Global Learning: Innovative Educational Practice

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Abstract: *Access to study abroad in higher education is still limited to students from affluent backgrounds or with outstanding academic results. To make this experience more inclusive for many, internationalisation in higher education has shifted its paradigm in the last few decades from the conventional demarcation of student mobility abroad to internationalisation at home (IaH) and internationalisation of the curriculum (IaC). Global learning is a high-impact educational practice that provides students with unique, authentic learning experiences beyond the classroom. This innovative teaching approach brings about a paradigm shift in classroom delivery and helps students explore different worldviews, cultures, and life experiences, globally and boundlessly. Global learning fosters intercontinental awareness and appreciation of diversity. In this session, students will gain extensive knowledge and understanding from experts and industry players overseas about the topics they learn in class.*

Keywords: *Global Learning, High Impact Educational Practice, Experiential Learning*

1.   INTRODUCTION

High-impact practices (HIPs) are educational opportunities designed to increase not only students' retention and grades but also the number of graduates (Finley, 2013). Designed by George Kuh, based on his work with large datasets from the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE), these practices include first-year seminars, common intellectual experiences, learning communities, writing-intensive courses, collaborative projects, undergraduate research, diversity/global learning, service-learning, internships, and capstone courses.

Participation in these practices has been shown to impact the academic experiences of underserved students significantly and to promote equitable outcomes across the institution (Kuh, 2008). Students can transfer classroom content (or knowledge they learn in the classroom) into their lives, interact with people from different cultures, strengthen their connections with their faculty, and report deeper learning experiences from participating in multiple well-designed, accessible HIPs.

High-impact learning happens when students are actively engaged in the educational process and when their learning extends beyond the classroom to be applied in their personal and work lives. Students engaged in high-impact learning often see improvements in grade point averages, graduate on time, and are more engaged in their education.

2.   RESPONSIVE LEARNING IN GLOBAL LEARNING

A shift towards global education is not new, as learning experiences that extend beyond national borders have taken many forms. In response to the acceleration of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) has advocated for a move toward a more global education for all students to create a more engaging and responsive learning environment. Through global learning initiatives, UiTM immerses its students in culturally diverse activities, with lecture delivery by multi-racial educators and industry players with sound knowledge from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The Association of American Colleges and Universities has described global learning initiatives as a means for students to learn about the diversities and commonalities among the world's peoples, cultures, nations,

and regions (Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], 2018). Therefore, culturally-responsive teaching is integral to any global learning (Rego, 2018). Students can gain learning experiences by accessing global content on history, people, and cultural events from countries around the world through global learning platforms. Ultimately, engaging students in this way helps them embrace the diversity around them and prepares them to be more responsive to the dynamics of the global learning environment and to enter the global workforce.

Although the composition of students at UiTM may not fully enable the realisation of culturally responsive teaching, as the students are Bumiputras, the global learning experiences they have gained could make them more responsive and responsible learners. Global learning practices, through access to shared global knowledge, allow students, particularly those from marginalised groups, to meet their cognitive and social-emotional needs and thus expand their potential as learners. They will also benefit most from the cultural dimension of this global learning experience.

Global learning through collaborative efforts at UiTM promotes internationalisation of the curriculum and fosters a cross-cultural environment. Internationalisation of the curriculum does not solely refer to outbound student mobility. Nowadays, it can mean "internationalisation at home", aimed at providing benefits to all students (Leask, 2015). By undertaking global learning activities through collaborative teaching and learning, UiTM has increasingly recognised the need to involve more students in internationalisation. Hence, through global learning, it is hoped that this endeavour will help develop students into responsible global citizens and, indirectly, impact the local community and global society. In addition, global learning practices encourage cross-cultural knowledge by sharing and addressing issues from different perspectives. Students from different countries come together in the learning process and are productive in influencing one another.

To optimise learning through global learning practices, reflection on universal instruction is supported by administering questionnaires for feedback after each session. Feedback on the session content is essential to ensure it meets the learning needs of all students and to make informed, responsive decisions about the implementation and outcomes of the global learning sessions. Reflecting on student progress will definitely support student learning and, in

turn, help educators design a more responsive learning environment and plan global learning practices in the future.

Student feedback on global learning sessions was overwhelmingly positive. Regarding knowledge acquisition, many participants in the global learning session felt that the sessions provided a lot of information. In one session, their responses were as follows:

I learnt about the environment in Germany and more information about insurance in Germany.

"Actually, I learned more new things today."

"I learned about it in German."

"They provide living costs for the unemployed, not like in Malaysia, which is based on lots of perspectives."

"In Germany, they have lots of famous international firms or industries that provide export items into Asia and other countries that Malaysia does not have. In Malaysia, we follow the industry but cannot make one."

"From the talk, I know the current social system in Germany and its economy."

"I learned that we are all the same and equal. However, out in the world, there is countless diversity."

Feedback from another participating class:
"I have learned a lot about Indonesian culture."
"I have learnt the background of Indonesia and the status of English there."
"I learned about how beautiful Indonesia is and its culture."
"I have learnt a lot about Indonesia's culture and the use of English in the country."
"I learnt a lot about Indonesian cultures and their way of living."
"I have learnt about the status of English in Indonesia. It was new knowledge for me."

Based on the comments, the students who participated greatly benefited from the learning sessions. Although there were variations in their responses, they definitely have enhanced their learning. They were in direct contact with different cultures, focusing on what they could gain during the global online session. Not all students will learn and reflect on the same thing, as they possess different focuses and perspectives, indicating that they are responsible for their own learning. However, the implications would mainly concern cultural diversity, which they will bring forward in their globalised future. Clearly, global learning has expanded each student's cultural horizons and knowledge, empowering them to enhance their global competence.

3. METHOD/ DATA/PRACTICE

The importance of global learning as a response of higher education institutions to globalisation cannot be overstated. Students should acquire it as part of their academic experience at colleges and universities as a result of the internationalisation of higher education (Hovland, 2014; Olson et al., 2006; Ruscio et al., 2015). (Hovland, 2014; Olson et al., 2006; Ruscio et al., 2015). Students are required to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) about the external world and their internal selves in their daily lives across local and global communities to achieve the essential learning outcome of global learning. This is because global learning is the essential learning outcome.

3.1 THE FORM OF GLOBAL LEARNING SESSIONS

There are two forms in which global learning sessions can be conducted:

- Classes may incorporate globally focused or comparative perspectives to examine issues through a global lens. Faculty may invite speakers who explore global diversity. Course activities, projects, teams, online intercultural collaborations, and assignments may support engagement with global perspectives and/or action on global issues; or

- Virtual learning experiences with a global focus can transcend place-based boundaries—allowing connection with peers around the world through technology or participation in international internship experiences without leaving home.

3.2   THE METHODS TO START A GLOBAL LEARNING SESSION IN THE CLASSROOM.

There are three phases to starting a global learning session in the classroom. The first phase is planning global learning. This can be done through:

- studying the syllabus
- knowing your students
- matching the topic/subtopic to the speaker's expertise
- discussing and getting approval from the management (if necessary)
- firming up details

The second phase is the implementation (virtual/online) phase. Here, the lecturers need to:

- prepare your students
- prepare your lessons
- have a pre-discussion/meeting with your invited speaker
- set the time and duration
- run the lesson

The final phase is to review and improve the session. This can be done by doing the following:

- get feedback from students, have a post-session discussion
- send a "thank you" email to your colleague/invited speaker
- self-reflect, self-evaluate, improve, and plan your next session

Based on these evaluation phases, any system may "create a functional match between what the environment provides and what the actor can and desires to perform" (Thelen & Smith, 1994, p. 44). This is illustrated in Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Methods to start a global learning session

Global learning opportunities focus on cultivating skills, knowledge, abilities, and networks to prepare students to engage in the challenges and opportunities of our highly interconnected world. Broad global learning goals guide learning, and each goal has a set of outcomes that demonstrate what students will know or be able to do upon completion of their classroom experience. Hence, students will be prepared to:

- thrive and lead change in an interconnected world
- understand and engage with dimensions of cultural diversity to find solidarity and achieve common goals
- address today's greatest challenges and make a difference in the world, collaboratively and equitably

Various strategies have been proposed to encourage global learning at the individual and programme levels. At the programme level, students demonstrated a more comprehensive understanding of global learning. They can relate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to the inclusion of more dynamic internationalisation factors and situate global learning within multiple, larger systems. This result aligns with earlier research on the dynamic nature of internationalisation. Thus, students proposed broader and more diverse approaches. This result aligns with previous research on the dynamic nature of internationalisation. As a result of internationalisation, global learning within individual systems and at each level is open, self-organising, and continually changing, shaped by its sensitive connections to other dynamic variables such as purpose, programs, approaches, and projects (Zhou, 2016).

The AAC&U (2014) states that global learning should educate students about the world and the various ways their decisions affect both local and global communities, give them the tools to address urgent global concerns, and teach them to be "attentive to diversity." Based on post-session evaluations, the vast majority of participants believe that global learning helps students understand their place in the world and that they are interested in becoming better global citizens. Furthermore, nearly all students in the global learning classroom believe that engaging with global perspectives helps them understand social issues in other cultures. This allows students to articulate their knowledge, skills, and qualifications to diverse audiences both within and beyond the university, and to engage in structured reflections that connect course experiences to the development of global citizenship. Consequently,

this experience can enhance students' learning by making learning objectives intentional, high-impact, and connected to real-world and civic contexts.

4.   FINDINGS /UNFOLDING RESPONSIVE LEARNING AND RESPONSIBLE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

This study examined the influence of three Global Learning projects on students' academic performance for three consecutive semesters (20194, 20202 and 20204) between 2019 and 2020. The focus group for this study were students from the Faculty of Law, the Academy of Language Studies, and the Faculty of Health Sciences. The first project, conducted in 2019, involved the Faculty of Law, while the second and third projects, conducted in 2020, involved three faculties: the Academy of Language Studies, the Faculty of Health Sciences, and the Faculty of Law (Figure 2). Online questionnaires were distributed to elicit participants' responses on the impact of the Global Learning programme on learning. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Section A comprises five questions measured using a Likert scale. At the same time, Section B explores in depth the participants' experiences regarding their Global Learning sessions.

4.1 PARTICIPANTS' FEEDBACK

The term 'global learning' emphasises students' holistic growth by focusing on their internal and external development, aiming to increase their confidence, broaden their perspectives, deepen their knowledge, and encourage critical thinking and intercultural communication (Braskamp, Braskamp & Merril, 2009). Based on this definition, the following five categories were chosen to quantify the effectiveness of the Global Learning Programme conducted in UiTM: i) level of interest, ii) level of confidence, iii) importance of this programme, iv) relevance of the content, and v) contribution of knowledge.

Figure 2 shows that participants in the Global Learning programme not only showed increased interest in learning but also higher confidence. 64.3% of participants strongly agreed that the Global Learning session had increased their interest in learning more, compared with only 33% who agreed. Regarding whether the Global Learning programme contributed to participants' confidence levels, more than half of the participants (60.4%) strongly agreed that it did,

34.1% agreed that their confidence had increased, and 5.4% neither agreed nor disagreed. The findings in this data correlated with Bourne's (2014) theory that global learning encouraged students to develop their self-confidence by asking questions and through discussions.

Data collected from the questionnaire in this study also showed that participants perceived the content of the Global Learning sessions they attended as relevant and important for improving and enhancing their knowledge (See Figure 2). Education at universities should focus on the development of knowledge and skills; therefore, the content of any Global Learning programmes should be current, relevant, and flexible to global changes (Marsella, 2007). The participants' responses in this study regarding the importance of this programme, the relevance of the content, and the knowledge contribution concurred with Marsella's (2007) viewpoint. The data indicated that participants strongly agreed that what they learned in the Global Learning session was important (68.7%). 66.5% stated that the content of this programme is important in understanding their course, and that by participating in this Global Learning programme, their knowledge and understanding of the topics in their courses have increased substantially (69.8%). It is interesting to note that none of the participants disagreed with or strongly disagreed with any of the statements in the questionnaire.
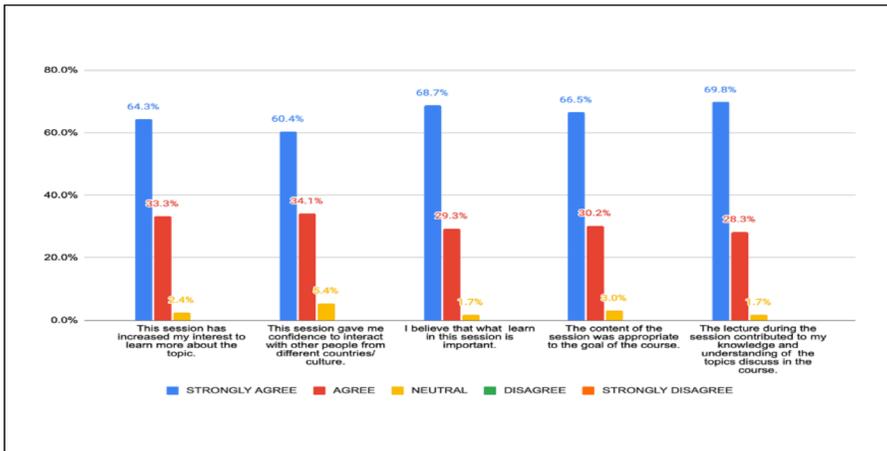

Figure 2. Participants' feedback on Global Learning Experience

An in-depth understanding of participants' experiences with the benefits of the Global Learning programme was also obtained from the questionnaire. The following questions were asked:

i)   How do you feel after listening to the session?
ii)   What have you learned from the talk today?
iii) Would you like to have more of these sessions? Any suggestions for improvement?

The respondents' feedback revealed that they not only felt inspired, confident, motivated, and excited after participating in the Global Learning sessions, but also reported that the session content helped enhance their knowledge. These are illustrated below:

Feel inspired:
- *I feel more inspired to see the culture and workplace of the other countries*
- *I am interested in learning more and deeper about business*
- *It makes me interested and motivated to explore and learn more things about business overseas*

Improve confidence:
- *Yes. This is an interesting sharing session that could increase students' confidence and help them gain more knowledge. I learned that we must be confident in ourselves and always remember our reason for starting a business when we feel like giving up.*
- *I feel more confident to be an entrepreneur*

Enhance motivation:
I feel more motivated to be a successful woman
I feel very motivated to continue to study further
I felt more motivated. I learned new things and want to improve myself better after listening to this talk
I feel motivated to relate my current work scope to the environmental issue.

Arouse excitement:
Awesome that we can share ideas and knowledge with Dr Beatriz
Excited because I get new knowledge from this lecture

Enhance knowledge:

I gained new knowledge and see the operation management from a new perspective

I feel enlightened. All the knowledge given to me was something new, hence it gives me a new perspective on how the law in Indonesia regulates the environment

I feel lucky to attend this session because it helps me to gain more knowledge about this topic

My feeling was so happy because I could learn more about Japanese culture

4.2 GLOBAL LEARNING PROGRAMME AND PARTICIPANTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Does the Global Learning programme prepare students for the future? Does it promote higher thinking skills and improve their academic performances? In this study, students' academic performance, measured by Grade Point Average (GPA) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA), was used to assess the effectiveness of the Global Learning programme.


Figure 3. The impact of Global Learning on students' academic performance

Figure 3 illustrates the impact the Global Learning programme had on students' academic performance. Students who participated in the Global Learning programme showed significant improvements in their GPA and CGPA across the three projects. The first project conducted in semester 20194 showed an increase in students' GPA scores (M=2.959 to M=3.406). In contrast, students who participated in the second project conducted in semester 20202 recorded an even higher GPA score (M=3.495). Similarly, students' CGPA scores improved, with all students who took part in this programme increasing their CGPA from 2.959 to 3.152 in semester 20202 and to 3.376 in semester 20204.

Students who participated in the Global Learning programme in this study were also more likely to be conferred the Dean's List Award (Figure 3). 8.82% of Global Learning participants were presented with the Dean's List Award in semester 20194, 35.42% in semester 20202 and a further increment of 19.13% in semester 20204.

A comparison of students' academic performance between those participating in the Global Learning programme and those who did not was conducted (Figure 4). In the first project (semester 20194), the results showed that Global Learning participants did not achieve higher academic performance than their counterparts. The GPA and CGPA mean scores of students engaged in the Global Learning programme were lower (M=2.595) compared with the GPA mean score of 3.083 and the CGPA mean score of 3.079 for non-participants. The Global Learning group performed better in the second project (semester 20202), with slight improvements in the GPA (M=3.406) and CGPA (M=3.361) scores compared with the non-participant group. In contrast, the mean GPA and CGPA for the non-participant group were lower at 3.152 and 3.245, respectively. The same conclusion can be drawn for the third project (semester 20204), with the Global learning group outperforming the non-participant group in both their GPA and CGPA scores.
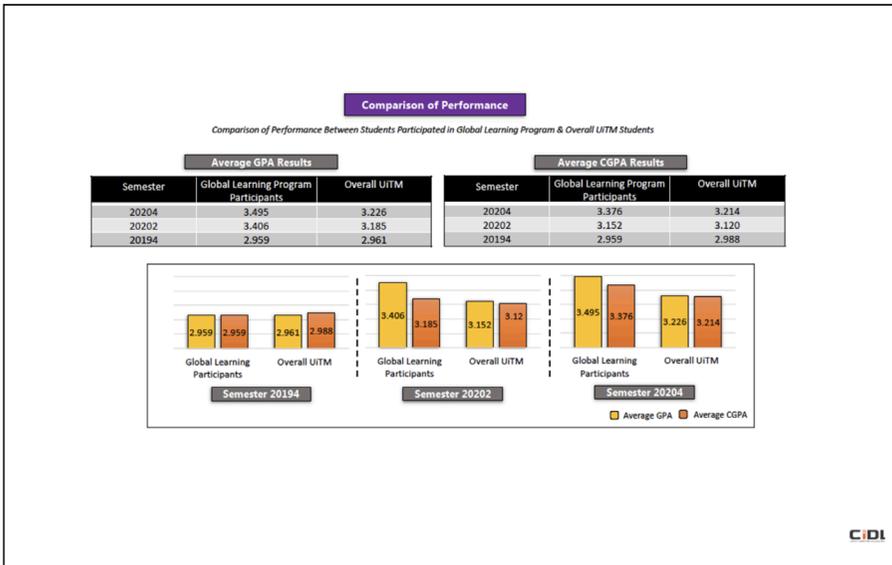
Figure 4. Comparison of performance between students who participated in the Global Learning programme and overall UiTM students

A comparison of academic performance between students enrolled in the Global Learning programme and all students at UiTM was conducted (Figure 4). The first project (semester 20194) displayed mixed results. The GPA score (M=2.959) for participants of the Global Learning programme was similar to that of the overall UiTM students' group. In contrast, the overall UiTM student group did slightly better (M=2.988) than the Global Learning participants (M=2.961) in CGPA. For the second and third projects (semesters 20202 and 20204), the results favoured students who participated in the Global Learning programme. The Global Learning participants had higher mean GPAs and CGPAs than the overall UiTM student population.

In summary, the findings in this study align with Bourn's (2014) theory of global learning, which treats global learning as a process. Students are exposed to different approaches and ways of understanding the world, thereby enhancing their attitudes, motivation, knowledge, and communication skills. The Global Learning programme at UiTM reflects this, as it not only broadens students' global vision but also enhances their knowledge, encourages critical thinking, and improves communication.

5.   CONCLUSIONS

Global learning fosters a broader understanding and global consciousness across fields, enabling students to learn, interrogate, and reflect on the world without physically crossing borders. It is about moving minds, not bodies, through virtual mobility, as lectures and seminars are delivered via various synchronous online platforms. As a high-impact learning experience, Global Learning ensures that students actively engage in real-world applications of knowledge and practice responsive learning.

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8.   AUTHOR'S CONTRIBUTION

The development and execution of this research were a collaborative effort among the listed authors. Oswald Timothy Edward served as the primary lead, responsible for the study's initial conceptualisation and the preparation of the original draft. The methodological framework was developed jointly by Oswald Timothy Edward and Siti Hafsyah Idris, and Oswald Timothy Edward and Julina Munchar conducted the formal analysis. Furthermore, the final manuscript underwent extensive review and editing by Oswald Timothy Edward, Siti Hafsyah Idris, and Julina Munchar to ensure intellectual rigour and clarity. Ultimately, all authors have reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript for publication.

9. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST DECLARATION

The authors declare that there are no known financial or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper. Although the study was developed within the context of institutional academic initiatives, including Global Learning activities at Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Malaysia, these initiatives did not involve any financial support, commercial interests, or contractual obligations related to the research outcomes. The design of the study, the collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, the writing of the manuscript, and the decision to submit the manuscript for publication were conducted independently by the authors.

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