

Notes from the Design Discussion Session

AAC&U Global Learning Network Meeting

Quotes:

"The central purpose of education is to create in our students, and in ourselves, the capacities for associative living." John Dewey

"Education is like identity—always in the making, forever incomplete, full of infinite possibilities."  
Maxine Greene

We spent some time with Kurt Lewin's concept of understanding the person in the context of the environment. In the PERSON X ENVIRONMENT equation.....the large X symbolizes our ability to deliberately design the environment to facilitate the development of the student (whether that is the classroom, a program, the larger campus culture, etc.). And, of course, PERSONS and their BEHAVIOR influence the ENVIRONMENTAL CULTURE---what it expects, rewards, etc.

We cannot expect in our students what the environment is not designed to support.

Developmental growth takes place when individuals are both challenged and supported in their efforts to learn and mature. Too much challenge can cause the person to retreat. Too much support can take away the incentive to risk and learn.

We need to help students make connections with concepts and what they are learning and experiencing (inter-connectivity). How do we help students not just collect the dots, but connect the dots??

Campus cultures can be places of inclusion or exclusion. Messages are given about WHO belongs. There is often a gap between our espoused values and our actual behavior. Students need a "mirroring face." (The folly of "expecting A and rewarding B") How do we close the GAP between the real and the ideal?

There are often more individual differences within any group than across groups.

We discussed the importance of staff in shaping campus culture and for helping students.

How do we help students develop a "global capacity".....with all the characteristics of a global capacity (complexity of reasoning and problem solving, empathy, ability to live with ambiguity, reflectiveness, appreciation of diversity, ethical sensibility)?

Students play a large role in creating and shaping environments.

Great phrase: "experientially exploratory environment"---that can facilitate the development of global capacity.

Innovation involves taking RISKS.....and risking failure. We can learn from failure. Innovation requires risk taking. The experience of failure, of not knowing, is often profoundly developmental. Can faculty help model that?

We talked about the importance of “the virtual experience”.....of helping students “rehearse” problem solving, solving dilemmas, experiencing the new and unknown.

We talked about the importance of self-awareness and reflection.....the realization of power and privilege. (Refer especially to opening plenary session)

Organizational change is difficult. Sustaining change is difficult. Understanding different types of resistance to change can be helpful. How can we help our institutions make changes...even in the face of risk?

Literature on learning teams may be helpful (see especially the work of Kayes, Kayes, and Kolb).

Institutions have values, cultures, histories.....how to honor them and use them as we change?

The “diversity conversation” always takes place in the context of history and of change. This is especially true as regions experience immigration. How do we help our students have that conversation? How do WE have it?

Don’t forget the important role of technology and ways of learning that come from its use.

Great phrase: “problem solving thinking”.

We need to learn to be, learn to learn, learn to do.

Do you have change for a paradigm?

It might help if we studied HOW students learn (models of intellectual, ethical, identity, intercultural development). Those models often have deep implications for what is challenging and supporting of student learning. And they help with deliberate design.

\*\*\*Many thanks to Karen Kalla for her notes.

**Notes from the Design Discussion Session  
AAC&U Global Learning Network Meeting  
Saturday, October 18, 2014**

We began by reflecting on what we have seen and heard throughout the conference and thinking about how to apply that learning upon return to campus.

### **Insights**

#### **Innovation – Scaling – Catechism**

How can we scale up programs and retain the innovativeness that keeps teaching and learning fresh and interesting. Does the very nature of scaling an innovation to a critical mass require parameters and guidelines that diminish innovation? How can we be “Planful” and “Open” at the same time?

#### **The Seduction of Innovation**

Is innovation self-reflective insight? How can we move from innovation to insight? Innovation can be shallow at first – new and exciting, maybe great, but lacking in depth. Innovation needs to be grounded and provide a solid point from which to evolve – to build depth and meaningfulness through experience overtime. Making innovation meaningful requires assessment to provide information for planning and thinking iteratively; questions to further expand and deepen understanding; and empathy.

#### **From Theory to Practice**

What information can we use from the latest scholarship and theory about identity to help design global learning experiences and environments?

#### **Encountering “Other”**

How can we structure ways to model encountering “other” in the actual conference? How can we structure the conference in more open and engaging ways, i.e., the Immersion Day experience and affinity group discussions (The Immersion Day provided new insights and context for processing and making meaning of the sessions throughout the conference)? How can we move away from a Western cultural framework? This is especially critical since so many people in this country cannot access that culture and its structures (i.e., finance, home ownership, education)

We discussed the connecting circle of concrete experience, reflection, theory, and action (Dewey and Kolb). How can we connect student identity, theory, and immersion to create an experience that is meaningful to one’s own life and that is critique-able?

We discussed the practice of asking students to read two newspaper stories on a topic of interest to them to create a common experience for reflection on a range of contemporary matters. How might this practice translate to a common conference experience?

#### **Catalysts for Change**

How are faculty members measuring their own abilities and competencies for global learning?

#### **Think – Live – Engage**

How are educators modeling global learning and global citizenship for their students?

### Advancing Innovation

Early adapters tend to push further than the mainstream to which they must connect in order to advance their ideas. Advancing innovation requires relating on a variety of levels and engaging in effective dialogues without being defensive.

### Intercultural Sensitivity – Difficult Dialogues

Most educators minimize conflict in the classroom instead of engaging difficult dialogues. This reinforces existing power and privilege structures and dynamics; marginalizes and dismisses one's lived experience. Microaggressions and insult arise from naiveté and invalidation. What kinds of messages do institutions send to students?

One must understand who one is before one can assess others. Meaningful facilitation helps to foster difficult dialogues and move beyond defensiveness in the academic setting – across and among all domains. It requires inner-work, from disassociation to association, face-work, and preserving.

### Global Health Theory

Global Health Theory contributes to global learning by drawing on theories of identity and subjectivity. What does it mean to be a person in a post-colonial world? One begins with a theory and then reflects on experience and how to assess and make meaning of that experience.

### Risk and Failure

Understanding requires risk and failure – how can one turn a mistake into a learning experience?

### Reciprocity

Innovation in a community must be important on both sides and foster self-reflection both sides.