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Abstract

In this chapter, we employ what we term our “empathic global citizenship” framework as a novel, dual emotional-logical approach to critical community engagement that helps enhance and promote global citizenship values that are transferrable and applicable in multiple contexts. We describe how this approach enriches existing community engagement models for students in a manner that is responsive and accessible to student demographics not equally represented by the higher education landscape. Therein, we also posit that, whether students conduct engagement activities locally or abroad, they are likely to gain valuable intercultural experiences and interactions that lead to the cultivation of empathy and global awareness. This chapter is situated in the context of critical global

citizenship education and community engagement experiences at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), a large Hispanic-Serving Institution. UTEP is located in El Paso in the far western part of Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border with Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and neighboring Las Cruces, New Mexico. The area, known as the Paso Del Norte region, represents the largest bilingual, binational work force in the Western Hemisphere with a population of approximately 2.3 million people. UTEP’s unique cultural and geographical location presents a rich landscape, with its own set of challenges and global interdependent dynamics, to create an environment where students and institutions must work in concert to address community challenges and model the type of engagement and mutual collaborative partnerships needed to deconstruct larger world problems. We posit that the experiences and skills our students learn in this context serve as invaluable and transferable building blocks for their development as empathic, global citizens throughout their educational journey and beyond, whether they remain in the region or relocate to another part of the world. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future avenues for continued development of empathy, global-mindedness, and critical lenses in our students, as well as the challenges and

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opportunities posed by our higher education landscape and the realities of the world as we know it today.

Keywords

Empathy • Critical global citizenship • Borders • Hispanic-serving institutions • Mexico • Leadership

3.1 Introduction

The world is complex with interrelated societies facing common imminent challenges, often aggravated by contentious socio-political discord dating back for generations. In this context, we have a collective sense of urgency for leaders, individuals, and organizations committed to a value system of global citizenship to help bridge the widening divides. Higher education institutions have a responsibility and role to play in their mutual efforts to broaden our understanding of global citizenship. They are also essential in exploring and implementing strategies to instill key values in communities and students in meaningful and impactful ways for creating positive change. As higher education continues to contribute to the preparation of global citizens, it is important that we examine, develop, and implement innovative curricular approaches and models that instill lifelong commitments to promote a more inclusive, equitable, and globally interdependent society.

In this chapter, we employ what we term our “empathic global citizenship” framework as a novel, dual emotional-logical approach to critical community engagement (Costa and Leong 2012; Mitchell 2008) that helps enhance and promote global citizenship values that are transferrable and applicable in multiple contexts. We describe how this approach enriches existing community engagement models for students in a manner that is responsive and accessible to student demographics not equally represented by the mainstream higher education landscape. Therein, we also posit that, whether students conduct engagement activities locally or abroad, they are

likely to gain valuable intercultural experiences and interactions that lead to the cultivation of empathy and global awareness.

To explain the connection between critical community engagement, empathy outcomes, global citizenship, and contextually driven programming, we situate this analysis at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), a leading Hispanic-Serving Institution (HSI) in the United States. UTEP is located in El Paso in the far western part of Texas along the U.S.-Mexico border with Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and neighboring Las Cruces, New Mexico. The area, known as the Paso Del Norte region, represents the largest bilingual, binational work force in the Western Hemisphere with a population of approximately 2.3 million people. UTEP’s unique cultural and geographical location presents a rich landscape, with its own set of challenges and global interdependent dynamics, to create an environment where students and institutions must work in concert to address community challenges and model the type of engagement and mutual collaborative partnerships needed to deconstruct and find solutions to larger world problems. We posit that the experiences and skills our students learn in this context serve as invaluable and transferable building blocks for their development as empathic, global citizens throughout their educational journeys and beyond, whether they remain in the region or relocate to another part of the world.

We conclude this chapter with a discussion of our continued pursuit to cultivate empathy and global-mindedness in students, while leveraging resources within the confines of higher education institutions. We offer additional points for future discussions, including recommendations on the importance of further developing our framework, on more effectively leveraging place, context, and resources, on how other institutions can learn from our approach while adapting their own unique ones, and all doing so in a manner helpful for educational institutions to maximize their impact on inclusive and equitable student engaged learning that positively impacts the larger society.

3.2 Higher Education Institutions as Drivers of Global Citizenship

Institutions of higher education are increasingly expected to graduate students with a number of qualities, skills, experiences, and aptitudes, including the ability to think critically, the development of leadership and interpersonal skills, and an openness to diversity, inclusion, and equity; often described or tabulated to define students' well-roundedness. At the same time, institutions are also now increasingly expected to demonstrate their public value in the creation of knowledge that is consumable and applicable to the workplace and real-world, global settings.

To address these growing expectations, institutions of higher education have turned to models of engagement supported by national entities such as the American Association of Colleges and Universities and the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Frameworks for curriculum innovation and community engagement are sought for guidance in preparing the next generation of citizens and for developing widely accepted best practices for the institutions that support them. The challenges with these frameworks, as with any model posed to help address a problem with education, include their ability to be applicable and adaptable in all settings and types of institutions (Goren and Yemeni 2017). It is then that the ingenuity of scholars, leaders, and practitioners is necessary to envision and adopt innovative models that best fit their context.

Through the UTEP case study, we address the adaptation of high impact practices (Kuh 2008; see also Kuh and O'Donnell 2013) that purposefully integrate place-based community engagement to both support culturally responsive education while also contributing to the public good. Through a modeling of our institutional commitment as a Carnegie designated Community Engaged Institution (CEI), our empathic global citizenship framework presents a practical and theoretical approach for instilling a lifelong commitment to citizenship that is transferable to different global settings, while leveraging institutional and community assets and resources locally. We posit the

transferability and instillment of citizenship values serve as an essential foundation of empathic global citizenship through critical and reflective community engagement.

High impact practices are generally defined by their experiential learning components, not only offering students hands-on educational opportunities, but also creating a structure that increases touchpoints with faculty for constructive feedback and formative learning support. UTEP's adaptation of these high impact practices offers benefits and a structure while also adding to the quality of student experiences by making many of these opportunities community engaged. For example, high impact practices typically include internships, capstone courses, group work and cultural activities, undergraduate research, and community engagement as separate, yet important types of experiences. Instead of independently offering capstone courses (comprehensive, senior-level type projects) or internships with a primary focus on student learning, many of these experiences are organized with community partners with a social or public purpose mission. As Núñez and Gonzalez (2008) illustrate, each of these experiences can be facilitated in and with community partners giving the same careful attention to reciprocity¹ and mutual benefit wherein student learning is treated as important and equally weighted as the benefit provided to the community. By designing these experiences in a manner that benefits both students and community partners, students gain skill-building experiences as they simultaneously learn problem-solving in social and public contexts. Students are also exposed to a level of consciousness of how the community and its representatives essentially

¹ Reciprocity in community engagement and global education experiences is critical for offsetting real or perceived paternalism in local communities. Outside assistance is not automatically virtuous, and it can undermine self-determination; as such, recognizing the ability to negotiate change on people's own terms is a fundamental step in creating non-exploitive relationships. As once famously put by Lilla Watson, an Australian Aboriginal woman: "If you have come here to help me, you are wasting your time. But if you have come here because your liberation is bound up with mine, then let's work together" (As cited in Welsch and Vivanco 2018, 126).

serve as their co-teachers and contributing educators. Their gratitude, often expressed without priming, extends not just to the institution that serves them and offers these experiences, but also to their community partners who host and mentor them.

Additionally, as we discuss later in this chapter, the student population at UTEP is different culturally and in socio-economic status; they are often challenged by various life demands not typically associated with the traditional first year entering student at a university. The dynamics and characteristics of UTEP's student population thus require a conscientious design of the activities and experiences meant to aggregate their traditional learning. Accordingly, anything designed to contribute to overall development must take into account students' complex life and family obligations. This is the case, for example, as it relates to what we know as study abroad programming. When institutions focus on offering students unique cultural experiences, global education, and engagement opportunities for learning outside of the classroom, these institutions must rely on different models beyond just the option to study abroad as the main pathway for developing global educational opportunities.

Although study abroad and study away programs offer incredibly valuable opportunities for students to gain first-hand experiences in different cultural settings, they are not always an ideal or accessible model for all students. These programs are mostly expensive, typically limiting a student's ability to earn income or to be at home to fulfill familial obligations related to childcare. Given these potential limitations, students must have a greater array of options to develop the learning outcomes desired through global enrichment opportunities. Once again, through the UTEP case study, we will explain how by emphasizing and centering the core of our global learning approach through critical community engagement, students may best develop the global citizenship skills anticipated for them.

In the next section, we elaborate on the use of our empathic and global citizenship-based framework to understand, decipher, and apply enhanced and effective critical community engagement

programming. While community engagement and global engagement are not new high impact practices, we argue our dual approach should help instill deep, meaningful empathic and global conscious learning applicable for any context (mainly local in UTEP's case) and thereafter transcend contexts and borders, with great potential to positively influence students' future contributions to society wherever life may lead them.

3.3 Empathic Global Citizenship: A Theoretical and Practical Framework for Enhancing Critical Community Engagement

Courses incorporating community engagement provide students with innovative curriculum approaches to facilitate experiences beyond the classroom that are meaningful for understanding and personally connecting with the history and culture of the communities they learn and serve in (see Núñez and Gonzalez 2018; Jacoby 2009; Kuh 2008; Sax 2004; Astin et al. 2000; Stanton et al. 1999). Community engaged courses further allow students to learn how they may positively affect the community and societal issues and needs while gaining invaluable hands-on experiences and a deeper understanding of the methods and practices of their field. A key component in student development therein concerns the theoretical and practical underpinnings students may learn and apply to their community engagement work (e.g., Markus et al. 1993; Osborne et al. 1998). But what is the basis for students to understand and care about those they are serving in their community, and how and why does it matter on a global scale? While some students may instinctively see the value and importance of engaging with their communities locally, others may find it more challenging if they are newcomers to the communities they serve and/or if they are unacquainted with the local socio-economic and historical dynamics and broader global contexts. This disconnect lends to Pogge's (2002, 3) question: "what should (then) be the basis for our concern for

those whom we have never met and are (otherwise) never likely to meet?”.

Here, we propose dually employing the concepts of *empathy* and *global citizenship* for our “empathic global citizenship” framework as a novel way to foster and maximize the benefits of critical community engagement as students learn about the needs and plight of others, their historical roots, and reflect on how they can make a difference in their praxis (see Van Willigen 2002) for affecting positive change on behalf of, and along with, those being served. In stimulating and cultivating an empathic response to community needs, we can move students closer to undertaking what some scholars describe as one’s political and moral obligation to work as global citizens towards justice and humanity, while recognizing through a critical lens, the causal responsibility rooted in a history of institutionalized, systemic oppression that has propagated gender, racial/ethnic, and other social disparities and inequalities (see Andreotti 2014; Dobson 2006; Pogge 2002).

Our empathic global citizenship approach *combines* the benefits of learning and stimulating empathy in community engaged experiential learning, while simultaneously teaching students to think with a global citizenship perspective—one that applies a critical lens for understanding their obligations of justice towards underserved communities and therein recognizing the complicity and causal responsibility that underlies social and political disparities. Distinct from previous works, while Dobson (2006, 187) and others (Andreotti 2014; Pogge 2002; Shiva 1998; see also Bauman 1998) have argued that a focus on obligations of justice is preferable over approaches that center on emotionally-based reactions such as “sympathy, pity or beneficence,” we posit that these approaches are not mutually exclusive and can actually work best when applied in tandem, particularly if one instills empathy for the emotional framework. Empathy provides a particularly useful, action-oriented framework because it facilitates for students and faculty to learn to put themselves in the shoes of those they are being partnered with as a means of better understanding, and

sometimes even experiencing, issues of justice and equity. As such, courses with opportunities for community engagement need not (and should not!) be colonial, patriarchal, or exploitive. They can instead involve reciprocity in the relationships that develop, allowing students and community members to exchange knowledge and experiences of mutual benefit, which may be particularly likely when students already have ancestral and/or personal ties to the communities they are partnering with. Furthermore, the knowledge and experiences that students internalize and use to develop their global citizenship may be transferable to future community interactions, including to other parts of the world where they might encounter other people and cultures with their own unique histories and critical societal issues to address.²

Students often draw from rich, diverse backgrounds and prior knowledge and experiences when committing to their respective engagement activities, which makes applying a dual emotional-logical approach especially practical and helpful for students to more successfully adapt to new learning environments. In some instances, there may be students who are themselves from the community being served (or from a very similar community) and thus will likely have more immediate and powerful empathic responses to the activities while perhaps already being aware of the historical discrepancies tied to obligations of justice. In other instances, students may have little to no previous experience with or knowledge about a community they are serving and some may even experience a certain level of cognitive dissonance in learning about socio-

² One caveat, though, is that cultural mixing can also lead to friction (Tsing 2005), and not just to collaboration. When people come together in diverse and conflicting social interactions, they are likely to create movement, action, and effects that lead to new and unexpected possibilities. We also wish to acknowledge that while friction and interactional experiences and exchanges do not necessarily make boundaries and inequities disappear, they do, however, create alternatives for redistribution of knowledge, experiences, and “unalienable possessions” such as identity (Weiner 1992; Hylland Erickson 2004) that allow for co-existing within newly found forms of appreciation and empathy.

economic and historical discrepancies, which may lead to learning obstacles to understanding, much less embracing the obligations of justice component. For the latter, an openness to learn from key class concepts related to global citizenship is critical in setting a foundation from which to build a full, well-rounded quality learning experience that can lead to maximized engagement outcomes. While previous studies do not provide a clear path on how to facilitate an openness to learning amid cognitive dissonance, our emotionally-based empathy framework may serve as a uniquely useful and practical vehicle for learners to explore and recognize the historical realities that underlie contemporary social and political disparities. As such, empathy and global citizenship can be learned in and outside of the classroom, applied and practiced in the community, and transferred elsewhere in future interactions locally, across borders, and in global arenas.

We further expect that, as students develop key leadership skills in their global citizen engagement activities, the driving concept of empathy should help maximize their resiliency in bridging the theory–practice divide and serve as a guiding principle connecting to other related concepts, such as equity, ethics, morality, diversity, and antiracism in public policy. All of these efforts in our combined approach are key to realizing perhaps the most critical, overriding objective in community engagement—one that Dan Butin and other critics argue often falls short: to achieve actual, substantive change that positively impacts the very people from those underserved communities we aim to accompany and assist (see Butin 2015; Wiegman 2012).

3.3.1 The Empathy Component

Delving into the empathy component, previous studies have demonstrated a significant connection between community engagement and empathy at both the interpersonal and intergroup levels (see, for example, Lundy 2007; Scott and Graham 2015; Sirin et al. 2021). Most recently,

Sirin et al. (2021, 244–52) have found that empathy can be employed as a theoretical and practical educational framework for students to put themselves in the shoes of those they are serving in order to maximize both their learning experiences and the quality of their service to and with the community. From the theoretical side, in-class reflective, guided discussions about the concept of empathy and how it has been applied in academic studies can help students develop an acute understanding of the dynamics that affect interpersonal and intergroup interactions in a society wherein the plight and needs of one person or group, and how other groups react to them, have important social and political implications to consider. We cannot emphasize enough how crucial this component is.

From a practical application standpoint, once students begin to engage in community activities where they are able to observe the plight and needs of others, affective empathy can be stimulated and cultivated, either in a *reactive* or *parallel* manner (Sirin et al. 2016, 895; see also Davis 1994; Stephan and Finlay 1999). With respect to the latter and as previously mentioned, those who have experienced actual hardship or victimization in their own past are more likely to see a parallel between their experiences and that of another individual or group experiencing similar emotions, even if it is not under the exact same circumstances. For instance, a student who has a deeply personal experience with issues resulting from racial/ethnic societal disparities may be much more likely than others to empathize in a parallel manner with the plight of an immigrant suffering from health issues due to the conditions they are exposed to at an immigration detention center (see Sirin et al. 2016). At the same time, there are many ways for those who are not so personally familiar with certain experiences to still have a reactive emotional or cognitive response to the experiences of others—typically by virtue of being generally empathic by nature, as well as by being socialized to contemplate in such a manner either as part of their early childhood development and/or via subsequent socialization processes, including,

but not limited to, the critical community engagement activities we propose here (see Sirin et al. 2021 for a more in-depth outline and exploration of these processes).

As faculty, we can plan opportunities for community engagement. However, working with people in their communities or natural environments means we cannot fully control or influence the multiple interactions that students and community partners are likely to encounter, which is not a bad thing. In fact, we find it important to recognize that activities in community settings outside of the classroom are likely to shape how students naturally experience empathic responses without priming them too much ahead of time to think or react in a particular way. We thus encourage an approach that first teaches students to observe, participate, ask questions, listen, and engage with respect and integrity while representing themselves, their fields, and the university in community settings. While empathy is also taught and discussed more generally in the classroom as a helpful, preparatory theoretical framework, students most directly experience the various processes leading to their empathic responses through participant observation and as part of their critical reflection exercises. Students may also take part in interactive conversations that are likely to ensue during or after each activity. As well, student critical-thinking and levels of responsiveness may vary, which is expected and may be especially helpful in safeguarding the natural (not primed) learning environment that allows each student to develop and grow based on their individual tendencies and strengths. In all, students are encouraged to stimulate and cultivate their empathic responses in both theory and practice across time through the pre, during, and post stages of engagement. By the end of a given engagement time frame, the hope is that students are able to arrive full circle in developing a newfound and genuine appreciation of what it means to put oneself in the shoes of another who is facing a societal challenge.

In recent research conducted at The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Sirin and Vilalobos (see Sirin et al. 2021) collected preliminary data to test in practice how empathy

functions in a course setting by embedding a community engagement component into their introductory, undergraduate-level government courses. These courses were mandatory for all majors and were conducted in a large-class setting with approximately 300 students, which made it possible to garner many observations and high variation in student backgrounds and educational interests. Students were required to complete approximately 5–20 hours of community engagement across various organizations and events designated by UTEP's Center for Community Engagement (CCE). At the end of the semester, the researchers conducted exit surveys with their students and found that students who participated in community engagement exhibited higher levels of group and overall empathy compared with those from sections that did not include an engagement component (see Sirin et al. 2021, 246–7). Such preliminary findings are encouraging and merit further systematic inquiry, including exploring how, in teaching students about empathy from a theoretical framework, such an approach can better prepare students for engagement while helping to expand our scholarly understanding of how the engagement experiences themselves in practice stimulate empathic reactions and enhance empathic motivations for enacting and realizing positive societal changes.³

3.3.2 The Global Citizenship Component

So what is global citizenship and what role do public universities play in creating opportunities for achieving real, positive changes in society? In line with our colleagues contributing to this

³ The benefits of our curricular innovations in this vein may also help non-social science majors who take our courses as electives. For example, as other previous studies have shown, although medical students often experience a general decline in empathy as they earn their degrees (Potash et al. 2014), those who take relevant humanities courses with engagement components may actually improve in levels of empathy as an overall educational outcome (Graham et al. 2016).

volume, we embrace the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.7, which nestles global citizenship within the following context: “By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, *global citizenship* [emphasis added] and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development” (United Nations 2021). Very importantly, this perspective promotes a collective responsibility and mindset for achieving goals while engaging in reciprocal relationships through mutual collaboration with community partners. Adopting such a perspective is far more preferable and beneficial to the community than, say, treating engagement activities as an opportunity for self-actualization, which lends itself to a dreaded form of community engagement that assumes a “moral supremacy and vanguardist feeling of being responsible for changing or saving the world ‘out there’” (Andreotti 2014, 21–2).

To properly foster global citizenship, one must thus strive to maintain a collective outlook that aims to engender positive, global change for the community in a selfless manner. Global education for students is possible in our universities, and not just for students who travel abroad or for those who are in graduate schools and professionals who have the resources and opportunities to travel. Developing intercultural awareness and communication through global processes is possible when students engage with people of diverse cultures, religions, ages, genders, abilities, lifestyles, and socio-economic backgrounds (McCurdy et al. 2005; see also Winkelman 2005).⁴ As well, cultivating opportunities for global education and cultural awareness can be taught through a variety of avenues and options, including: community engagement

opportunities, service learning, research, and internships where students can learn about their own culture, the nuances and differences within their own culture, as well as the cultures of other people and organizations. The goal is not for students to exchange their cultures for those of others, but rather to develop an awareness of the ways they and others think and behave. Therein, globalization does not become a matter of cultural homogenization, but rather a process that illustrates how people create and nurture their cultures because of their connections with others (Welsch and Vivanco 2018). In addition, not everyone participates equally when making such intercultural connections, which allows for critical consideration and critiques of power relationships and social inequality. By participating in group activities and discussions, students benefit from seeing and experiencing how others think and behave, thus helping to cultivate sensitivity and intercultural competence.

In our own context, we aim to maximize the potential we have at UTEP and our community surroundings, as well as increase our global impact beyond the Paso Del Norte region. While many of our students, staff, and faculty members are from our border region, we also have students hailing from 70 countries who bring diverse and unique global perspectives to our learning environment. Therein, we are uniquely distinct as an institution because the lion’s share of our experiential learning and critical community engagement partnerships take place locally in binational and bicultural geographic settings.

That said, one of our biggest challenges in taking on a global citizenship approach is to avoid a tunnel vision perspective that would limit our global outlook *solely* based on our experiences in the U.S.-Mexico border region. We aim to build on the direct learning experiences that happen locally by having faculty and students also (not instead of!) think about how such learning may be applied in other contexts, including other binational border regions across the world to achieve a more well-rounded, truly global perspective. This includes building and expanding on our study abroad and study away programs. In doing so, we encourage colleagues from other universities to

⁴ This falls in line with the citizenship education goals for the Global Network for Learning Cities (GNLC) program that is part of the United Nation’s Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Institute of Lifelong Learning.

likewise challenge themselves in dually maximizing their engagement and outreach efforts to underserved communities both near and far. As we delve into such plans and considerations, we must remind and challenge ourselves to set meaningful and attainable goals for achieving actual, substantive positive changes in society. Therein, we must not fall into the trap of serving as “justice dreamers” who may mean well but whose efforts are centered on symbolic forms of outreach rather than more tangible, meaningful activities for facilitating and affecting positive changes that would fulfill community engagement goals (see Butin 2015).

One of the best ways to avoid becoming symbolic “justice dreamers” is to accept and address directly the pitfall that so often haunts academia—the tendency to address issues in a purely academic manner. According to Wiegman (2012, 1), the desire among academics to affect positive change in society is often inspired and driven vis-à-vis the “critical habits and political ambitions of identity knowledges in their current institutional and intellectual formations” in academia. Wiegman further employs the term “identity knowledges” to describe disciplinary and interdisciplinary fields that promote scholarship in the area of social justice and change. Yet many academics allow themselves to stop short of actually affecting change beyond the classroom, while others who do move on to engage with the community may do so with the wrong mindset: engaging in activities that they find self-rewarding and inadvertently seeking to reflect on how their experiences contribute to their self-improvement, which may boil down to feeling good about doing “the right thing” regardless of whether they actually did something to meaningfully improve the lives of those around them (Butin 2015; Wiegman 2012; but see Mayhew and DeLuca 2007). When community activities are approached in such a manner, educators and students may place themselves—often unintentionally—on a pedestal for being the ones to contribute their time to the community and thus crowning themselves for their efforts without even considering why the societal issues exist in the first place. As well, apart from

thinking too much in academic terms, educators and students might also, and at a more personal level struggle with a sense of entitlement and “sanctioned ignorance”⁵ that is blind to the historical injustices that created such social and political disparities (see Spivak 1990; Pogge 2002; Dobson 2006; Andreotti 2014).⁶

The antidote to such academic and personal shortcomings is to not only employ a global citizenship perspective, but one that is more “critical” than “soft” in nature (Andreotti 2014, 27–30), and one that nicely overlaps with the literature on critical community engagement (Butin 2015; Wiegman 2012; see also Mitchell 2008). Andreotti (2014, 27–30 and Table 2.1) conceptualizes critical literacy as an exploratory process of reading about world history and its “implications of our systems of belief in local/global terms in relation to power, social relationships and the distribution of labour and resources” while also developing our skills, shaping our critical engagement activities, reflecting on our community experiences and the impact we are having, and what remains to be done. By helping students to recognize and name the forces that cause social inequities in this way, they are more likely to become critical of oppressive forces and structures that cause the privileges and inequities with a broader critical awareness of the world. At the same time, we must also recognize that our knowledge on any given subject and abilities are partial and incomplete. Community engagement experiences allow for continuous and further transformative learning at each iteration, which helps us to

⁵ Spivak (1990) describes sanctioned ignorance as a process that naturalizes the myth of Western supremacy through disavowing the history of imperialism and colonialism while also disregarding contemporary power disparities between “First” and “Third” Worlds evident in today’s global capitalist system. Therein, the sense of sanctioned ignorance may be maximized when those in First World countries buy into their perceived historical supremacy while those in the Third World meanwhile acquiesce to a desire to be “civilized/catch up with the West” (Andreotti 2014, 26; see also Biccum 2005).

⁶ As another applicable antidote, one may also consider a collaborative faculty-practitioner approach to research (e.g., see Barge and Shockley-Zalabak 2008).

refocus our perspectives about others and ourselves, and therein build more effective and meaningful reciprocal relationships with our community partners.

3.4 Leveraging Place, Context, and Resources

At the outset, we discussed the role that higher education institutions play in the formation of global citizens as well as some of the models, or high impact practices, best suited to provide students with richer learning environments. We then described the importance of creating such experiences in community settings where critical perspectives can be drawn, and how connections can be made to further understand the complexities of a setting. We have posited that through such engagement experiences, empathetic and globally-minded values, thoughts, and behaviors may emerge through effective critical community engagement, and we have argued that these are transferable to different contexts and may be applied globally. We have also addressed the importance of establishing these experiences in a way that is culturally responsive and appropriate for a given student population, first to ensure their adaptability and accessibility, and secondly to enrich the depth of the experiences that help students associate with their environment in an empathetic and globally-minded manner. We thus posit that leveraging an institution's place, context, and resources are of utmost importance in this approach.

To further illustrate what we mean by leveraging place, context, and resources, it is important to explain UTEP's community and educational context. This is not meant to imply that replicability of the setting would be the goal, but rather illustrates a process for truly understanding where organizations with an ability to promote empathetic global citizenship may be situated and how one might adapt to succeed in any unique setting. Through this deep exploration of organizational settings, educational institutions or the like may not only offer similar opportunities, but also model a respectful connection and

invaluable commitment to their own communities and the respective challenges they face.

3.4.1 The Borderland Institution with a 21st Century Demographic

UTEP sits in one of the largest binational, bicultural metroplexes in the world where globalization is experienced on a daily basis through the migration of people and the import and export of goods and services (Staudt et al. 2010). The University draws the majority of its student population from the Paso Del Norte region, which includes students from Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Mexico, New Mexico, and the various municipalities and rural areas in and around El Paso County. As the only comprehensive 4-year higher education institution in El Paso, UTEP functions as a socio-economic driver for its students and the region. Many of the students commute to the university daily while holding part-time or full-time jobs, often caring for dependents (children, siblings, parents, and grandparents) and contributing to their households in a family-oriented community atmosphere. Accordingly, our students are exposed to the nuances and complexities of development and underdevelopment caused by two nations coming together at the border (see Staudt et al. 2010).

The El Paso-Ciudad Juárez metroplex at the U.S.-Mexico border is part of a larger global phenomenon, associated with international border crossings, international water and air agreements, global manufacturing and economic transactions, and with existing and deep historical familial ties on both sides of the border. For instance, it is not uncommon, and in fact quite typical, for families to gather on either side of the border for dinners and various other activities, for members of families to care for older parents and grandparents living across the border, and for local and international commerce to move between countries.

This metroplex area is rich and unique and also the home and economic setting for the many students, faculty, and staff who make up The

University of Texas at El Paso. The economy of the region is interdependent while observing different local, state, and national policies and laws. While it is a relatively affordable place to live, this border region also faces challenges associated with low wages and low educational attainment rates, with about 50% of its high school graduates pursuing post-secondary education. As a result, the university has invested itself in its community as an integral component of the educational ecosystem. For over 30 years, UTEP has led and supported the establishment of the El Paso Collaborative for Academic Excellence. Through this collective impact model of engagement, the collaborative has provided a venue for school districts, El Paso Community College (EPCC), and other meaningful partners to implement strategic actions that lift and enhance the educational opportunities of students in this ecosystem. Approximately 75% of teachers in El Paso come from UTEP and 80% of UTEP students come from schools in the community. The university contributes to the quality of teaching while school districts supply UTEP with the next generations of future teachers, principals, counselors, and school administrators. UTEP is also the primary local source of preparation for nurses given that 60% of nurses in our region graduate from UTEP.

As an integral part of the community, UTEP is a highly-regarded and responsive Hispanic-serving institution, with a student population reflective of the community's 78% Latinx population. As a community engaged university,⁷ UTEP has managed to serve its community needs while adhering to R1 standards, a rarity to achieve in the higher education world. UTEP is also the only R1 institution in the U.S. with an open access admittance policy, which helps promote inclusiveness and equity to students of

diverse academic and socio-economic backgrounds. Since the 1970s, the university has intentionally positioned itself to serve and promote a student population that reflects the community's demographics. Quite uniquely, UTEP's open access admittance policy accompanies the institution's aspirations for excellence (indeed, "access and excellence" lies at the core of the mission), and this involves a deep commitment among faculty to engage with students in wide-ranging scholarly activities via active and often overlapping research, teaching, and service agendas. As such, UTEP has taken a leadership role in the U.S. by approaching higher education in a highly transformative way.

Amid UTEP's status as a Hispanic-Serving Institution, one should also caution that our students are not to be perceived as a monolithic group. Many students are born and raised in the region, but many others are international students new to El Paso. While some students have family and friends on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border, others do not travel outside the community for extended periods of time or have ever crossed the border. Still others come from households familiar with the border, but do not travel outside the country or continent beyond Mexico. That said, upon entering UTEP, many of our students have taken advantage of opportunities to interact with various cultures as a result of programming and activities, which helps to advocate for and raise the profile of our local and international student population.

With regard to the student culture at UTEP, our students do not take for granted their access to higher education or view it as a privilege they are entitled to. Our students come from modest income backgrounds, and a large percentage of our graduates are the first in their families to proudly attain a higher education degree. As a result, many of our students are extremely hard workers dedicated to their studies and their willpower many times drives them to overcome veritable obstacles on their way to fulfilling major educational and career goals and achievements surpassing expectations. On the flipside, the historical experience of "under-entitlement" also presents a number of dilemmas associated

⁷ With support and direction from UTEP's Center for Community Engagement (CCE) and its affiliated faculty, the university is designated with a Community Engagement Classification by the Carnegie Foundation and continues to grow in its engagement, including through initiatives such as UTEP's Community Engagement & Leadership (CEL) program (see: <https://www.utep.edu/liberalarts/resources/faculty-staff-resources/cel/index.html>).

with power dynamics and institutional cultures. For example, some of our more introverted students are not as likely to visit professors during their office hours to build relationships, and tend to view this practice as an action that needs to be taken only when struggling with major academic challenges in their courses. It is quite common to hear statements from our students such as “I am sorry, I don’t mean to bother you, I know you are super busy and have important things to do.” Although we are likely to respond that our office hours are there to assist our students and visit with them for any reason, many still see this action as an intrusion of the professors’ time and space. To address this issue, UTEP recently developed a *Bienvenidos* (Welcome) campaign to more openly invite students into our offices to meet us, build deeper relationships, and discuss avenues for further growth in and beyond the classroom, which every so often leads to community engagement opportunities. We intentionally used the word *Bienvenidos* in Spanish because we realized that tailoring our messages to our unique student demographics also helps students feel more welcome and attuned to UTEP’s unique campus culture.

Still, the binational context in which the students live in is complicated. The existence of an international border as a common element of almost daily life has not always been viewed as a unique advantage or opportunity for gaining a broader, global understanding of the world through personal observations and interactions. Similarly, our binational, bicultural, and mostly bilingual community has become a common part of our reality, but is not always viewed as an asset or valuable source for learning. Political decisions and climate conditions, including international border closures, storms, and energy outages affect students on both sides of the border and require empathy, understanding, and advocacy from faculty and staff working with students. It is through such efforts to engage and support, however, that we can help students navigate effective pathways to opportunities, growth, and success stories. One way to create such pathways is through innovative institutional programming and collaborations.

3.4.2 Integrative Community Engagement

We explained that UTEP is classified as a community engaged institution through the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. This designation is an endorsement of the university’s commitment to the community with demonstrable resources, programming, leadership, and outcomes that determine the impact of this commitment. UTEP’s community engagement programming extends across all of its 8 colleges and schools, and includes the participation of 88% of all academic departments. Community engagement is often reported in the form of hours. UTEP has recorded over 1 million hours of community engagement annually for the past 5 years, 78% of which is in the form of engagement that is integrated and aligned with the curriculum. This metric is important in regards to having structured class reflection time to dissect and understand the engagement experience (not to be confused with traditional passive community service). Our academic engagement is representative of 480 courses that have been documented to include community engagement in a structured format. Over 10,000 students participate in this form of engagement annually, while more than 6,000 students participate in community service. The large-scale application of community engagement opportunities is in large part a result of its intentional combination with other high impact practices like capstones, undergraduate research, practicums, clinical experiences, student teaching, and internships.

Additionally, as part of the experiential learning component that has become an integral expectation of the college experience, students are also often invited to participate in study abroad or study away programs. We previously mentioned how important it is for an institution such as UTEP that primarily and uniquely drives most of its community engagement activities locally to be sure to avoid tunnel vision when it comes to other opportunities beyond the Paso Del Norte region. Accordingly, UTEP’s study abroad and study away programs have been

gradually developing and growing over time, and have been increasingly viewed as valuable experiences for students. These programs are often associated with building global perspectives in students and helping them broaden their understanding of the world and their role as citizens. At the same time, we've mentioned that at UTEP, there remains a challenge: studying abroad is not often a realistic option for students who cannot afford to leave their homes, their communities, their jobs, or their dependents. As these types of programs continue to develop, efforts to provide additional support for those with financial limitations and other challenges are key to expanding student access and prospects, and there are also efforts to provide more online remote or hybrid opportunities for engaging abroad without actually having to physically leave El Paso for those otherwise unable to participate.⁸ In the meantime, we contend that many of these experiential opportunities, and their purpose, can still be fulfilled in

the context of the students' local environment if we focus on the learning and the values we aspire to foster as global citizens.

Increasingly, like other R1 and larger institutions, UTEP also offers and encourages community-based internship opportunities for students and sets their expectations as part of a dynamic educational pathway. They are embedded into the curriculum in alignment with our mission, which allows these kinds of high impact practices to be accessible to our students. Internships in particular allow students an entrance into organizations to learn about their mission, organizational cultures, and the communities they serve. Students conducting internships go through orientations and training similar to recently hired employees. They get assigned to supervisors in the community and are placed in units to work with staff and clients while learning the skills necessary to become professionals in their fields. Upon completing their internships, students are more likely to be offered employment with those organizations and are also likely to be more competitive in seeking other job offers for their careers.

In the following section, we will next provide some key vignette examples of community engagement experiences wherein critical engagement was present, multiple high impact practices were integrated, community partners were co-creators of knowledge, and how such experiences have yielded empathic and global citizenship values. Therein, we share and elaborate on the development and application of our approach and thereafter we go on to explain how it could be adapted by others.

3.4.3 Vignettes of Engagement in Action

Having laid out our framework, institutional background, and some of our key programs and collaborative initiatives, we now turn our attention to three vignette illustrations of faculty and students critically engaging with community partners to address the topics of electoral processes, voter and vaccine registration, and ethnic conflict and genocide. Beyond such course

⁸ For example, as part of the Collaborative Online International Learning (COIL) initiative at UTEP, Núñez partnered with Patricia Islas Salinas from Universidad Autónoma de Ciudad Juárez in developing modules for engaging students on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border in a mainly online setting and therein help students with the development of group activities and research projects vis-à-vis intercultural communication (see Rizo García 2013). The goal was for students to learn about each other's communities without having to travel abroad, particularly during an ongoing global pandemic. For this, faculty plan their course syllabi, learning goals and objectives, and class activities by working together and communicating remotely through Zoom, Google Meets, WhatsApp, and via email. UTEP also has a special agreement and partnership with the Texas International Education Consortium (TIEC) to help build binational global education experiences, including through curriculum taught by professors such as Carolina Valencia from UTEP Health Sciences who employs a global citizenship framework aimed at helping UTEP students develop, among other things, cultural competency and sensitivity in partnering with students from Tanta University in Egypt. Such binational collaborations through education partnerships create opportunities to develop empathy, global-mindedness, problem solving skills, and partnerships with students enrolled in other universities (see also Montelongo and Martinez 2018, which details how UTEP faculty and students partnered with colleagues from New York City to apply a globally-minded framework for learning about diverse Latin American Diasporas in the U.S.).

assigned engagement projects, we also provide an additional fourth vignette relating to the kind of empathy and global-mindedness that can be fostered more generally in faculty-student interactions that we refer to as global encounters. For each vignette, we contend that empathy and global citizenship values are those that cannot only be achieved through exposure to other cultures, countries, and settings, but also by engaging in valuable experiences pursued in localized community spaces with people of diverse life experiences and perspectives. Community engagement involves an iterative process of planning and preparing students for engagement and self-reflection whereby students reflect on their own identity, those of others, and how they relate and co-exist in the world. The more students engage with others, the more they are likely to seek to understand and be understood, leading to a greater range of experiences and alternative ways of knowing and being (Bohannon and van der Elst 1998). Kindly check and confirm the style followed for 'Vignette 1: Electoral Processes' is correct. Needs minor correction please: While the style followed for Vignette 1 is correct, the titles for the other vignettes (#2-4) are missing the bold font, which we have added with our tracked changes (see below). Thanks in advance for your help in finalizing the bold font for the other vignette titles!

Vignette 1: Electoral Processes

In 2006, I (Núñez) had a student enrolled in an Applied Anthropology course who learned about doing rapid ethnography. He saw an opportunity to seek funding to get young people involved in the U.S. elections and to document their experiences. He approached me to see if I could help him after he was notified that he had received a grant. I then invited a colleague in the Department of Political Science, Dr. Tony Payan (now at Rice University), to see if he would co-teach a course on community engagement and the electoral process, and we called the class Help America Vote (for more details see Núñez and Sánchez 2008; Núñez et al. 2009; see also Núñez 2014). The community engagement component of the class involved about 80 students in

learning more about the electoral process from a political science perspective, and how to conduct participant observation/ethnographic research from an anthropological perspective. Students were also trained and certified as poll workers. Students used their bilingual and computer literacy skills at the polls while also helping to carry and set up computers and other equipment at polling stations.

In the post-election phase, we asked students to share their field notes, their critical reflections, fill out surveys, and participate in debriefing sessions. The major lesson learned from involving university students in the electoral process was that they recognized the importance of civic participation as voters. In their reflections, students noted how transformative it was for them to participate in local elections being cognizant that if they did not vote, they would have to contend with laws passed by older adult voters. As students gained confidence in helping to serve as election officers, they were more likely to invite their family and friends to go and vote. Students observed Latinx voters going to the polls in small groups and carpooling together, thus making the act of voting a family affair. One of the major, and unanticipated, observations reported by students in their final reports was the empathy they had developed for older adult voters, many of whom were unable to access the polls when these sites were located in buildings with stairs and without wheelchair accessible ramps. Although the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed in 1990, many buildings have yet to be retrofitted to make them accessible for people who use wheelchairs or other devices to facilitate their mobility. Student poll workers who had observed elders, many of whom were U.S. veterans, who were unable to vote because they could not physically access polling sites, became outraged and quickly demanded that all voting booths be moved to accessible places to make sure that people's constitutional rights to vote were guaranteed.

Although ADA accessibility was not the focus of our community engagement effort, this particular finding became a great example of intergenerational collaboration and empathy that came about from knowing some people were able to exercise their roles as able-bodied citizens while others were unable to do so. Since this experience,

election officials have made new technologies available in the form of portable computer tablets for voters with physical challenges and ADA accessible buildings have replaced inaccessible voting locations.

In the time that followed, several of the students who enrolled in this community engaged class sought leadership positions by running for public office, while others pursued law school and graduate school. Today, two of the students who helped co-author the grant for the Help America Vote project are now addressing global climate change as university professors in Europe.

Vignette 2: Voter and Vaccine Registration

Over the past decade, my students and I (Villalobos) have conducted extensive in-person non-partisan voter registration efforts on and off campus. My efforts began quite modestly in offering students extra credit for a couple of “volunteer” hours to simply talk to others on campus in a non-partisan fashion about voter awareness and the importance of having one’s voice heard. Eventually, I found my true calling for community engagement by partnering with my colleague, Dr. Azuri Gonzalez (Director of the Center for Community Engagement) along with the El Paso County Elections Department, in an exciting and very intricately organized TurboVote project. The first iteration involved a class on the presidency with 40 students working in small groups, each with a team name, mission statement, and strategies laid out for interacting with other students on campus, as well as other members of the community off campus. On one of the teams we had a student who had returned to earn her degree after many years of stopping out and she, known to everyone as “La Abuelita” (the grandma) was especially inspiring, not just to the people she reached out to for the project, but even before that in inspiring the other students in the class. She did this by recalling the difficulties of having her voice heard in her younger years, how much things had changed since, and reflecting with much empathy on how many things still needed to change in the U.S., Mexico, and other parts of the world in order for women and all people in need of a voice to find true, substantive

representation. To this day, I still refer to her example quite often.

In subsequent semesters over the years, I have continued my non-partisan voter registration project with my students and have gradually improved it in several ways, including by expanding my partnerships to include student campus organizations such as IGNITE and community organizations such as the Border Network for Human Rights. Just as importantly, I’ve improved the manner in which I conduct the project—namely by gradually fine-tuning the training for students to engage with others to provide useful, factual non-partisan information and to do so with an empathic and global mindset that is open to any challenges community members might have in getting registered to vote, such as language barriers (for which we provide bilingual registration cards), taking into consideration how factors such as health disparities make it more difficult for some members of society to be as politically connected or active than others, and also doing so on different sides of the border. Throughout these experiences, my students have learned valuable skills on how to approach others in the community with an empathic and positive mindset, how to be professionally organized, and how to be strategic in maximizing their efforts while functioning within a complex border region. Those skills have also transferred particularly nicely for those students who have gone on to join campaigns as staffers or even run for office themselves, be it locally or going off to other places (I recall, for example, one student from Bhutan who had served as an elections official, came for his Master’s degree, learned about the U.S. electoral system, and returned to Bhutan with new ideas and insights to apply in his own context). In reflecting on their experiences, students have often said how much more rewarding it is to actually go out and get involved to help solve issues such as feelings of voter apathy rather than simply discuss and debate them in class.

Most recently, and quite unlike in previous years, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, my students and I necessarily had to reformulate and adapt our community engagement efforts remotely vis-à-vis various social media platforms during a time when face-to-face interactions could not be done. In doing so, my students rose to the occasion and engaged in outreach efforts

for non-partisan political awareness and voter registration ahead of the critical 2020 Presidential and national, state, and local elections in Fall 2020; and thereafter in the more recent local elections for the Spring 2021 semester. Despite not being able to interact in-person with people at the local level, my students and I were still able to engage extensively with community members and, as a bonus, were also able to connect and help people far beyond the borderlands via online social networks that stretched across the country (e.g., for the Georgia run-off elections) and other parts of the globe (e.g., Mexico elections, politics in Poland, etc.). To date, the work done on voter registration efforts on campus in liaison with the university (namely Dr. Gonzalez with the CCE and our CEL program that I chaired) and the local elections department has yielded well over 15,000 registrations and counting.

Lastly, I also recently expanded my students' activities to promote non-partisan vaccine awareness and registration, including by encouraging and helping students and others in the UTEP "Miner" community on how to sign up for UTEP's highly successful COVID-19 clinic program as well as other programs and opportunities on and off campus within the region. Doing so has provided another opportunity to do something to tangibly help others in potentially life-changing ways. Many of the strategies employed for voter outreach were adapted to raising vaccine awareness and helping community members access their shots against a backdrop of many unique political challenges and health disparities. In reflection, many of my students expressed how inspiring they felt it was to have a means by which to actively help move the community towards a safer, healthier environment and contemplate the global-level efforts being made around the world to achieve the same goal in combating the health threats posed by the virus. More than ever, a great deal of my students were able to connect politics and health issues in a highly constructive manner. It gives us all one more avenue of hope and optimism for the future.

Vignette 3: Ethnic Conflict and Genocide

Based on my personal background growing up in Turkey as a minority member and as a scholar of international security with a specialized interest in ethnic conflict and genocide, I (Sirin) was inspired to design a critical community engagement and leadership (CCE and CEL) project for my Ethnic Conflict and Civil Wars course so that my students could have an opportunity to learn, empathize, and reflect more deeply from hearing and understanding the voices of victims of ethnic conflict and genocide. I had my students engage in various local, national, and international virtual projects including transcribing and timestamping Holocaust survivors' video testimonials as part of Philadelphia's Holocaust Awareness Museum and Education Center's Legacy Library, mapping to identify structures, roads, and populated areas in remote locations for humanitarian aid, creating TikTok videos and social media venues for bringing awareness to humanitarian crises such as in Myanmar, and even developing original games and simulations to foster empathy for victims of ethnic conflict and genocide.

The course was designed to be 100% online and coincided with the period of remote teaching with no face-to-face activities due to the pandemic so the community engagement component also had to be fully virtual. This presented a challenge that transformed into a major opportunity to connect with not just local community partners but with the global community. Many students, including those who were initially skeptical about virtual community engagement, indicated a heightened interest in continuing the virtual activities even beyond the completion of the 20 hours per student required for the CEL designated project. For instance, students who used social network platforms to bring awareness to ongoing conflicts reported in their reflection essays that the content they created spurred discussion about the topics among their social media friends, most of whom noted no prior knowledge about many of the issues (such as the plight of the Rohingya people in Myanmar and Bangladesh) brought to their attention.

Students also expressed a sense of empowerment and pride in creating such new content. In a world where inane memes and partisan propaganda dominate social media, students were excited to put the scholarly, non-partisan knowledge they learned from the course to use in virtually interacting with the community. Based on such student feedback and the learning outcomes achieved, I suggest that community engagement opportunities presented to students should offer not only face-to-face options, but also virtual ones even in the post-pandemic phase to increase flexibility, accessibility, and empathic outreach to a larger, more global audience.

Vignette 4: Faculty-Student Global Encounters

One spring semester, while teaching an Introduction to Cultural Anthropology course, I (Núñez) got a call from a college advisor asking if I could accept three student athletes traveling from Nigeria who would be entering the semester three weeks late due to delays in their visas to travel and study in the U.S. I agreed to accept the students and I turned to my class for their input in preparation for the new students arrival at UTEP. I asked for their help in preparing a presentation to make the new students feel welcomed. I asked my class to think about what it would feel like to arrive to a new country and a new university and asked them: "What do you want your new classmates to know about campus? What do you wish someone had shared with you prior to arriving at UTEP? And what places around campus and town do you recommend they explore once they get here?" In their group presentations, students showed images of key buildings, including places to eat, study, hang out, and take a quick nap in between classes, places to explore off campus, and other tips and insights that they wanted to share with them. The three students thanked their peers for their presentations, great recommendations, and warm welcoming.

The three Nigerian students sat together towards the right backside of the classroom in a course with over seventy students. Towards the end of the semester, I asked students what they wanted to do once they graduated from the university. Students usually respond with typical answers such

as "I want to be a teacher, an engineer, or a lawyer." From the back of the class, I saw a quiet man raise his hand and say, "when I graduate, I want to be king." This answer stunned us all, and the class broke out in laughter. I had never had a student say he would be a king, so I asked him to tell us more. His two Nigerian classmates nodded their heads, and informed us all that their classmate was a prince in his village and was next in line to become king.

The three students' arrival from Nigeria into our course allowed for our UTEP students to organize materials to welcome them to campus and to our community. Throughout the semester, students participated in intercultural communication through class participation, small group activities, and community engagement. They exchanged insights on their ways of life, participated in empathy building, and shared experiences. Towards the end of the semester, we planned a potluck and shared a meal together, bringing to a close a successful semester of intercultural engagement and global interactions.

You may note that in each of the vignettes illustrated above, the expressed and intended outcomes were associated directly with the described project—learning about the electoral system, learning to engage others in the voter process and getting access to vaccines, learning to understand the voices of victims of ethnic conflict and genocide, and more broadly pertaining to faculty-student interrelationships, learning how to welcome others from outside the region into the classroom as partners in the learning process. In addition, for each of the experiences, given the setting, the connection to place, and the implications for a community the students cared for, multiple associations with empathy were made possible and were transferable among groups and demographics. There are countless other examples to explore at UTEP, many of which are detailed in Núñez and

Gonzalez (2018). The key observations to conclude, however, are that purposeful structured activities must be established with critical connections and reflections pertaining to each of the experiences facilitated. The richness of the experiences depends on the connectivity to a well understood and embraced context to truly inspire the depth of learning necessary to develop empathy.

3.5 Conclusion and Future Directions

To conclude, we sum up our overall thesis for this chapter as well as offer a few observations for future consideration. First, we emphasize the importance of recognizing that global citizenship is important and those who acknowledge its significance can contribute to its cultivation among various constituencies. In our case, as teachers in higher education, we have identified the models, resources, and opportunities to inculcate global citizenship values and skills in college students through university programming. In doing so, we identified the employment of critical community engagement embedded in the curriculum where students go beyond contributing to their community in potentially passive service-related engagement, and instead immerse themselves in an invaluable learning experience for personal, professional, and reciprocal engagement. It is through this approach that students understand societal challenges beyond their immediate surroundings and can apply their learning to a wider, more global context.

Secondly, we have presented a theoretical approach to further enrich community engagement, where one can feel empathy and think globally in meaningful, transformative, and transferable ways. We cautioned that the emotional component is not to be mistaken for mere sympathy or worse, pity, but rather elicits a more powerful, action-oriented emotional self-discovery process wherein students see themselves, whether reactively or in a more parallel manner, amidst the afflicted circumstances they witness others going through and subsequently

feel moved to address towards positive change. We explain that empathy results from rich experiences where students are not mechanically primed or prompted to label their learning as empathy, but rather sense the organic consequence of having been provided the opportunity to truly observe and understand the plight of others, and thereafter be inspired to work towards solutions and reciprocity in their community relationships. It is useful to remind ourselves that the reflective process in this engagement is crucial to reach a genuine point of discovery and self-awareness.

Thirdly, we advocate for the leveraging of place, context and resources to adapt practices for cultural relevancy as well as for pragmatic reasons. In our case, we leveraged the assets of our student population (family-oriented, hard-working, engaged, and committed to their learning) with the richness of the symbiotic relationship between our institution and its surrounding community. We made use of the community's microcosm for larger global issues to teach and expose our students to experiences they could recognize in other settings. The very essence of the connection with place, we argued, created the richness for developing the empathic and global-minded critical framework that can be replicated when constituent dynamics are matched with a context ready to facilitate meaningful learning and growing experiences. In this process, we also capitalized on these dynamics to demonstrate how costly programming may not always be the answer to achieve global citizenship, and that in the absence of monetary resources, this should not be viewed as a roadblock or limitation.

As we look to the future of global citizenship and the impact individuals can have in a more peaceful, inclusive, and equitable society, we acknowledge that empathy is not the only bridging solution, nor that critical community engagement is the only avenue to achieve this. We understand that there are limiting circumstances and perhaps psychological dynamics such that some individuals may not (at least not immediately) develop an empathic view or behavior we have identified as key. These

limitations go beyond the scope of our expertise and the scope of our theory to practice endeavors. Still, the overall value and potential impact of our curricular innovations are broadly robust and beneficial to the learning process. Ultimately, through this chapter, we sought to contribute to the discussion where we examine what exists in the world of educating students for a global society, and how institutions, leaders, and educators alike might identify their individual positions and assets from which to also contribute to this collective effort.

We hope to inspire and motivate individuals from various organizations, in and outside of higher education, who find themselves in a position to impact individuals and their understanding of their role in society to reflect on their own settings and resources. As educators, we have shared our reflections from years of applying theory to practice in the engagement of students in a border community like ours in El Paso. Given that our institution is situated at the nexus of two countries, the United States and Mexico, and three states, Chihuahua, New Mexico, and Texas, we have valued the substantial opportunities for student learning and global citizenship development within a binational and bicultural environment.

We also invite readers to recognize the theoretical underpinnings of their own practice, and to explore the application of our engagement models in their own settings. Student learning and engagement are not limited to the Paso Del Norte region, but rather students' priceless experiences from engaging with local communities are transferable and adaptable to any other context they may encounter in their future travels and home settings in any part of the world. Whether students collaborate with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, or local school districts, and whether they conduct engagement activities locally or abroad, they are likely to gain valuable intercultural experiences and interactions that lead to the cultivation of empathy and global awareness.

Last, we are committed to continuing this global citizenship pursuit as the world continues to evolve. We find ourselves at a time of social

divisions, conflict, and global challenges wherein movement towards openness to learn about and empathize with different perspectives, histories, and experiences is increasingly of the utmost importance if we are to achieve progress. Grounding this learning at the very essence of human beings has to transcend models and approaches we have relied on in the past. It is time that we look for opportunities that celebrate what all cultures and settings have to offer, and that we identify the channels of empathy that can help unite us all. Human rights, peace, and the overall sustainability of our planet depend on our very ability to connect, empathize, and care to cultivate change.

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