

An Institutional Model of Global Competence Learning Outcomes Final Report of the Faculty Learning Community on Intercultural Competence

John Carroll University

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Vision Statement for Global Competence: All John Carroll graduates will demonstrate the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes to empathize, value difference and communicate across it, recognize interdependencies, adapt to change, and promote social justice in a global context.

Rationale: The vision statement of John Carroll challenges the University community to “graduate individuals of intellect and character who lead and serve by engaging the world around them and around the globe.” In pursuit of this vision, the University has launched several initiatives to globalize the curriculum and to cultivate a sense of global citizenship in our students. To name only one recent effort, the College of Arts and Sciences received a McGregor Foundation Grant in 2011 with the title “Engaging the World: Educating for Contemporary Global Citizenship.”

In spring 2011, nine JCU faculty members from four academic departments formed a learning community on intercultural competence with the goal of developing individual assignments, program learning outcomes, or other curricular support in this interdisciplinary area. In spring 2012, a set of faculty from the original group was invited to link its efforts to the curricular initiatives outlined in the McGregor Foundation Grant application. The second iteration of this learning community on intercultural competence was charged with identifying institutionally-appropriate learning outcomes associated with global citizenship.

Relevance: The work of the learning community is timely. Since the creation of the faculty learning community on intercultural competence, other curricular initiatives on campus have integrated concepts of global citizenship or competence into their outcomes. In spring 2012, John Carroll faculty approved the learning outcomes generated by the Phase I Academic Planning Task Force. One outcome among them is that students will “act competently in a global and diverse world,” a learning outcome that likewise appears in the final report by the Phase II Academic Planning Task Force Curriculum Working Group in October 2012. Such initiatives at JCU are not unique; during its work, the learning community became aware of similar efforts at other academic institutions and organizations to define these terms and integrate them into their curricula.

The learning community believes that this model of global competence possesses several strengths, and thus great potential for meaningful application by the JCU community: **its currency, its multidimensionality, and its specificity to John Carroll.** After presenting our definition of global competence, an elaboration of the strengths of this model will serve as a preliminary introduction to the learning outcomes.

Definition of Global Competence: Global competence reflects a performance-based developmental process in which learners acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in four dimensions that encompass a range of interactions, beginning with the individual and expanding outward to

incorporate the global. These four dimensions are: self and others, interaction, interdependence, and globalization.

1. Currency.

In an effort to understand concepts as vast as intercultural communication, intercultural competence, global competence, and globalization, the learning community read several foundational texts as well as current research in these areas. Over the course of two years, it consulted with faculty from the SIT Graduate Institute with specialization in international education and reviewed various models from other organizations, including one presented by the Global Challenges Institute, an initiative of the American Association of State Colleges. Several learning community members also attended a lecture by Veronica Boix-Mansilla, author of “Educating for Global Competence: Preparing our Youth to Engage the World.” What these lectures, reports, and curricular initiatives suggested in sum was the growing need to identify the learning goals that will prepare our core constituencies for global challenges. The model proposed here has been informed by these other, more established initiatives, while it endeavors to address the specific values and needs of the John Carroll community.

2. Multidimensionality.

The learning community analyzed some curricular models that, at the one extreme, focused primarily on issues of interpersonal interaction, or at the other, globalization. This model recognizes the essential interconnectedness of these dimensions as they expand from the micro- to the mezzo- and macro-levels outward, and it embraces a dynamic learning process in which the learner’s acquired knowledge, skills, and attitudes in various dimensions inform and support learning in other ones. To offer one example, one’s awareness of others may evolve as one develops a deeper understanding of interdependence; this awareness may, in turn, enhance one’s positive interactions across culture; these successful encounters may then shape one’s own awareness of self as a globally sensitive and competent individual.

While several concepts have gained currency in recent years, the learning community therefore chooses the term “global competence” over “global citizenship” because it believes the former term marries the interconnected discourses on intercultural competence and globalization more explicitly than the latter.

3. Specificity.

Informed by emerging best practices in the education for global competence, the model proposed here has been cast with regard to John Carroll and its particular values and needs. Central to this model is our definition of culture and the implications that this definition has on interactions:

Culture is the primary non-genetic means by which humans adapt to their environment. In the context of this document, we understand culture to refer to a shared and negotiated system of meanings widely known among a group of people, often based on socially ascribed categories of race, gender, sexual identity, nation, ethnicity, religion, and economic background. A person learns to interpret the world through this lens, but

also contributes to the technologies, social practices, and ideas, values and beliefs produced by this system.

Cultural competence is thus needed in encounters across groups within the United States as well as internationally. In the dimensions focused on “self and other” and “interaction,” the model promotes a concept of cultural competence that obtains domestically as well as internationally.

Second, distinct from some other models of global competence, the one proposed here integrates a commitment to social justice into each of the four dimensions. Indeed, the learning community believes that such a commitment to social justice is an inherent and indispensable component of global competence. Education for global competence must include the development of the awareness of global hierarchies of power and wealth and the inequitable distribution of technological, educational and natural resources, and of the impact these forces have on the lives of people anywhere in the world.

Consistent with an understanding of global competence as a developmental process, this model understands social justice as a work in progress. In becoming aware of social injustice, learners develop an awareness of their own roles in the construction of culture, interactions, relationships and global processes, and acquire the ability to analyze situations and to recognize the impact of action or inaction. The model therefore values the types of experiences that will provide learners with the tools to analyze and understand a variety of different perspectives and to build capacity for collaborative action based on solidarity and community development.

Recommendations: The learning community hopes that this model of global competence will offer insight into how one might interpret what it means to act competently in a global and diverse world. It recognizes that the outcomes it proposes are numerous, yet does not presume that any one course or program could attend to them all. Realistically, a course might endeavor to develop a set of learning outcomes associated with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of one dimension; alternately, it might seek to synthesize knowledge or skill areas intentionally from two or three dimensions. At the least, the learning community offers a common framework and vocabulary for exploring, designing, implementing, and assessing a globalized curriculum at John Carroll University; at the most, it could provide support for a strategic plan for global initiatives.

Learning outcomes particularly relevant to social justice are marked in this document with an asterisk.

Learning Outcomes:

Dimension 1: Self and Others

Self-awareness reflects the ability to understand oneself as a cultural being whose beliefs, values, and assumptions shape and are shaped by one’s society and environment; awareness of others reflects the ability to recognize others as similarly complex cultural beings. As the center-most dimension, this set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes focuses on developing a critical understanding of identity

construction at the individual and cultural level, cultivating empathy and a respect for others, and extending the boundary of human similarity and difference to include the “other.”

Knowledge. Upon graduation, the learner will be able to

- 1K1. relate how one’s own experiences and perspectives of race, gender, sexual identity, nation, faith, and economic circumstances shape reactions to others;
- 1K2. describe the similarities and differences among and within cultures with respect to race, gender, sexual identity, nation, faith, and economic circumstances;
- 1K3. describe the historical and structural reasons that lead to multiple perspectives on race, gender, sexual identity, nation, faith, and economic circumstances;
- 1K4. recognize the subjectivity of one’s own world view.

Skills. Upon graduation, the learner will be able to

- 1S1. articulate one’s values as they relate to the ethical codes of one’s own background;*
- 1S2. articulate how one may be perceived as the “other;”
- 1S3. critically compare beliefs, values, and assumptions between and among groups with respect to race, gender, sexual identity, nation, faith, and economic circumstances;
- 1S4. analyze ethical and moral questions from multiple standpoints across cultures or asymmetrical power positions. *

Attitudes. Upon graduation, the learner will be predisposed to

- 1A1. act with empathy toward others;
- 1A2. value the dignity of all persons;*
- 1A3. learn about the suffering of others.*

Dimension 2: Interaction

The dimension on **interaction** recognizes the increasing need for knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to respond appropriately in situations where people with different cultural experiences interact. These interactions frequently occur at the interpersonal level, but they may also involve an interface with products, practices, and organizations deriving from different cultures and through various media outlets. Whereas the first dimension emphasized the development of a critical apparatus for understanding oneself and others, this dimension is fundamentally interactive and communicative. Successful interactions require learners to apply their awareness of self and other and expand it to develop a more complex and nuanced understanding of human cultures and communication forms. Media facilitate communication across cultural and national boundaries and can challenge identities associated with these boundaries or work to forge global cultural identities. A knowledge of media and the means through which individuals and organizations use media to create, disseminate, and consume messages are therefore central to global competence.

Knowledge. Upon graduation, the learner will be able to

- 2K1. describe several cultural worldviews;
- 2K2. provide examples of how culture may shape one's perceptions of appropriate actions;
- 2K3. identify and deconstruct cultural stereotypes;
- 2K4. recognize inequities in access to media and the impact of these inequities on social justice.*

Skills. Upon graduation, the learner will be able to

- 2S1. interpret aspects of others' cultures and societies with accuracy and sensitivity;
- 2S2. communicate and interact effectively across cultures;
- 2S3. analyze media to discern various perspectives, interests, and biases and their effects in forming world views;*
- 2S4. produce media messages that demonstrate cultural awareness.

Attitudes. Upon graduation, the learner will be predisposed to

- 2A1. embrace ambiguity and open-endedness;
- 2A2. appreciate cultural differences;
- 2A3. support socially-responsible media production and consumption.

Dimension 3: Interdependence

This dimension adds the element of systems thinking to broaden awareness of the context in which interaction takes place. **Interdependence** here refers to the reciprocal relationship among parts of a social system and to the relationship between human society and the natural environment. To understand oneself and others, the learner must be able to place the individual within structures that are intertwined, recognizing that changes in one part of the system will result in changes in other parts. This dimension thus identifies knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will develop the learner's ability to consider the interrelationship of the parts within the whole and to understand issues and events as they relate to larger systems and their power differences.

Knowledge. Upon graduation, the learner will be able to

- 3K1. describe issues and events in the context of world geography;
- 3K2. explain how historical forces affect current events and issues;
- 3K3. explain the interrelationships of economic, environmental, cultural, and technical systems regionally and globally;
- 3K4. identify situations of political, economic, and social injustice that emerge in interdependent relationships.*

Skills. Upon graduation, the learner will be able to

- 3S1. analyze factors in social and environmental change that result in shifting power relationships;*
- 3S2. articulate how one's own life decisions have an impact locally, nationally and globally on others;

3S3. analyze the conditions that give rise to inequalities and their impact on people's lives.*

Attitudes. Upon graduation, the learner will be predisposed to

3A1. engage in system-level problem-solving;*

3A2. reflect on one's place in the world.

Dimension 4: Globalization

Given the worldwide systemic interdependence that characterizes human existence today, new knowledge, skills and attitudes are required of the globally competent learner. **Globalization** is understood in this model as the expansion and complexity of social relations and consciousness across time and space, challenging existing political and ethical borders and boundaries and linking people and phenomena once thought to be unconnected. The global system expands relations with people, media, institutions, activities, and may therefore create shifting forms of human contact and new interdependencies through the multiplication of economic and social networks. Globalization may bring about new widely-shared meanings, values, and understandings of the natural and social worlds. This system results in a broadening of human awareness and consciousness, facilitating new individual and collective norms and identities.

Knowledge. Upon graduation, the learner will be able to

4K1. identify events and issues of global importance including climate change, migration, crime, technology, and trade;

4K2. outline the role played by humans in shaping and being shaped by the global physical and natural environment;

4K3. explain how inequalities are intensified and new forms of injustice appear in a global system;*

4K4. describe how technology and global human interaction may address injustices.*

Skills. Upon graduation, the learner will be able to

4S1. analyze the connections between and among local, regional, and global actors and events;

4S2. evaluate the impact of global events on human welfare;

4S3. synthesize information and develop an argument in favor of improving a given problem or situation;

4S4. assess the effectiveness of efforts to address injustices at the local, national and global levels.*

Attitudes. Upon graduation, the learner will be predisposed to

4A1. engage in globally- and socially-responsible decision making;*

4A2. reflect in an ongoing (as opposed to episodic) manner on one's capacity and duty to contribute;

4A3. seek, identify, and create opportunities for action locally, regionally or globally;*

4A4. recognize the ethical obligation of all people to contribute to a more just world.*

Sources

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