

TDG Project - Understanding Global Issues through Cross-Faculty Collaborations

Background

Acquiring global perspectives is one of the Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) of graduates in the Hong Kong University of Education¹. Global perspectives and internationalization are intertwined: the former promotes the latter, and vice versa. According to the Institute Research of Graduate (IRG) conducted in 2013 and before², as well as the GILO survey for students, Global perspectives is described as follows:

Global perspectives refer to individual's awareness of the limitations of one's own culture and of other cultures, of the interdependence of countries, and the interconnection among the past, present and future.

This definition is adapted from Hanvey's *An Attainable Global Perspective* (1976). Hanvey identified 5 key areas for development of global perspectives and according to Hanvey's idea, global perspective has embraced the idea of global awareness.

Global perspectives can also be understood in a very broad sense³, understanding and addressing global issues from different perspectives. The globalized world has a whole range of complex issues, ranging from health to poverty, from education to economics, and from democracy to sustainability. Global awareness⁴ can help our students make sense of the changes and impacts of globalization, and they are capable of interacting and collaborating with each another more effectively, tolerantly and inter-culturally.

The project team decided to follow Hanvey's work as the starting point and then to branch out the coverage to a broader scope. For example, Hicks (2003) outlined some of the key ideas and concepts of global education⁵ and the details will be studied and incorporated into the rubrics

¹ Including

- ♦ Show an understanding of social and civic responsibility
- ♦ Show tolerance for and appreciation of cultural and intellectual diversity
- ♦ Can function effectively and constructively in a global environment and in a variety of complex situations
- ♦ Be able to appreciate diversity of communication styles employed by individuals from different national and cultural backgrounds.

² The IRG is simplified from 2014 onwards and no descriptions of GILOs are provided.

³ According to Doscher (2012), the ability to examine the world via diverse cultural, intellectual, and spiritual points of view has been called global perspective.

⁴ According to the definition adopted by Doscher (2012), knowledge of interrelationships among issues, trends, and systems across the globe has been called global awareness (Lemke, 2002).

⁵ Hicks, D. (2003). Thirty years of global education: A reminder of key principles and precedents. *Educational Review*, 55(3), 265-275.

and guidelines for the use of the project. The definition quoted from Doscher (2012) will also be one of the reference points.

The importance of global perspectives is well acknowledged by the University and echoes the theme “internationalization” by UGC and QAC. The University aims to develop students’ international perspectives and global knowledge so that they may become caring professionals with global vision in their own fields.

While there are many efforts to engaging students to gain overseas exposure, it is of the same importance that students can enhance global perspectives through on-campus experiences. Internationalization of the curriculum can be realized by joint degree/ joint projects at the programme level. On the other hand, incorporating global elements at the course level can also facilitate the same goal (Burnouf, 2004; Doscher, 2012; Green, 2013). The infusions of global issues and introduction of global perspective in programmes / courses are one of the means to enhance students’ global perspective. According to the result of Doscher’s study (2012), global learning courses, with components such as international and global content, did indeed have a positive effect on student achievement of global awareness and global perspective (p. 121).

This project will focus on global issues and related topics in course teaching as the starting point⁶. A stock-taking exercise was conducted at the University in early 2015 and it was found that the three faculties have over 300 courses consisting of global elements. These courses cover a wide range of topics including education, culture, literature, politics, environment, social development, and globalization.

⁶ “Global issues and problems” is the study of the persistent, transnational, interconnected concerns of our age: peace and security, development, the environment, and human rights (Doscher, 2012). Global issue, in brief, is a complex matter that may have impact on the world. Through the understanding of global issues, students will explore and identify different perspectives, and will be aware of the diversified approach of global matters, subsequently enhance their global perspectives.