn, online global learning experiences—where students collaborate via the internet with fellow students, educators, and community members who live in other countries—help students develop language skills (Belz 2009), work on cross-cultural teams (Duus and Cooray 2014; Lindner 2016; Taras et al. 2013), and grow as global citizens (O’Dowd 2018).

This Moment in History

In March 2020, the line between education abroad and online global learning experiences was promptly blurred. When COVID-19 was declared a global pandemic, nearly 100% of US education abroad programs around the world were cancelled and thousands of students returned home in mere days. International educators’ first step, after ensuring students were home or sheltering-in-place safely, was to devise a plan for academic continuity for students whose education abroad programs were interrupted. They did this mostly by offering students online learning options to complete the coursework they began abroad (The Forum on Education Abroad 2020a). Simple as it may seem in hindsight, this represents a herculean effort and a watershed moment in the history of our field. Not only did this transition result in the development of tried and tested contingency plans that can be used to address future challenges for individual students, program locations, or global crises, it also paved the way for the further uniting of online and on-the-ground mobility enterprises for global universities.

Nearly a year after the pandemic began, most education abroad programming has not yet resumed. To fill the hole left by program suspensions until vaccinations, border policies, and university risk assessments make education abroad feasible and widely available again, many universities have initiated or increased their online global learning portfolios (The Forum on Education Abroad 2020a) to include (1) access to online coursework offered by education abroad partner institutions or faculty based at foreign study abroad centers, (2) COIL or virtual exchange formats that pair groups or classrooms in different locations to study or collaborate on projects together, (3) technology solutions that augment travel experiences through virtual tours, online lectures, connection to peers overseas, and remote internships.

Using the internet to augment international education experiences isn’t entirely new to education abroad professionals, but recent innovations represent a change of philosophy and scale. As early as 2013, many in the field described using online coursework to deliver pre-departure content (The Forum on Education Abroad 2013; Wojenski 2014), for reflective activities and self-exploration while participating in programs (Hamilton et al. 2019; Savicki and Price 2017; Gibson and Capdeville 2019) and to communicate with and find support from home (Mikal 2011; Hofer et al. 2016). Going back as far as 2012, one of this paper’s authors, for example, created a virtual program co-taught by faculty at Ohio State University and ESALQ in Brazil, which included having business and agricultural students from universities in both countries studying and working together in project teams. After COVID-19, it appears education abroad professionals and virtual exchange specialists alike are coming around to the idea that online global learning experiences are here

to stay; conventional study abroad will definitely be back (The Forum on Education Abroad 2020a; Goodman 2020) and the next frontier is to make them work together to maximize the potential to best achieve student learning objectives.

Reflecting on Reflection

Education abroad and virtual exchange share more than just student learning outcomes and opportunities for citizen diplomacy. They also benefit from the power of reflection (*Standards*, 6.3.1, 6.3.1.1). Research reminds us repeatedly that through reflection, students make meaning and grow from their experiences (Williams 2017). Through reflection, the transformation and learning continue long after a program has ended (Reisen et al. 2008). Through reflection, even very brief experiences can deliver meaningful results (Matheus and Gaugler 2020).

So, too, can our reflection as a field lead us to greater success in the future. If we accept that international and intercultural experiences are essential to a well-rounded 21st century education, that they serve to promote democracy and civic engagement and help students see the interdependence among those of us who occupy this planet, as well as career- and life-oriented skills like critical thinking, communication, working on diverse teams, and resilience, then we must use this time to regroup, reflect, improve, and innovate. But only if we hear the concerns of our colleagues who call out financial concerns, lack of faculty engagement, competition for student interest with on-campus activities, and fear of the unknown as the major challenges they face when trying to engage students in international experiences (The Forum on Education Abroad 2020a). If we know that Generation Z is altruistic, entrepreneurial, tech-savvy (Doughty, Fanini, and Lai 2020), anxious (American Psychological Association 2018), and—across the US and in Europe—more diverse than ever (Parker and Igielnik 2020) and more demanding of institutions that promote diversity, inclusion, belonging, and tolerance (Hughes 2020), then perhaps the new vision for the future we've begun to develop in 2020 can lead us to unique solutions.

The Future of *Education*: International and Intercultural Experiences Online and On the Ground

What is the future of international education and, therefore, education in general, then? Of course, it is academically rigorous, in line with agreed-upon standards of good practice developed by competent professionals (*Standards*: The Forum on Education Abroad 2020c; *Guide*: The Forum on Education Abroad 2020b), and places student learning and development as its top priority (*Standards*, 4.2.1). Expectations of educational quality and student demand in the marketplace also tell us that international educational opportunities need

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to be more environmentally sustainable, more accessible, and equity-minded, with a commitment to social and racial justice at their core. Touristic or superficial notions of place and culture must be replaced by deeper, more authentic, personal experiences. We can achieve (some of) this by mobility experiences or online global learning experiences, but the gold standard for the future

will be a combination of both. In what follows, we'll offer a vision of how the future of education abroad can evolve to serve these goals, and some examples of initiatives that are already working in that direction.

Deeper Connections and Greater Understanding

Whether the goal is to get students to engage with a particular language, culture, community, or theme, the method shares some common threads. Real transformation requires real immersion and deeper, stronger relationship-building. Students tend to miss out on important subtleties and complex intersections if they find themselves, for example, jet-setting to a different European capital every weekend with their fellow study abroad students instead of staying put and learning authentic lessons with the people and institutions endemic to a place.

The evolution of online components to global learning experiences provides us with a fertile ground in which students can plant roots that will help them dig deeper and reach greater heights of intercultural understanding, resilience, and relationship-building during the on-site component of an education abroad experience or subsequent travel (*Standards*, 6.1.9). Recent research demonstrates that college-age students do a lot of socializing via social media (Décieux, Heinen, and Willems 2019) and may even use social media as a tool for vetting or testing out friendships before being willing to engage in more extensive and offline relationships (Standlee 2019). Using virtual activities to connect students with their peers and to begin building relationships before they travel can help them feel more connected to a place, encouraging richer engagement, stronger friendships or working relationships, and perhaps even a connection that favors staying in one place for a longer period of time instead of hopping from one tourist attraction to another.

The incorporation of virtual experiences as a complement to in-person learning allows us to moderate the impact of a trend towards shorter and shorter periods abroad, and extend the timeline of a program—and with it the ability to explore and understand the multifaceted culture(s) of a program location—without adding significantly to the cost of participation or the amount of time students have to spend away from home, family responsibilities, work, sequential coursework, and campus-based activities.

Building deeper connections is inherently important, of course, because healthy human relationships lead to happier, healthier people. Building these connections also serves as a foundation for the other goals that follow. A more nuanced understanding and mutual respect for places and people unlike oneself, which is built by sharing knowledge and experiences, is essential to developing a sense of interdependence and intertwined fates which render environmental and social justice as personally held commitments rather than distant ideals.

Seeing the World While Caring for the Planet

Preserving, protecting, and restoring the natural environment on Earth is of the utmost importance for the longevity of many species and for the health and quality of life of many communities around the world today. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #13 identifies this as a shared priority on the international stage by stating that we must “take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” (UNSDGs; United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, n.d.). To work together as a global society to achieve this goal, we must all be (re)educated on what damage has been done and how it can be halted or reversed. New innovations are needed to continue confronting this global challenge. The future of education can play a critical role in this by helping students understand local, national, and regional approaches to conservation and sustainability and giving them the tools and connections to work across geopolitical boundaries to develop new solutions. Education abroad and online global learning, in particular, can further this effort by putting students in touch with diverse natural environments and with communities who take a

different approach to combatting climate change than what they observe at home or are differentially affected by climate change, and to remain focused on this issue long after returning to their home institutions and communities.

To take on this challenge, organizations operating educational programs must first consider their own environmental impacts when making decisions about programming (*Standards*, 4.3.7). Calculating and offsetting the carbon footprint caused by one's air travel has gained some recent popularity among students and institutions involved in international programming. It is a good place to start (Dvorak et al. 2011), but is insufficient as a single action. More comprehensive policies and operating procedures must be developed, including the voice of host communities, faculty, and on-site administrators.

Educating students about the consequences of their own choices, both at home and abroad, is certainly a logical next step. The future of international programming must have at its core a mission to help students go beyond taking responsibility for the carbon emitted into the atmosphere by travel to understand why environmental stewardship is important, how individuals, institutions, governments, and companies can combat climate destruction, and what existing strategies and techniques exist in the world to promote conservation and mitigate climate impacts (*Standards*, 6.2.5, 6.2.5.1). There is some evidence that participating in education

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abroad can help students develop a better understanding of human-nature relationships (Asfeldt and Takano 2020) and a sense of responsibility to engage in conservation activities and advocate for conservation (McLaughlin et al. 2018). Indeed, it seems that environmentally-focused programming, for reasons not yet well understood, actually can have a greater impact on study abroad participants than it does on local students engaging in the same activities (Jolley et al. 2018). In light of this, the trade-off for the carbon output incurred by student travel may be worthwhile if it

leads students to make more responsible, sustainable choices while they are studying abroad and throughout the remainder of their lifetime.

In one example, Dickinson College is embarking on an institution-wide effort to promote sustainability which combines their long history of education abroad programming with newer online initiatives. In early 2021, while education abroad programming is still not feasible for their students, Dickinson (n.d. -a) will instead offer the Globally Integrated Semester (GIS), in which “students will take a globally integrated course [either on-campus or with a faculty member overseas, or both] connected to a Dickinson program abroad during their spring semester, participate in globally themed workshops throughout the semester and, COVID-19 conditions permitting, travel to the Dickinson program site linked to their globally integrated course for 3 weeks after the end of the spring semester.” The workshop series is led by faculty and staff from across the school's centers (mentioned below) and will explore themes of sustainability and interdependence from local and global perspectives. Some courses offered by the college's study abroad faculty at their sites overseas will also integrate themes of sustainability and conservation, such as, for example, the Arctic Studies course to be offered in Iceland.

The college is cultivating the integration of these values throughout the curriculum by investing heavily in faculty development by way of the Valleys & Ridges Program, run by the Center for Sustainability Education (Dickinson College, n.d. -b), which helps faculty examine sustainability concepts from different disciplinary and transnational perspectives and develop ways to incorporate these concepts into the curriculum they teach. Lindsey Lyons, assistant director, Center for Sustainability Education at Dickinson, reflects on the success of the program so far: “The innovations that have developed connecting sustainability and global study and engagement as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic have been extremely positive. Through our faculty

development, we hope to create a learning environment where students possess the knowledge, skills, and abilities to connect sustainability learning to their global experiences abroad and then apply these lenses of interdependence in their civic engagement efforts when on our campus” (personal communication, January 5, 2021).

Onsite faculty from Dickinson’s global education centers have participated in these faculty development opportunities for sustainability and diversity, equity, and inclusion, allowing them to rethink and revise course curricula and program level operations, particularly during this time of limited global exchange. Julia Carnine, resident director of the College’s Dickinson in France program, describes her own experience in the Valley and Ridge program as promoting a “heightened awareness that some of our most basic program components (both curricular and co-curricular) needed to be explicitly connected for students to create a more seamless learning journey about sustainability in cross-cultural contexts during their Dickinson years.” With this in mind, her discussion of local public transportation during program orientation, for example, has been reframed in terms of sustainable mobility and “a deeper connection to how this cultural practice represents a principled choice in our context.” Similarly, she has now realized that meal times shared with French hosts are “a perfect way to point out local sustainable foodways, how in Toulouse we often eat in season, shop for fresh produce ... and create community ... around meal times.” This inspired Carnine and colleagues to develop a language and culture immersion summer program entitled French Language and Foodways that used “place-based learning to focus on sustainable agriculture, urban planning, alternative waste systems to highlight local solutions and challenges. Here sustainability was at the core of our learning goals, and students were asked to find important connections through both global (Toulouse) and then local (Carlisle) applications” (personal communication, January 5, 2021).

When asked to reflect on the impact of these efforts on Dickinson’s larger goals for student learning and development, Samantha Brandauer, Associate Provost and Executive Director of the Center for Global Study and Engagement, reflects, “Now we have faculty and staff scattered across our programs all over the world who have shared language and goals around sustainability. This has begun to reshape the student experience in and outside of the classroom through new course design, updated onsite orientations and changing practice. By bringing faculty and staff from around the world into Valley and Ridge, we have also infused a more global and intercultural perspective on sustainability. Perhaps what has been most positive has been new connections between our [global studies] faculty and staff around the world and the team within [sustainability education]. These connections have created opportunities and new projects and programs, particularly during COVID-19 as we have been reimagining much of our work” (personal communication, January 10, 2021).

Commitment to Social & Racial Justice

2020 has also seen the emergence of a new wave in the movement for civil rights, social justice, and the undoing of systemic racism in the United States and around the world. The murdering of Black citizens by police in the streets and in their own homes coincided with stay-at-home orders around the world and the realization that Black and Brown citizens in the US (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2020) were disproportionately falling victim to the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. This led to massive protest movements in US cities large and small and many other world cities, including Berlin, Paris, Dublin, Copenhagen, Milan, and Bristol, UK (King 2020). More recently, news of viable vaccines has been accompanied by reports that poorer nations will be out-bid by richer ones, delaying access to the vaccine for their populations (Cheng and Ghosal 2020). Using the UN SDGs as our guide, we see that the future of education works towards identifying these injustices by name, teaching students history from the perspective of the oppressed

as well as the oppressor, and actively working to undo the systems that perpetuate inequity and injustice (UN SDGs 5, 10, 16).

In education abroad, as in US higher education more broadly, institutions have for some time professed a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. To date, this has largely taken the form of considerations related to access, and efforts to recruit from historically underrepresented and underserved groups to participate in study abroad (*Standards*, 4.5.5, 6.1.3), including BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) (Sweeney 2018), men (Selingo 2019), first-generation college students (Tolan and McCullers 2018) and students with disabilities (Mobility International USA, n.d.). But despite these efforts, these groups remain underrepresented among US study abroad students. Black students account for 14% of all college and university students (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, n.d.), but only 6.4% of study abroad participants (IIE 2020a). Hispanic/Latinx students account for 18% of university students, but only 10.9% percent of study abroad participants. First-generation college students are far less likely than their non-first-gen counterparts to participate in study abroad (National Survey of Student Engagement 2020).

The collective reckoning with racial and social injustices that has erupted over the course of the last year puts into sharper focus the areas beyond access where education abroad can and must also do more. Namely:

- 1) Historically underserved and underrepresented students should be able to feel safe, respected, and included in international experiences (*Standards*, 6.1.9.2, 6.1.11). Students from marginalized groups have repeatedly reported feeling unprepared for the prejudices and injustices they would encounter abroad and unsupported when they experienced traumas as a result (see Additional Readings for more on this). Students of color, for example, face specific challenges overseas, but they also bring specific strengths that can help them to adapt and connect to their education abroad experience in ways white students may not (Hartman et al. 2020).
- 2) Staff working in international programming should be as diverse as the students they serve. International educators are still mostly white, heterosexual women (Lopez-McGee 2020). Representation matters, and staff who share certain lived experiences with their students are sometimes better equipped to support them through it. Those staff who do not belong to historically underserved and underrepresented groups require additional skills development training to properly navigate group dynamics and support diverse students (*Standards*, 4.5.5, 5.2.2, 5.2.2.2, 5.2.2.3), as their reaction to inter-group tensions and experiences in the community can make the difference between students feeling supported and empowered or isolated and discriminated against (Johnstone, Smith, and Malmgren 2020).
- 3) Recruitment materials, curricula, and co- and extra-curricular activities must introduce students to an array of diverse experiences in the location of the program partner—both in the present-day and throughout history (*Standards*, 4.3.6, 6.1.4). Colonial legacies and systems of oppression in the past and present must be introduced to students and critically examined. Only through conscious, critical analysis can international educators be sure that education abroad and online global learning programs are not reinforcing biased or harmful stereotyping of locations, people, and sources of knowledge (Ficarra 2017).

The Nobel Week Dialogue Scholarship Program, developed and co-sponsored by EF College Study and The Forum on Education Abroad, in partnership with the Nobel Prize Museum, is a new hybrid program launching in 2021 that asks prospective students from diverse backgrounds around the world: “*What is the next big effort that is crucial to the development of our world and future and how does this effort advance equity and justice?*” (The Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.). Over the course of seven weeks students will complete

a series of online modules (both synchronous and asynchronous), plus a one-week in-person module to participate in the Nobel Dialogue Week in Sweden. Together with course faculty, fellow students, experts, and members of the local community whom they will meet while in Sweden, the selected students will learn about topics of structural oppression, injustice, marginalization and violence while exploring their own personal perspective and relationship to each of these, while also co-creating goals, knowledge, and solutions to global challenges. The program has been carefully designed to align with the Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad and serve as an example of the Standards in action. By combining significant online coursework with an in-person experience, and creating a diverse cohort of students who will represent multiple nations, the program is also an incubator for a future education abroad program model that is hybrid in format and multinational.

Proving Effectiveness

None of these initiatives will lead to meaningful, lasting change unless the effectiveness of in-person, online, and hybrid experiences to achieve the goals we set out for them can be demonstrated to key stakeholders (*Standards*, 4.1.4, 4.1.5). Assessment tools, research, and training for education abroad abound,¹ and yet the percentage of institutions and organizations taking a principled approach to assessment and evaluation for their education abroad programs remains low. The following simple steps can help bridge the gap between ideal and practice in program assessment.

- 1) Start small to facilitate follow-through. If assessing outcomes feels overwhelming, identify one or two goals that are top priority and find a way to measure those effectively first. Once that has been achieved, more goals and measures can be added.
- 2) Look at metrics at the student, program, and institution level. Measures of effectiveness and impact at the individual level can include the degree to which students are achieving stated learning goals for the curriculum or co-curriculum or demonstrating pre-identified competencies (*Standards*, 4.1.5). Program or institution-level metrics might include participation rates, student persistence to graduation, or rate of employment after graduation (*Standards*, 4.1.5).
- 3) Disaggregate data by student demographics (*Standards*, 4.4.7). The goal is to make programs equitable, not just diverse. Compare outcomes measurements across student demographics, i.e., compare outcomes for any historically underrepresented or underserved groups with outcomes for the dominant group. If differences emerge, ask why. Explore narrative or qualitative data available to you to gain more insight and understand why these differences may exist
- 4) Do something. Once assessment information is collected, analyzed, and interpreted, it must be used in two ways. First, to *seek continuous improvement* (*Standards*, 4.1.5). Where have your programs come up short? How can you adjust so that the outcomes are better next time? Second, *advocate* (*Standards*, 4.1.3). If outcomes are positive, share them! Tell senior administrators, funders and donors, partners, alumni, prospective students. If outcomes fall short of the goals or identify a weakness, can they be used to advocate for more support? Or motivate change where it has previously been resisted? Either way, the time spent gathering this information has not gone to waste.

¹ See Additional Resources list in the Appendix of this chapter.

Conclusions and Final Recommendations

Education abroad will be back. The online alternatives that have surged in 2020 do not mark the end of student mobility, to be sure. Still, the experiment in online learning brought on by COVID-19 has highlighted that education abroad is about more than just students' mobility between nations. In fact, it has reminded us what the underlying purpose of student mobility experiences has always been: to connect students across cultures so that they can develop intercultural competencies, learn to engage with people different from themselves, and immerse themselves in knowledge and ways of knowing different from those in which they were raised.

This year has also highlighted what student mobility and intercultural engagement can do for our society(ies) in the future. Building relationships between individuals and institutions across the globe better prepares us to tackle global problems, such as the impending climate crisis, the need for a reckoning with global racism and anti-Blackness, and combating rising nationalism(s). The combination of different modalities, technologies, and pedagogies can be harnessed to help students overcome anxiety and fear of the unknown and, thus, become more engaged in international and intercultural learning experiences so that they develop into citizens who can think both locally *and* globally about the challenges we are facing now and the challenges they will face in the future. The following recommendations can help institutions in Germany, the European Union, and around the world navigate their way towards a brighter, even more transformational future for education abroad and for a well-rounded, internationalized, and interculturally competent approach to education in general.

Recommendations

- Prioritize what matters to today's students and to the future of humankind and the planet when designing curricula and international programming, i.e., sustainability, equity, social and racial justice, employability.
- Disrupt traditional administrative and classroom structures at institutions of higher learning in service to evolving goals and challenges; work across academic disciplines and administrative units, including international/global programs, online learning, diversity and inclusion, sustainability, and senior administrators who prioritize internationalization of the campus and curriculum (*Standards*, 4.4.5).
 - Consider developing key performance indicators for individuals and units that value cross-unit collaboration.
 - Have directors of collaborating units report to a common supervisor to facilitate organic collaboration and identification of shared goals and strategies.
- Give students reasons to engage deeply with themes and communities they seek to learn about. Connect students to peers, educators, experts, and community leaders when they travel to other geographies for education abroad programming or via online formats.
- Assess program and student outcomes regularly and share results to articulate the value of experiences to students, families, institutions, employers, and governments.
- Invest in professionals. Transformational, high-quality programming, whether online or on the ground, requires professional skillsets of the administrators and educators involved in program creation and implementation. Furthermore, the playing field of higher education is constantly

shifting. Thus, these skillsets represent a significant and continuous investment of time, effort, and, often, money. Institutions that value and prioritize internationalization of their campus and curriculum must accompany those priorities with allocation of resources to fund training and adequately remunerate work efforts.

- Responsible administrative units must be given adequate professional staff and reasonable budget parameters within which to operate so that they can achieve goals without increasing the financial burden to students.
- Faculty and academic staff should be rewarded for their international program contributions commensurate with the recognition they receive for on-campus coursework, whether this be via assigned course loads and course releases, tenure and promotion evaluations, salary, etc.
- Seek and support external funding and opportunities for colleagues wherever possible, e.g., ACE's Rapid Response Virtual Exchange/COIL Transformation lab (American Council on Education, n.d.).

Recommendations for Institutions Seeking to Expand International Programs and Collaborations in Germany and Western Europe

Draw on strengths and unique facets of the German or European experience to offer students a learning opportunity they cannot get anywhere else:

- What can be drawn from European experiences of bridging political divides (e.g., reunification of Germany, the Irish Troubles) to help US students develop skills to talk to others with different viewpoints or life experiences?
- Consider approaching a topic or theme of inquiry from different disciplinary and geographic or national perspectives, either by traveling to multiple locations or connecting virtually with colleagues in multiple locations, or both. This must be done thoughtfully and not simply to check off one more country on a student's "bucket list." It could take the form of a trans-European perspective by collaborating with multiple partners within Europe or it could take a broader view and collaborate with institutions in other regions of the world. China is more popular than Germany among US graduate and business students, for example. How could a program be designed to connect foreign students with China *and* Germany?
- Germany is more than just its ethnically German, white majority. Germany is also Turkish-descended people, those born in Germany and those who migrated there. Germany is Syrian refugees and Roma communities. Germany is national minorities like Frisians and Sorbs and migrant communities from Southern Europe, former Soviet states, and the former Yugoslavia. It is international students from Africa and Asia. To truly know Germany, students need to be connected with people and traditions and present-day life for these groups, too (*Standards*, 4.4.6).

A Warning

Virtual experiences can be facilitated at a much lower financial cost than most programs involving student mobility and without time away from home, family, campus, or work. That has its advantages. But as we push ahead with the expansion of virtual and hybrid programming, we must be vigilant and guard against any ghettoization of education abroad. Virtual experiences cannot be the only options for students experiencing

real or perceived economic, cultural, and/or societal barriers or living with disabilities. If future assessments of program success and internalization efforts see all or most of their growth in participation among historically underserved and underrepresented students via online programming, the efforts can be considered a failure. We must continue the fight to make and keep mobility experiences accessible and affordable for all students who desire to participate, while also remembering that online global learning experiences can and should be a pathway towards international mobility by helping students build skills, overcome fears, and grow their interest in engaging with other cultures and realities.

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APPENDIX: Additional Resources

Evidence of Impact & Research

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Best Practices – Education Abroad

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- The Forum on Education Abroad. 2020. *An Education Abroad Professional's Guide to Online Global Learning Experiences*. <https://doi.org/10.36366/G.978-1-952376-06-1>.
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Sustainability

- Climate Action Network for International Educators [Website]. <https://www.can-ie.org/>.
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Racial & Social Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion

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Assessment

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