

**ENGAGING DISSONANCE:  
DEVELOPING MINDFUL GLOBAL  
CITIZENSHIP IN HIGHER  
EDUCATION**

# INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND LEARNING

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INNOVATIONS IN HIGHER EDUCATION TEACHING AND  
LEARNING VOLUME 9

# ENGAGING DISSONANCE: DEVELOPING MINDFUL GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Created in partnership with the  
International Higher Education Teaching and Learning Association



United Kingdom – North America – Japan  
India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited  
Howard House, Wagon Lane, Bingley BD16 1WA, UK

First edition 2017

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**British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78714-155-1 (Print)

ISSN: 2055-3641 (Series)

ISBN: 978-1-78714-154-4 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-78714-311-1 (Epub)



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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY ENGAGING DISSONANCE?

... the development of our students as individuals, as moral agents, as responsible members of their community, and even as global citizens, hinges on their ability to have **meaningful encounters** with issues of diversity rendered in terms of the global realities of our lives. (Charles, Longerbeam, & Miller, 2013)

Charles et al. (2013) refer to *meaningful encounters* as the core of productive encounters with human difference. As we understand it, this refers to the necessity of *interaction* across differences. Whether that interaction occurs between an individual and a text or cultural artifact, or between two individuals, meaningful – that is substantive, purposeful – encounters are necessary to the development of responsible members of our global community. In other words, *exposure* to difference cannot provide the basis for developing the skills and attitudes necessary for effective intercultural communications or interaction across difference. *Immersion* in and of itself does not ensure a functional basis for development of intercultural capacities.

Developing the skills and attitudes associated with mindful global citizenship demands meaningful and substantive, not trivial or symbolic, interaction and encounters. It also requires being able to engage dissonance. By dissonance, we refer to discomfort, anxieties, and ambiguities that may accompany intercultural communication and interaction. As we – and our students and colleagues – seek to develop openness, to internalize multiple perspectives, to actively listen – we will inevitably experience tensions and moments where we are uncomfortable. How we approach this reality – how well prepared we are to acknowledge and encounter it, how well we can understand and explore it, how equipped we are to allow for it – these will inarguably impact the outcomes. Pope and Mueller (2005) suggest that discussions around students’ differing values and beliefs can prompt educators to perceive this work as difficult, challenging, and uncomfortable. And indeed, it can be.

Meaningful encounters require not unilateral action but reciprocal and reflective interactions. In terms of supporting such encounters in our courses and program, we need a fundamental shift in how we “approach

intercultural teaching in higher education so as to reflect the reality that acts of knowing and communicating are as dynamic and complex (and imbued with questions of power and authority) as we increasingly understand the world to be” (Lee, Poch, Shaw, & Williams, 2012, p. 49). Supporting student learning and development begins with enhancing instructor knowledge and capacity. Practitioners need accessible and substantive practical models for effectively engaging dissonance so as to support meaningful encounters with difference in courses and programs designed to support intercultural development.

Given the current ethnic, racial, and religious conflicts in our own backyard as well as across the world, we recognize that there is even more urgency in learning how to effectively engage diversity in our classrooms and programs as well as to support students’ development as mindful global citizens. In light of these current urgencies, this volume aims to support higher education practitioners’ openness to and capacity to support “meaningful encounters” with diversity in their curriculum, programs, and interactions with students and colleagues. Our contributors present the tensions and complexities of intercultural work in higher education and challenge readers to think critically about the implications of individual practice as well as disciplinary and institutional structures and supports.

## **FLEXIBLE PEDAGOGICAL TOOLKITS AND LIFELONG LEARNING**

In this edited volume, all of the contributors are exploring and experimenting with how to engage dissonance in the effort to support meaningful encounters with difference. The authors present frameworks, tools, and curricular designs that they have explored and used to support students’ interactions with and critical reflections on difference and cultural identity. This work has taken place in a range of contexts, from cross-cultural online collaborations, to standard university classrooms, to service learning opportunities in local and global contexts. Each chapter offers a tool or design element or concept that readers might adapt in their own course or program, as well as providing critical reflection on and exploration of what did and didn’t work, ultimately, and of particular refinements the author will implement in the future. As a result, the chapters model the theory-practice continuum that must inform the developmental process of intercultural teaching and learning.



It is important to note that the authors come from a variety of disciplinary backgrounds and are in different stages of their career. For most of our authors, pedagogy and globalization/intercultural development were not their areas of formal expertise or training, but rather were objectives and processes they found becoming increasingly important in their work due to institutional priorities, student populations, and/or their own growing sense of urgency. Some authors began intentionally engaging this work in collaborations with others, through a professional association or a global institutional partnership program, while others happened upon circumstances (mandates or initiatives) that prompted their involvement.

Writing from their specific disciplinary and institutional context, contributors reflect on their experiences of doing intercultural work in classrooms, on campuses and in programs. This work requires continuing to develop one's own intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive capacities so as to support their students' development of global citizenship skills. We have intentionally sought chapters that provide explicit representations of the ongoing and reflective nature of this work – as it takes place in courses, within programs, among colleagues, and institutionally. Therefore, the authors in this volume present themselves as *learners*; they, too, are in developmental processes in regard to their practice and effectiveness as global citizens.

Our hope is that this volume will provide educators with conceptual and practical resources that focus on the critical role of cognitive complexity/dissonance in the education of global citizens and the enactment of intercultural pedagogy. This book is organized so as to support intercultural teacher-learners at different points in their developmental trajectory.

## **PART I: TOWARD A PEDAGOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

Educational efforts that emphasize dissonance and multiple ways of knowing can prepare students for global community engagement and support their development of complex awareness of self and others. To do this effectively and intentionally requires adopting a pedagogical framework that invites student voices, ideas, and perspectives into the learning environment. A pedagogical framework is the set of ideas, beliefs, and assumptions that orients us and that informs our planning, reflection, and revision. Whether or not it is intentional or even conscious, we are operating from a pedagogical framework, and this part aims to provoke reflection and exploration of the current frameworks that inform your work. We present

three chapters in which the authors provide accessible points of entry for fellow scholar-practitioners to think about a pedagogical framework that centers student voices, values diversity in the classroom, and aims to cultivate the knowledge, skills, and values of global citizenship.

In the first chapter, *Enhancing Global Community Engagement through Constructivist Approaches to Education*, A. Renee Staton and Steven Grande lay out a constructivist framework for developing a learning environment that supports students' capacity to acknowledge and engage ambiguity and to deepen their comprehension and critical thought while respecting the integrity of the communities with which we work. In the next chapter, *Creating the Conditions for Productive Dissonance: An Inclusive Pedagogical Framework*, Raichle Farrelly, Shawna Shapiro, and Zuzana Tomaš present a framework of inclusive pedagogy, foreground three critical aspects of instruction: scaffolding, interaction, and noticing.

*Facing Our Foreignness in the Mirror of Interculturalism: American Student Encounters with the Self in India and the Role of Emotional Entropy in Developing Global Agency*, by Christine Cress, Tricia Mulligan, and Thomas Van Cleave, closes Part I and transitions us into Part II. In this chapter, the authors reflect on particular teaching/programmatic experience in order to critique and refine their pedagogical framework and practices. In doing so, they explore the connections between the concept of emotional entropy and transformational learning. An evidence-based pedagogical model and strategies for preparation, praxis, and processing are offered in supporting students' and faculty's capacity to explore dissonance productively.

## **PART II: REFLECTIVE PRACTICE IN COURSES AND PROGRAMS**

Just as all higher education practitioners need to reflect on and intentionally adopt a pedagogical framework, we then need to use that to inform our course design and implementation, including the selection of content, the composition of activities and assignments, the tools we use to establish climate and to assess student learning and development. Part II presents chapters that represent and reflect on specific courses or programs in which the authors sought to support meaningful encounters with difference and to facilitate students' development of skills and capacities necessary for mindful global citizenship. These chapters provide a variety of contexts and disciplines within which course and programs are

implemented, whether it is online (synchronous or asynchronous), in person, on campus or off campus, and they provide moments to celebrate as well as points of challenge.

In the first two chapters in this part, the authors explore the integration of service learning as a basis for supporting students development of intercultural interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive skills. In *Developing Intercultural Competence through Service Learning*, Hope Garcia and Uyen Tran-Parsons explore the outcomes of a faculty-initiated and developed international service-learning course in Yunnan Province of China. The course drew students from a broad range of disciplines, including biology, BN education, and art, and sought to provide experience and knowledge about interdisciplinary and multiple stakeholder approaches to complex social problems. To support students' capacity to understand, articulate, and reflect on their experience in this global, service learning course, the authors suggest utilizing a student development framework of "challenge and support."

In *Bridging the Gaps of International Business Practice in Dissimilar Cultural Settings to Increase Social Capital for the Stakeholders: The Case of a Mombasa Community Engagement Project*, Gemma Coughlan and Paul Wabike chapter presents the challenges for universities as they engage in collaborative service learning and research projects with multiple and local partners and stakeholders. The chapter explores the dissonance that arose in a particular partnership their University had with communities in Mombasa, Kenya as they attempted to try and balance teaching and research priorities alongside engaging culturally different, geographically distant communities.

We shift from a focus on service learning to several chapters that present exploration of technology's potential to support meaningful encounters with difference.

In *Leveraging Technology to Create Mindful Intercultural Learning Experiences in Undergraduate Education*, Carine Ullom considers the advantages of globally networked learning experiences (GNLE) in engineering cognitive complexity as a means for developing mindful global citizenship among undergraduate students. Ullom provides specific examples of pedagogical practices that maximize the potential of robust and free technology tools and provides guidelines for selecting and implementing appropriate technologies.

The next chapter, *What Do Geology and IT Have in Common? The Case of an International Collaboration through Experiential Learning*, by Audeliz Matias and Alberto Aguilar-González, presents a study based on an

international partnership between faculty members at SUNY Empire State College and Tecnológico de Monterrey-Chihuahua in Mexico. This collaboration used technology as a way for students in each university course to communicate and collaborate on several joint projects. The authors discuss how the technological tools enabled cross-cultural interactions which provided opportunities to integrate the cultural issues into the geology course and interdisciplinary collaborations in the programming course.

M. Laura Angelini's chapter, *Mindful Global Citizenship through Simulations in Higher Education*, explores the pedagogy of a flipped classroom. In this chapter, Angelini considers how her students, teachers of English as a foreign language in secondary schools, were introduced to complex simulations and their design as a way to facilitate deep social awareness, empathy.

Part II concludes with two chapters that focus on program-level initiatives within specific disciplinary and institutional contexts to support the development of global citizenship skills, attitudes, and knowledge. In *Practical Strategies for Engaging Dissonance in Veterinary Medical Education*, Sharon Boyd reviews teaching approaches used to develop students' professional skills as veterinary practitioners at the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons. As veterinary leaders, they will be expected to demonstrate skills in multidisciplinary group facilitation and community engagement. With that in mind, this chapter provides an overview of how professional skills are developed over the course of the Veterinary Medicine program.

Eija Raatikainen and Aija Ahokas, authors of *Building a European Professional Identity – Experiences from the Intensive Program*, describe a five-year long co-operation between seven Higher Education Institutions (Universities of Applied Sciences and Universities) in Europe. The focus of the text is to describe the structure of the Intensive Program (IP), the pedagogical approach behind it, and to ask the question, "How can the Intensive Program support students and teachers to develop their mindset of European professional (in their own field) and what kind of pedagogical approaches and teaching methods/pedagogical solutions are needed for it." Almost 190 students took part in these Intensive Programs during 2011–2015 and the results provided in this chapter may be useful for teachers who are considering multicultural- and -professional-Intensive courses using team teaching and collaborative teaching- and learning methods.

### **PART III: REFLECTIVE PRACTITIONERS: TEACHER LEARNING AS LIFELONG LEARNING**

As we stated early in this chapter, the development of intercultural pedagogy is by its nature incomplete and ongoing. As intercultural development research has established, the fundamental process of developing the intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive capacities to flourish in a global environment require time, practice, refinement, and reflection (Lee, Poch, O'Brien, & Solheim, forthcoming; Lee et al., 2012; Pope, Mueller, & Reynolds, 2009). Therefore, it is safe to say that expertise in this area is not fixed or definitive, but fluid and developmental. Pope, Reynolds, and Mueller (2004) contend that developing ourselves as mindful global citizen takes place from the inside out and it is intentional.

In response to this reality, the final part of the book provides examples of faculty engaging in reflexive practice and ongoing development in order to improve their capacity to engage dissonance effectively, for themselves, their students and with their students. Our goal is to bring the volume full circle: from Part I's focus on pedagogical theory, we move into Part II's focus on implementing and evaluating pedagogy in practice in specific contexts; Part III presents integrated and iterative theory-practice cases. In this part, the authors model the developmental process at the core of intercultural pedagogy, a process of reflection, revision, and refinement that is essential whether one is at the beginning or well into their journey. The chapters in Part III feature teacher-scholars reflecting on how they have navigated dissonance and sought to facilitate and engage in meaningful encounters with difference, in the their design of a course, the interactions they pursue with and among students, or their work with colleagues. Most of the chapters are co-written by faculty and students or former students which provide multiple perspectives on learning environments that sought to enact and support multiple perspectives, meaningful encounters with diversity, and to consider and promote equity in educational contexts.

Jason Harshman, in his chapter, *Reflexive Pedagogy and Perspective Consciousness in Global Citizenship Education*, focuses on developing a pedagogical framework and a respective course design to facilitate reflective practice in a teacher-education course. He argues that the development of perspective consciousness, understanding of the influences that consciously or unconsciously shape one's global perspective, should serve as the focal point. His chapter presents the evolution of his course design in ways that facilitates a pedagogy whose central aim is to support the development of

perspective consciousness so that students develop a more open-minded and critically self-reflective worldview.

In the next chapter, *The Personal Is Global: Fostering Student Engagement with Systems of Domination and Resistance*, Gerald Shenk describes a decades-long developmental process of integrating a pedagogy of “praxis” in his undergraduate history course. Shenk’s core learning goal reflects both his disciplinary context and his commitment to multicultural/intercultural education: developing students’ capacity to understand themselves as both products of and actors in history. In collaboration with a co-teacher as well as in light of student, a faculty member who was a former undergraduate in the course, Shenk describes an iterative process of refining two centerpiece assignments of the course. He explores the key points of dissonance for students and draws on their reflections in revising the course and in assessing the outcomes.

The third chapter in Part III, *The Parks & People Experience: Questioning the “Global” in Global Citizenship*, by Neil Brown, Nicole Laliberte, Anna Alcaro, Morgan Pfeiffer, and Warren Reed, challenges the assertion that the concept of “global citizenship” is either simple or stable. Using critical geographic theories of scale, they interrogate and seek to understand its problems and paradoxes as well as its possibilities. The author team includes former students and co-instructors reflecting on the Parks & People experience. They identify and explore tensions within the program and demonstrate how the everyday practices of “global citizenship” are enmeshed in geographies of privilege. They conclude that the goal is not to separate ourselves from inequality, but, rather, to face the complexities of the relationships we are trying to foster in the name of promoting social justice.

The final chapter, *Social-Emotional Competence: Vital to Cultivating Mindful Global Citizenship in Higher Education*, is written by an author team that includes a faculty member and three undergraduate students. Deborah Donahue-Keegan, Janna Karatas, Victoria Elcock-Price, and Noah Weinberg situate their chapter within their current and complex institutional context as a means of working at the complex intersections of global and local imperatives around diversity and equity in education. The chapter challenges institutional narratives about the “difficulty” of diversity and questions contradictory rhetoric around mandates, goals, and “obstacles.” The chapter shifts from an organizational context into specific classrooms as the authors present and reflect on stories that highlight pedagogical and dilemmas and promising possibilities on one campus. Through reflective encounters with different spaces within the institution, the authors

argue for skill development that is often underrated and overlooked in higher education, but is essential to the development of mindful global citizens, especially the cultivation of culturally responsive social-emotional competence.

## CONCLUSION

Designing, supporting, and engaging in meaningful encounters with various forms of human diversity is critical if we seek to become and to develop global citizens. This work is challenging, complex, and sometimes unpredictable. While there is no formula or one-size-fits all approach to this work, there are conceptual and practical tools or components that transcend specific contexts. It is our hope that these chapters have provided readers with some of those tools. By building relationships with our students and colleagues, we can more effectively support the reflective and reciprocal nature of this work. Further, there is always an opportunity to reflect and to continue to refine one's approach and understanding. The chapters selected for this volume model different reflective processes for studying and for ongoing development.

Refinement, this work is never done as each context we work in is unique.

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