

What are Global Collaborative Classrooms (GCC)?

Mason's GCC connects Mason's students with a faculty selected international classroom in a co-taught, internationalized learning environment. GCC draws on the GCC model that has emerged as a new method of teaching and learning which is highly collaborative and which serves to supplement the study abroad option by providing a means for intercultural experiences within the home campus classroom. Not all courses developed under the auspices of GCC will take full advantage of the transformational learning opportunities inherent in the model to help students achieve significant intercultural outcomes; therefore, it is useful to identify some common myths about GCC.

Myths about Global Collaborative Classrooms (GCC)

Myth 1: A GCC curriculum is about teaching international students

An international curriculum is for all students. The majority of students in tertiary institutions are home students and their need for 'internationalization' is greater than that of the international students. International students are already living, working and studying in a foreign environment, often also having to communicate in a foreign language.

Myth 2: A GCC course is a specialist course

There are many courses in universities that deal with international, global and development topics and issues but these are not part of the concept of a GCC curriculum.

Myth 3: Some disciplines are already international

All knowledge is developed within a socio-cultural-historical context and develops over time; no knowledge is static.

Myth 4: Adding international materials to a course provides global perspectives

This may be a good first step to internationalizing a curriculum, but it does not provide the impetus for multi-cultural learning that either an actual or simulated immersion experience does. For example, real-world team projects or service learning activities enable students from both the host and international classrooms to face the difficulties of examining their cultural identities, values, and assumptions. Content reconceptualization from non-dominant viewpoints is another way to develop multiple perspectives.

Myth 5: I can simply use videoconferencing to connect the students from the two classrooms

While this can be an interesting way to introduce the classrooms initially and to see the other culture, videoconferencing has limitations for group interaction and achievement of intercultural/global learning outcomes aligned with collaborative learning activities and mediated by interactive learning technologies.

Myth 6: One module in a Global Collaborative Course suffices

A course module may be defined as 1-4 weeks of instructional activities. GCC is a concept that involves high levels of host student to international student interaction, often through well-managed group or team project learning activities. The achievement of meaningful intercultural learning goals usually involves a minimum of 4-6 week time frame. Ideally, GCC would permeate through a whole course and not be compartmentalized to a single activity, but may as a way to get started.

If these are all myths, what then is GCC?

Discovering our cultural selves

GCCs are designed to facilitate dialogue and collaboration across and within groups of students, to develop greater understanding and competencies for global work and citizenship. The starting point for GCC is the internationalization of ourselves. Students need to be able to step outside of themselves and look at their own lives, behaviors, values and attitudes, as they might appear to someone from another culture, so that they can start questioning themselves.

Key questions when planning to design a GCC

What are the Learning Outcomes of this course that facilitate dialogue and collaboration, develop greater intercultural understanding, or foster competencies for global work and citizenship across and within groups of students?

What are the knowledge, skills and attitudes that your students should develop to reflect the learning outcomes above?

What assessment tasks could students complete to demonstrate achievement of these knowledge, skills and attitudes?

What learning activities and tasks will assist learners to develop these knowledge, skills and attitudes?

What inter-networked tools and resources are available to achieve the above?

Some of the above materials were adapted from open source course materials provided in [Designing and Developing an International Curriculum in HE](#), April 2015, Oxford Brookes University.

References

- Clifford, V.A. (2010). Ch 13 The Internationalised curriculum: (dis)locating students. In E. Jones (ed.) *Internationalisation and the Student Voice*. London: Routledge, pp.169-180.
- Clifford, V.A. (2009). Engaging the Disciplines in Internationalising the Curriculum, *International Journal of Academic Development*, 14(2) 133-143