The Inner Work of Being a Global Citizen

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Personal significance
“External Work” of Global Citizenship Education

Traditional emphasis on language acquisition, study abroad, and faculty exchanges,
LaGuardia Community College

- 157 countries, 129 languages
- 60% born in another country
Perspective Change

A process that includes:

- Questioning the assumptions and beliefs underlying one’s own perspective
- Engaging with “diverse and competing perspectives”
- Revising one’s prior assumptions in the face of new information, and
- Changing behavior.
BRINGING STUDENT VOICES TO THE CONVERSATION

Theoretical Framework

- **Perspective-taking** (Selman, 1975; Martin, Sokol & Elfers, 2008)
- **Perspective transformation** (Mezirow, 2000; Cranton, 2006; King 1997)
- **Self-authorship** (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Baxter-Magolda; Pizzolato, 2003)
- **Campus diversity** (Gurin, et. al, 2002; Hurtado, Dey & Associates, 2010; Halualani, 2008; Saenz, Reason, 2011)
BRINGING STUDENT VOICES TO THE TABLE
A hermeneutic study

18 students, 11 countries, 8 languages

In-depth interviews & focus group
- Prior experience
- Early messages
- Personally-held stereotypes
- Prior self-authoring behavior
- Campus interactions – “critical incidents”
- Impact
How do you define diversity?
“People close doors to... [African Americans] because they’re judged by just their skin color and I wouldn’t like that happening to me. So I was like why should I judge them too, you know?”
“I hadn’t met anyone [from Israel] before I met him. When I talked to him …when I spend time with him that really changed my perception [of Israelis].”
Michael

“[This student] it was his first time hearing about civil rights … So it was like a culture shock to me. I’ve been talking about this since grade school. And for him it’s the very first day…America is not the center of the world; it’s not the only thing going on.”
Findings

- All but one student reported benefits
- Understanding others, being more open and better at interacting with peers
- Majority questioned a prior assumption and revised (11); took new action (13)
- Revising a stereotype of another group
- Engaging with diverse viewpoints happened only in formal settings
Implications for scholarship and practice

- More research on diverse campuses including community colleges
- Embed “perspectives” work in formal structures
- Linking curricular & co-curricular
- Professional development & support
• Diverse campuses offer a glimpse into the “near future”
• Attend to the “inner work” needed to live with diversity
• Most important conversation going on in higher education today.
“If we have to become part of a new world civilization, if this is our task, then we shall need a philosophy...which teaches us to see the justification for the other’s point of view and which makes us doubt our own.”

Hans Georg Gadamer
On the Question of One God...