

Constructing Global Awareness Day-by-Day

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Abstract

Global awareness is discussed through the experiential learning of six teacher candidates and six teachers on a Fulbright-Hays study abroad program to Israel. The participants focused their learning on four key aspects of global education; multilingual communication – to enhance a world view, historical layering – to understand the peripheries of communities, conflict resolution – an intrinsic component of global citizenship, and geographical interdependence. The participants enhanced their understanding of the multifaceted concepts surrounding globalism, globalization and global education.

Keywords: global awareness, historical layering, experiential learning, multilingual communication

Mark Twain, the famous American author, notably said that the nomadic instinct is a human instinct. Curiosity and open-mindedness endemic to both nomadic and modern-day, purpose-driven travelers nurture experiential educational encounters, creating global awareness. Global awareness is a worldview or way of thinking about one's place in an increasingly interconnected world (Delacruz, Arnold, Kuo and Parsons, 2009). Framing and facilitating teaching and learning of globalization, the process of uneven development that

creates new forms of world interdependence, necessitates dynamic pedagogies and interdisciplinary curricula planning in public schools. Interpenetration between global cultural flows and local cultural patterns are central to the continuing process of globalization (Kim, 2009). Conceptualizations of globalization that are closely tied to global education become more recognizable through documenting human interactions on overseas trips.

One can think of global awareness as part of global education focusing on cross-cultural and transnational investigations of modes and motivations of human activities. Understanding global education requires conceptualizing the intertwining of technological advancements and their economic, political and cultural impacts. The impact of globalization, localized adaptations that selectively fuse and alter global and local traditions and phenomena can be seen as an useful site and central strategy for artistic expression and cultural engagement (Marshall, 2009).

With the above value of global awareness in mind for college education, this article focuses on four aspects of the issue:

- Multilingual communication – to enhance a world view
- Historical layering – to understand the peripheries of communities
- Conflict resolution – an intrinsic component of global citizenship
- Geographical interdependence

Educational and cultural arbiters in the nineteenth century recognized the need for Americans to develop a greater world view therefore encouraging travel to Europe. The Grand Tour was a traditional trip to Europe mainly for upper class European and now American young men and women/with a chaperon, or young men and women who could find a sponsor as a coming of age (21 years) rite of passage into adulthood. The Grand Tour was to educate young people so that they become familiar with the art, culture and the roots of Western Civilization by visiting Rome, Venice, Florence, and Paris. The Grand Tour could last from several months to several years. Exposure to the cultural legacy of classical antiquity and the Italian Renaissance was to instill the need for the continuation of the cultural hegemony of European traditions over those from outside of Europe. In the 21st century, there is a shift from an exclusive European perspective to one that is more expansive and embracing of a world view. This enhanced world view includes multicultural explorations of geographically, racially and ethnically diverse urban and rural environments.

The Mutual and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 created within the U.S. State Department of Education several overseas educational programs such as the Fulbright-Hays study abroad program for language and area studies by providing training opportunities for faculty, teachers, and college students. Senator J. William Fulbright saw the study abroad program as a modest one with an immodest aim to achieve in international affairs a regime more civilized, rational and humane than the empty systems of power of the past.

The format of the Fulbright-Hays group study abroad “Constructing Global Awareness through Multimodal Interdisciplinary Educational Platforms in Israel” during July 2017 required that the study abroad experience involve twelve participants -six pre-service and six in-service teachers in four weeks of global experiential study. The in-service teachers were teaching social studies, language arts, visual arts, and bilingual education. The pre-service teachers were finishing their preparation for elementary school certification with one student completing a secondary math certification. The diversity of the educational levels and content areas of the participants in the study abroad program added to the group’s multivalent learning. The transformative experiences were planned to enhance democratic and critical thinking to advance multicultural curricula development and global awareness in novice and experienced teachers.

One of the challenges in teacher education is to internationalize programs emboldening preservice and in-service teachers to gain historic empathy, collaboration skills and a desire for further civic engagement. Identifying and framing these critical components to further teachers’ global awareness is crucial for interdisciplinary teaching and learning. According to the Open Doors 2012 report, only 4% of all students studying abroad from the United States are education majors out of a quarter of a million students who study abroad every year (Moss and Marcus, 2015). In our interconnected 21st century world, reflection of exemplar experiential learning can be understood through a quotidian investigation of what became areas of interest for the in-service and preservice teachers in the blog posts and photographs posted during the overseas experience. These investigations often became the subject of interdisciplinary lesson plans, audio-clips, and school-based turn-key activities after the one month study abroad experiential learning program in Israel. Experiential learning affords an intellectually rich and emotionally accessible path to infuse linguistic, aesthetic and social justice issues into higher education classroom discussions extending the parameters of awareness to multimodal education.

The Fulbright-Hays group study abroad pre-visit workshops included Hebrew language study, museum visits to Jewish and Islamic art collections, observation at the state-wide New Jersey History Day competition for middle and high school students, a history lesson on the Mid East, and a culinary experience at an Arabic restaurant. The overseas experience focused on advancing global awareness through interactions with diverse members of Israeli society, lectures and seminars at institutions of higher education, visiting UNESCO sites and numerous natural environments ranging from the Dead Sea, the desert, an oasis, mountains, and the sea. The post-visit workshops had participants present their interdisciplinary lesson plans to each other and the co-directors, create audio files of unexpected overseas learning to be uploaded on the travel abroad website and attendance at a concert of Palestinian and Israeli music. The study abroad participants contributed their interdisciplinary lesson plans, audio clips and post visit workshops to the blog and website.

Textual and Visual Literacy (Photo-essay/blog)

The photo-essay became a blog with each participant contributing two or more days of personal insights and photos during the overseas portion of the study abroad – wpunjfulbright.wordpress.com. The selective pairing of photographs and meaningful text by the teachers/participants revealed the key thematic issues –multilingual communication, historical layering, conflict resolution, and geographic interdependence – and educational goals of the study abroad experience. Aesthetic perspectives were captured and expanded in the myriad photos taken of the diverse landscape of Israel and human interactions. The photographic visual evidence documented heartfelt discussions between multi-racial and multi-ethnic components of Israeli society. In *The Innocents Abroad* (1870) Mark Twain presciently writes that travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness, and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts.

Multilingual communication - to enhance a worldview

During the first two weeks of the month-long trip, participants/teachers were part of an immersive language program (ulpan) to learn the Hebrew language. None of the twelve participants were Jewish and had never been exposed to the Hebrew alphabet and language before the trip. During the intense language lessons and through daily use of Hebrew, the teachers/participants gained a significant understanding of the language and practiced conversations with native speakers. Several of the teachers/participants were bilingual (Spanish and Greek speakers) which appeared to expedite their learning of a third language. Some of these teachers/participants were English as a Second Language teachers. The immersive Hebrew language program brought fresh insights into their responsibilities to teach a language to non-native speakers within the time constraints of the classroom to learn a language. The bilingual teachers/participants commended the immersive Hebrew language teachers in their ability to have the teachers/participants learn the Hebrew alphabet and have simple conversations in Hebrew in just two weeks. This knowledge of the Hebrew language helped the teachers/participants feel comfortable navigating around Israel. Globalism is a worldview best learned through multilingual communication.

At the Western Galilee College, in the northern part of Israel near the city of Haifa, the teacher/participants learned about the College's educational goals for their student population. As an educational institution, they are focusing on the needs of the local Jewish and Arab residents. One of their goals is to help their multilingual and multi-ethnic students obtain a degree that will assist them in turn-keying their skills into employment to help the rest of their community. It is the Israeli mantra that everyone is a vital component within their society. With a two-tiered educational system for Arabic and Hebrew speakers, there is a tension in the marketplace in hiring and advancing in business and educational institutions.

The teachers/participants' tour of the College included a visiting a contemporary art exhibition, "Housewarming." The college gallery exhibition illuminated one of many of the Israeli challenges, to integrate Arab and Jewish communities so that they are living side-by-side and can communicate with each other in both Arabic and Hebrew. The residents in the northern part of Israel including the city of Akko have felt displacement first-hand beginning with the founding of the modern state of Israel in 1948. Because of subsequent conflicts in the area, the residents were multilingual coming from Hebrew and Arabic speaking families thereby highlighting the dilemma of what and where is considered home. The gallery exhibition presented a contemporary visual interpretation of the symbolic image of "home." Many of the artists' work reflected on the dynamic of permanence and transience in what is considered home such as living in an unstable home life or living through displacement with their families. It is through further aesthetic and educational interventions to improve multilingual communication can the Jewish and Arabic communities nurture a mutually beneficial worldview.

The teacher/participants employed their newly learned linguistic pedagogies to classroom teaching and learning by a) focusing on dual language instruction, b) experimenting with immersive (ulpan) language pedagogies, and c) creating visual displays on bulletin boards inclusive of peoples' heritage and written language. Additional research on bilingual education supplementing what the teachers/participants had learned overseas became the source for professional conference presentations. It can be imagined that future graduate work will focus on questions 'How is language learned at different developmental levels?' and 'When does language attrition occur?'

Historical layering – understanding the peripheries of communities

The historical record in Israel is rife with evidence of empires –Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Ottoman and more recently the British Empire. En Gedi is a national park in the eastern part of Israel near the Dead Sea that contains the remains of a synagogue dating back to the Byzantine period 330-1453AD. The excavation displays a ritual purification bath, evidence of date palms and balsam trees, arboreal features cultivated in antiquity, and a mosaic floor decorated with a leaf pattern surrounding four birds within a medallion. The mosaic contains no human forms, suggestive of the level of religiosity by the community that once lived there. It has been a Jewish tradition not to include the human image in religious Jewish sites such as synagogues or ritual baths. The inclusion of recognizable animal forms suggests the influence of Greek, Roman and Byzantine artistic traditions in the far reaches of their empires. The teachers/participants felt it was important to have students recognize the human component of artistic decisions from past generations that have long since passed to become part of history lessons.

En Gedi is also a nature reserve and features an oasis with a waterfall. Ancient Israel and later generations of civilizations in Israel situate their places of

worship and governance on sites with easy access to the life-giving element of water. The importance of water in a vast desert landscape was continually discussed during the month-long study abroad in Israel. A reverence of water and the necessity of water to sustain life is therefore apparent in both ancient and modern Israel. It is celebrated in Ein Gedi with its lush landscape. The experiential learning in Ein Gedi can be a model for transference of global experiences to be embedded into higher education environmental, historical and anthropological classrooms.

Historical layering was also evident when the teachers/participants had a first-hand encounter with a woman from the ancient Jewish community in Ethiopia. Ethiopian Jews came to Israel in large numbers in 1984 and in 1991; they serve in the Israeli army. On Kibbutz Ervon, a woman named Yoney, an Ethiopian Jew showed and explained how she lived as a young child in Ethiopia. She was one of the 125,000 Ethiopian who have settled in Israel over the last half century. The historical record says that the lost tribe of Dan reached Ethiopia in post biblical times. As of the 4th century AD in Ethiopia, there has been a community of Jews- Beta Israel/the house of Israel- who would not convert to Christianity or later Islam. There is a long history of Jews in Yemen in the far south of the Arabian peninsula, a vital but peripheral settlement of Jews in the Mid-East. The Ethiopian Jewish community however represented a yet more peripheral community from the center of Jewish life in ancient, medieval and modern Israel.

It was a very powerful experience learning about black/Ethiopian Jewish people in Israel for all the teachers/participants. No one had any idea that black Jews existed. Yoney is married to a local Israeli of European origin; they have children together and work in the semi-agricultural community of Kibbutz Ervon. Yoney shared that at the age of four she and her family started walking north from Ethiopia to Sudan to Egypt then crossed into Sinai and then into Israel. This journey took over a year with great hardships for all. After arriving in Israel as a child, her assimilation was not easy or immediate due to her racial difference. This sentiment had deep resonance with one of the African American female teacher/participants. Yoney embodied multicultural practices in her daily routines. One of the teacher/participant's was a history teacher who believes that personal stories are the best way to have students be inquisitive learners and begin to understand the scope and layers of history.

The experiential learning in Ein Gedi was translated by one teacher/participant into a hands-on mosaic art project noting the diverse art historical influences in Israel. This teacher presented her mosaic lesson at a regional and national visual art conferences. Another teacher conducted a multicultural event sharing personal stories and images from her diverse student body. For college students interested in history and anthropology questions can center on 'What is the meaning of diaspora in relation to the peripheries of empire?' and 'Does interdisciplinary curricula constructs clarify or obfuscate an understanding of human interactions?'

Conflict Resolution - an intrinsic component of global citizenship

The teachers/participants traveled to a town near Jerusalem to meet Anna Kanana, a woman rights' activist. Her goal is to create an independent life for not just Arab women but Jewish women while spreading peace and love within both cultures. She welcomed the group with coffee explaining that coffee was a way to engage guests and start a discussion on peace between individuals. Anna gave details about the cultural and feminist struggles in her life. Through cultural and intercultural dialogue between Arab and Jewish women, Anna transformed herself to have as much independence as possible. Anna shared that she needed to leave her small village and participate in female organizations in order to more publically promote peace and understanding. Her life story provoked reflection by the teachers/participants noting familiar themes in global citizenship. Gender equality became the focus of a participant's research and subsequent graduate school application.

Global citizenship and conflict resolution can manifest itself through commercial enterprise. The House of Buza, (note: buza means ice cream in Arabic) opened six years ago and is and is co-owned by a Jewish entrepreneur and an Arab businessman. They use the flavors and spices of the Galilee to make ice cream with local ingredients. The owners of the House of Buza provide a unique approach to conflict resolution through common global interests in entrepreneurship. The owners recently won a peace prize due to their successful business venture that brought diverse groups of people together. Developing other mutually beneficial business opportunities can motivate college students to research and formulate joint projects to reduce conflicts and build global citizenship. Pondering global citizenship, classrooms in a wide range of disciplines in higher education can begin to ask questions such as 'Are intercultural dialogues a panacea for world peace?' and 'What does peace sound and look like?'

Geographic interdependence

Israel has been a historic geographic crossroads between Asia, Africa and the Mid-East. The southern port of Eilat on the Red Sea epitomizes the critical interdependence of the area. The teachers/participants could look along the eastern shoreline to the country of Jordan and if they looked further down the coast, one could see Saudi Arabia. On turning one's head to the western shoreline of Eilat, one could see the country of Egypt. The frequently altered borders with Jordan, Syria and Egypt have been subject to several war and peace treaties throughout the years. Upon viewing each of these different countries in the distance, the teachers/participants had to revisit their uniquely American perspective. The idea of a great distances is readjusted since one can travel in the United States for hours and still be in one state not to mention one country. What the teachers/participants found most striking was that besides the countries' flags

marking borders, it was almost impossible to differentiate geographical borders, despite the many lives sacrificed in establishing these borders.

When swimming in the Red Sea in Eilat, one can look to the east and see Jordan and further south Saudi Arabia. If one looks west, the country of Egypt is walking distance from the port of Eilat. This southernmost city is of economic importance to the country of Israel since it is a deep water port where ships can carry goods to Asia and Africa. Eilat is of ecological importance for several reasons; one of which is that Israel has the most northern coral reef in the world. In Israel there is an aphorism, one must understand the environment in order to protect it. Israel does not allow people to fish in the coral reef, and because of this restriction during the teachers/participants' time snorkeling, they were able to swim among colorful and abundant marine life. The teachers/participants were able to see the delicate balance necessary in marine life from the sea anemone, to the clownfish, to the parrotfish, and the cleaner fish and how easily humans can disrupt it.

The underwater observatory in Eilat was built in the center of a coral reef to protect the coral and fish during the breeding season. The borderless underwater world highlights the geographic interdependence and cooperation between the countries of Jordan, Israel and Egypt. Further research in higher education classrooms on geographic interdependence could focus on the two following questions: 'What is the purpose of invisible and altered borders?' and 'Is the word oasis, a political, ecological or cultural metaphor?'

Conclusion

The goal of the study abroad to Israel was to build democratic thinking and global awareness for college students and classroom teachers referred to as teachers/participants. The purpose of the Grand Tour discussed earlier has been transformed into a pragmatic and academic understanding in higher education of the multifaceted components of global awareness. Global awareness is pursued by a) ameliorating multilingual communications to further a world view, b) to uncover and interpret the layering of historic political and cultural empires, c) to create conflict resolution strategies to foster global citizenship, and d) to recognize the necessity of geographic interdependence as an outcome of our interconnected world. As Mark Twain mused it is an individual's curiosity, open mindedness and adventure that is the defining framework that propels global awareness; these dispositional attributes are central to excelling in teaching and learning in experiential and classroom-based education.

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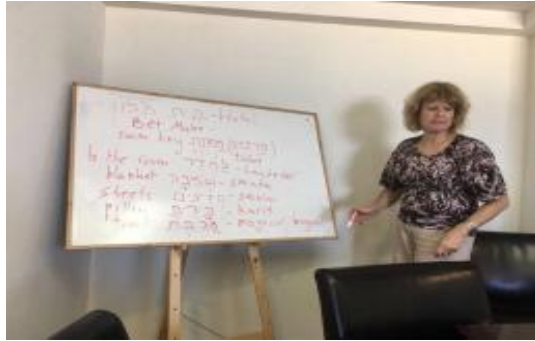
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[En Gedi & Masada – www.parks.org.il](http://www.parks.org.il)

Appendix/Gallery

Multilingual Communication - to enhance a world view

Immersive Hebrew language class with instructor and teachers/participants and during instruction



Historical Layering – periphery of communities



Yoney on Kibbutz Ervon, an Ethiopian Jewish woman



Ethiopian Jewish turbans on teachers/participants



Byzantine synagogue mosaic floor in Ein Gedi



Oasis of Ein Gedi

Conflict Resolution - an intrinsic component of global citizenship



Fulbright-Hays group with peace activist at your home



Buza Ice Cream Store



Teacher in Buza ice cream store



View of fish and coral in underwater observatory in Eilat, Israel

Geographic Interdependence

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Laura Fattal, Ph.D. is an Associate Professor in the Department of Elementary and Early Childhood Education, College of Education, William Paterson, New Jersey. She is an arts-integration specialist well published in numerous interdisciplinary education, art education and art history journals. She teaches education courses for preservice teachers at all levels of their sequence towards certification. Dr. Fattal was the co-director of a Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Abroad to Israel summer 2017. She has combined her research interests in multilingual and arts teaching and learning towards global education.