



Does the World Matter? Critical Ways of Fostering Global Understandings

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Keynote Address

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Questions to consider

- How have we been educated about global in the past?
- What metaphors would we use to describe the world now?
- What concerns us or moves us when we think about global issues?
- What challenges would we face in promoting global understanding?
- How will we overcome the challenges?
- How will we work with others to change institutional cultures?

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- Community outreach and dialogue
 - Issues oriented curriculum and teaching
 - Social action within the public arena.



Some community voices

- We have issues such as poverty here and why do we have to solve the problems out there in the world? (brother-in-law).
- Their whole culture is like that...there is no need to go there and help... their whole system is so and so (a neighbor).
- What we need to do is to stop the outsourcing of jobs overseas? (a soccer colleague).

What is important knowledge

- * Emphasis on Western civilization
- * Attributes Europe or North America as the “center”
- * Dichotomous ideas of what is history and pre-history or non-history
- * Emphasis on one perspective as “truth”
- * Seeks hierarchy in what is superior/inferior
- All civilizations/cultures be studied
- Avoids superior/inferior frameworks
- Many truths and they are conditional upon individual perspectives.
- Truths are subjective.
- Examines relationship between power and knowledge.

Cultures

- Exotic, bizarre, primitive (behind “time”)
- Problem-oriented; homogenous and monolithic.
- Cultural similarities
- Respect for differences
- Nation-states are diverse in ethnic linguistic, religious make-up.
 - Counters stereotypes



Visuals

- Selective and biased images: shown as hostile, crowded, idle, disorderly.
- Often images of “unrecognizable” people.
- Emphasis on fear and incomprehensibility.
- Diverse images: under-privileged and privileged
- Everyday life is emphasized.

Language

- Standard English or English as the “normal” language.
- Disregard or unwillingness to use respectful or proper terminologies.
- Recognizes that language is political.
 - Learning new language leads to open-mindedness.
 - Respectful use of words.

Religion

- One “true” religion: leading to conceptions of good and evil religions.
- Desire to save people/cultures based on biased/superior views.
- Religion influences culture/life.
- Avoids superior/inferior conceptions of religion.

Economy and Labor

- Emphasis on free and not fair trade.
- Hard work always leads to success; winner takes it all.
- Poverty is an effect of people's habits and behavior.
- Ill-informed consumerism: Unwillingness to recognize the effects of consumerism.
- Blames poor people in non-western societies for job loss in U.S.
- Examines exploitation in labor
- Fair trade benefits all
- Awareness about over-consumption
- Has understanding of how global labor works and the needs of people.

Prejudice

- Prejudice existed in the past “and I don’t have it”
- Reluctant to share own biases.
- Is not a significant social issue.
- Prejudice is learned and is contagious
- Acknowledges/works to overcome bias
- Considers an important issue that ought to be discussed and corrected.
- Prejudice exists in all places in the world but in different forms.



Views of Social Change

- Apathy; no-change desired.
- Or actively works for status quo in power and privilege.
- By actively seeking policy changes, seeks to assist those who are not served by society.
- Transforms institutional practices.



Issues Oriented Learning

- Content Analysis
- Local/global relations in consumption
- Understanding of inequalities
- Cultural differences
- Media literacy
- Cross cultural experiential learning
- International service learning



Refugee experiences

- They (the refugees) did not try to convert me. Their religious viewpoints were personal and family related.
- They did not come to United States for economic reasons. Their arrival is more about political problems, displacement.
- They look at American very favorably and also have strong ties back to where they were born. They often send money to support families back home.
- After 9/11, they are looked at more suspicious, which is unfair.
- Somali women were particularly powerful. I was surprised and I thought they would be quite marginalized.
- Most families do not know English but are quite literate in their own languages. Children face challenges in balancing home cultures and American popular culture.
- Most work low wages. Often at night-time.



International learning

- I see America in a different way now. I feel like I can interpret foreign policies differently now.
- This is quite different from what I had seen on television or film.
- People are quite happy with the limited supplies they have. People don't have much to begin with.
- I **feel** this changed me as a person.



Global advocacy

- writing letters to newspapers seeking balanced viewpoints on global issues.
- writing letters to public officials to be more responsible on how foreign policy is enacted.
- seeking more funds for research or service work about AIDS in the world or on removing landmines in Mozambique, Afghanistan or Cambodia.
- interviewing how your congressional representative voted on global issues, particularly on foreign aid, and publishing the interview in a newsletter.
- having dialogue with community members and passing resolutions on specific issues.
- writing news releases, proposals and petitions.
- conducting research and projects that have direct social benefits and which can bring about positive change.