# Engaging students globally without leaving the comforts of home

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## Abstract

To meet the needs of and preparing graduates to enter the 21$^{st}$ century business environment, higher education institutions have realized global learning is now an essential part of the knowledge and skill sets needed by business graduates. Global competency is no longer a luxury. This article describes how a regional higher education institution has implemented active learning projects and assessments which integrate global competency in the core and elective courses. Students can complete these projects and assessments without leaving the comforts of their homes, the campus, or the U.S. and still be exposed to a global experience. The purpose of the study was to examine the global competency students acquire through active learning projects and assessments in different classes. Specifically, the study sought to determine the students' perceived satisfaction level with these global active learning experiences, and to determine if they perceived their global competency had increased. Data analysis suggests the students were gaining global competencies using active learning projects and assessments. Also, from seven of the specific courses, the students indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their acquired global competency in six courses. Additionally, the students' perceived global competence increased after taking the courses which implemented these projects and assessments. Therefore, it appears students can gain global competency through active learning projects and assessments used in courses without leaving the comforts of home.

# Engaging Students Globally Without Leaving the Comforts of Home

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**Abstract**

To meet the needs of and preparing graduates to enter the 21st century business environment, higher education institutions have realized global learning is now an essential part of the knowledge and skill sets needed by business graduates. Global competency is no longer a luxury. This article describes how a regional higher education institution has implemented active learning projects and assessments which integrate global competency in the core and elective courses. Students can complete these projects and assessments without leaving the comforts of their homes, the campus, or the U.S. and still be exposed to a global experience. The purpose of the study was to examine the global competency students acquire through active learning projects and assessments in different classes. Specifically, the study sought to determine the students' perceived satisfaction level with these global active learning experiences, and to determine if they perceived their global competency had increased. Data analysis suggests the students were gaining global competencies using active learning projects and assessments. Also, from seven of the specific courses, the students indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with their acquired global competency in six courses. Additionally, the students' perceived global competence increased after taking the courses which implemented these projects and assessments. Therefore, it appears students can gain global competency through active learning projects and assessments used in courses without leaving the comforts of home.

**Keywords:** global competency, business school, business courses, active learning, competence growth

**Introduction**

In aligning curriculum to meet the needs of and prepare graduates to enter the 21st-century business environment, higher education institutions have realized global learning is imperative and no longer a luxury. Universities and colleges must strive to provide opportunities and experiences which prepare their business students to succeed in the global economy. Institutions of higher education recognize they must prepare business students for global interconnectedness since businesses have expanded beyond customary borders. (Diamond, Walkley, Forbes, Hughes, & Sheen, 2011; National Education Association, 2012; National Education Association Education

Policy and Practice Department, 2010; Peter D Hart Research Associates, 2006; Shigeoka, 2012; The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2010; Willard, n.d.; Wobbe & Vaz, 2015)

Business educators must add global competency to their curriculum (Willard, n.d.; Shigeoka, 2012; National Education Association Education Policy and Practice Department, 2010). However, the main problem is our business students cannot afford to travel or study abroad in another country for a variety of reasons such as cultural myopia or funding sources. Furthermore, Fischer (2019) stated changes in geopolitical climate attitudes towards international educational programs have caused higher education institutions to rethink the value of these programs. Thus, the question becomes how do we expose them to global business knowledge and skills necessary to be familiar with doing business in or with a foreign country without leaving home or their campus or the U.S.?

To answer this question, we reviewed the literature which supported the value of classroom active learning projects and assessments which enhance students' learning outcomes. The article describes how a regional higher education institution implemented active learning projects and assessments (see Appendix A for detailed description of these projects and assessments) which integrated global competencies in the core and elective courses. Also, it determines the students' perceived level of satisfaction with the use of active learning classroom activities. Furthermore, the article sought to determine if the students perceived their competencies to have increased after taking these courses which implemented these projects and assessments.

## Literature Review

Many universities and colleges are finding this new mission a challenge due to the struggle to find resources to provide the opportunities and experiences which would enhance their students' global knowledge and skills sets. It is ideal to have students study abroad or work abroad for a semester. This experience would provide opportunities for our students to engage in global learning; however, it is noted that study abroad programs may not appeal to all students. Still our graduates must have exposure to the required knowledge and skill sets to be successful in the 21st century. (National Education Association Policy and Practice Department, 2010; Shigeoka, 2012) Educators are now tasked to overcome these barriers and provide students with opportunities and experiences to obtain or enhance their global competency knowledge (Davis-Salazar, 2016; National Education Association Policy and Practice Department, 2010; Mansilla & Jackson, 2011; Reimers, 2014; Shigeoka, 2012; Stearns, 2010).

The reality is students have circumstances which may set limitations on their quest to seek global educational enriching activities outside of the U.S. or even outside of their own state. These limitations may include time and money (Davis-Salazar, 2016). Our university fact book indicated many students are working as full-time employees while attending school and have selected to complete their coursework online (Northwestern State University of Louisiana Office of Institutional Research, 2015). Therefore, many of these students may not have the resources needed to leave their home or university or cannot leave because of other obligations. As such, it is imperative that educators be able to bring the world to the students.

Educators have limitations and constraints which hinder the implementation of a truly global experience: global internships, study abroad programs, and service-learning trips to overseas seem to be out of the reach of our students for different reasons. Among those reasons, financial

considerations, cultural myopia, and academic progress seem to be the most important ones. Study abroad, foreign language study, and other credit-bearing global learning opportunities are sometimes viewed as "extras" because of a surcharge beyond the required credit hours for the degree (Davis-Salazar, 2016) or the impact on graduation date and financial aid (Northwestern State University of Louisiana University Registrar's Office, 2016). Despite these challenges, accrediting agencies require that curricula incorporate activities which are reflective and relevant of global competency needed by business students. For example, AACSB International Standard 13 states,

> for any teaching and learning model employed, the school provides a portfolio of experiential learning opportunities for business students, through either formal coursework or extracurricular activities, which allow them to engage with faculty and active business leaders. These experiential learning activities provide exposure to business and management in both local and global contexts. (AACSB International, 2018, p. 40)

Also, these standards mandate which educators provide documentation of engagement, innovation, and impact in business programs.

Lin (2018) reported using e-pal (pen pal) exchange projects, students indicated an increase in their global competence awareness. Another school used embedded projects which were integrated into prescribed sets of classes from general education and major specific courses which exposed students to global competence awareness (Davis-Salazar, 2016). Following this model, our school has overcome some of these obstacles (financial constraints, cultural myopia, and academic progress) by implementing global-related activities and experiences into the curriculum. These projects and assessments provide opportunities for our students to engage globally without leaving the comforts of home, the campus, or the U.S.

The use of active learning in the classroom includes incorporating activities, assignments or projects which require students to do or perform tasks, describe what they have done, and, if appropriate, repeat the tasks (Arneson & Kufner, 2016; Bird, 2001; Damassa & Sitko, 2010; Millis, 2012; Wilson & Sipe, 2014). Several researchers have described examples of how to use active learning in the classroom. Zaino (2016) reported post-secondary students and graduates of post-secondary education believe they would be better prepared to enter the workforce if professors incorporated opportunities and experiences which are reflective of real-world business scenarios. His examples simply lend more credibility to the fact that active learning is likely needed for students to grasp and retain concepts. Damassa and Sitko (2010) indicated the use of classroom simulation helps complete learning. A very simplistic analogy to explain simulation is: "it's how your mamma taught you". Learning by watching and then demonstrating the processes learned are the basis of simulation exercises. Furthermore, Bird (2001) stated simulation exercises engage students to become more active participants and may lead to a sense of assurance they have gained the required knowledge and skills.  These activities also promote reliability among their peers particularly in the case of a group grade. We believe integrating various types of classroom assignments and activities enhance students' engagement in courses; thus, promoting mastering the concepts or tasks. Another form of active learning is cooperative learning, which is defined as a technique which groups students into small teams where they use a variety of learning activities to increase their knowledge and skill set about a particular concept or skill. This method creates a learning environment where students are held accountable for their individual learning as well as promoting and nurturing the learning of other group members (Balkom, 1992; Jenkins, Antil, Wayne, & Vadasy, 2003; Millis, 2002, 2009).

To provide our business students with exposure to knowledge and skills needed in the global business world, we have developed and incorporated active learning projects and assessments into existing courses. These active learning projects and assessments are international-relative and focused on simulation and cooperative learning techniques which enhance the student's global competency with no requirement for our business students to leave the comforts of their homes, their campus, or the U.S.

**Methods**

*Sample*

For this study, we selected the spring 2013 through fall 2016 graduates and the spring 2017 graduating candidates. These participants were selected as the sample because (a) graduates or graduating candidates had taken the most or all courses which implemented international-related projects and assessments, and (b) these graduates, or graduating students left contact information for our school using the School of Business Exit Survey. Therefore, we could reach out to them even after graduation. We identified 246 spring 2013 to fall 2016 graduates and 104 graduating spring 2017 candidates. The sample size was 350.

*Data Collection*

For data collection, we developed two identical questionnaires. Each questionnaire had a total of 38 questions (see Appendix B). All recipients were sent a request to participate and the Survey Monkey questionnaire link by e-mail.

The first questionnaire's SurveyMonkey link was sent in February 2017 to 246 graduates who graduated during the period of spring 2013 to fall 2016. Recipients were given a specific deadline for completion of the questionnaire. A second e-mail request was sent in March 2017 and the third request in April 2017. We received 42 (17%) usable responses.

The second questionnaire's SurveyMonkey link was sent in April 2017 to 104 spring 2017 graduating candidates. Recipients were given a specific deadline for completion of the questionnaire. The second and third emails were sent during May 2017. We received 50 (48%) usable responses. The reason for a higher response rate from spring 2017 graduates should result from their still-in-school status which gave them more willingness to participate in this survey.

The data obtained were analyzed using computed average scores (mean) to determine the students' perceived level of satisfaction with acquired global competency through each course and in each of the eight core global aspects of competence. *T* tests were conducted for each course to compare students' perceived level of satisfaction between two groups (i.e., Group 1 Graduates who graduated during spring 2013 to fall 2016 and Group 2 Graduating candidates in the spring of 2017) and to compare students' perceived competence before and after each course for both groups.

We used Likert scales to determine the students' perceived level of satisfaction with their global competence and whether they perceived an increase in their competence after taking the courses which implemented international-related projects and assessments. Since a typical Likert scale is used to measure attitudes, and the Likert response format usually has only five response options (Sauro, 2015), we used a 5-point Likert scale.

## Findings

Under Question 2, participants used a 5-point Likert anchored scale to rate their perceived level of satisfaction: 5 = (*Completely Satisfied*), 4 = (*Very Satisfied*), 3 = (*Somewhat Satisfied*), 2 = (*Slightly Satisfied*), and 1 (*Not at all Satisfied*).

For each course, we calculated the mean of the students' perceived level of satisfaction with their global competency. Group 1 participants indicated that they were very satisfied with their global competency acquired through MKTG3230, BUAD3270 and BUAD3280, satisfied with BUAD2200, HMT3050 and HMT4030, and somewhat satisfied with HMT3140. Group 2 participants indicated that they were very satisfied with their global competency acquired through MKTG3230 and BUAD3270; satisfied with BUAD2200, BUAD3280, and HMT4030, and somewhat satisfied with HMT3050 and HMT3140 (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Level of Satisfaction With Acquired Global Competency

| | Group 1 | | | Group 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Course** | **Mean** | ***n*** | **Interpretative Scale*** | **Mean** | ***n*** | **Interpretative Scale*** |
| BUAD2200 | 3.90 | 30 | Satisfied | 3.66 | 35 | Satisfied |
| MKTG3230 | 4.06 | 34 | Very Satisfied | 4.09 | 34 | Very Satisfied |
| BUAD3270 | 4.04 | 28 | Very Satisfied | 4.20 | 35 | Very Satisfied |
| BUAD3280 | 4.12 | 26 | Very Satisfied | 3.38 | 26 | Satisfied |
| HMT3050 | 3.11 | 9 | Satisfied | 2.90 | 20 | Somewhat Satisfied |
| HMT3140 | 2.83 | 6 | Somewhat Satisfied | 2.94 | 16 | Somewhat Satisfied |
| HMT4030 | 3.00 | 8 | Satisfied | 3.11 | 18 | Satisfied |

*Note.* *Interpretative Scale: Very Satisfied > 4, Satisfied = 3 - 4; Somewhat Satisfied 2-3; Not Satisfied < 2.

To determine if any significant differences existed between the two groups among the courses, we used the two-tailed *t* test assuming equal variances at the .05 level.

- $H_0$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$. Group 1 and Group 2 have no significant difference in mean perceived level of satisfaction with acquired global competency.
- $H_a$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 \neq 0$. Group 1 and Group 2 have a significant difference in mean perceived level of satisfaction with acquired global competency.

For BUAD3280, $p$ (0.0459) < 0.05. For all other courses, $p > 0.05$. Therefore, we rejected $H_0$ for BUAD3280 but cannot reject $H_0$ for all other courses (see Table 2). For BUAD 3280, we are 95% confident Group 1's and Group 2's perceived level of satisfaction with their acquired global competency were different. Also, for each of the other six courses, we are 95% confident no differences exist between Group 1's and Group 2's perceived level of satisfaction with their acquired global competency.

**Table 2.** *T* test Results Comparing the Level of Satisfaction Between Group 1 and Group 2

| **Statistic** | **BUAD 2200** | **MKTG 3230** | **BUAD 3270** | **BUAD 3280** | **HMT 3050** | **HMT 3140** | **HMT 4030** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *t* Stat | 0.9597 | 0.1358 | 0.6613 | 2.0474 | 0.2638 | 0.1259 | 0.4061 |
| *p (T<=t)* two-tail | .3410 | .8924 | .5109 | .0459* | .7941 | .9011 | .6885 |
| *t* Critical two-tail | 1.9996 | 1.9966 | 1.9996 | 2.0086 | 2.0595 | 2.0860 | 2.0687 |

*Note.* * $p < .05$

To determine the students' perceived competence level before and after taking the courses, we collected data using Questions 3–26. Students used a 5-point anchored scale to rate their perceived global competence in the eight core global aspects: 5 (*Excellent*), 4 (*Good*), 3 (*Satisfactory*), 2

(*Needs improvement*), and 1 (*No competency or awareness*). If the rating was "N/A", the rating was not counted. Since the HMT courses received 2 or less responses, we eliminated those courses since it could not generate valid statistical information. We calculated the BEFORE Mean scores and AFTER Mean scores for each of the eight global core aspects of global competence. Then we calculated the competence growth by subtracting the BEFORE Mean scores from AFTER Mean scores. The results suggest both Group 1 and Group 2 perceived positive competence growth over all eight core aspects. Therefore, our data analysis in this section includes the following courses: BUAD2200 (see Table 3), MKTG3230 (see Table 4), BUAD3270 (see Table 5), and BUAD3280 (see Table 6).

**Table 3.** Students' Self-Evaluated Competence Before and After BUAD 2200

| Core Aspect | Group 1 | | | Group 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BEFORE Mean | AFTER Mean | Competence Growth | BEFORE Mean | AFTER Mean | Competence Growth |
| Problem Solving | 3.83 | 4.29 | 0.46 | 4.00 | 4.63 | 0.63 |
| Confidence | 3.88 | 4.33 | 0.45 | 3.63 | 4.37 | 0.74 |
| Self-esteem | 3.71 | 4.33 | 0.62 | 3.68 | 4.30 | 0.62 |
| Teambuilding | 3.71 | 4.33 | 0.62 | 3.96 | 4.41 | 0.45 |
| Leadership | 3.58 | 4.42 | 0.84 | 3.79 | 4.37 | 0.58 |
| Global Awareness | 2.95 | 3.91 | 0.96 | 3.36 | 4.41 | 1.05 |
| Business Communication | 3.23 | 4.15 | 0.92 | 3.45 | 4.54 | 1.09 |
| Research Skills | 3.50 | 4.25 | 0.75 | 3.75 | 4.48 | 0.73 |

**Table 4.** Students' Self-Evaluated Competence Before and After MKTG3230

| Core Aspect | Group 1 | | | Group 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BEFORE Mean | AFTER Mean | Competence Growth | BEFORE Mean | AFTER Mean | Competence Growth |
| Problem Solving | 3.61 | 4.22 | 0.61 | 3.97 | 4.57 | 0.60 |
| Confidence | 3.57 | 4.26 | 0.69 | 3.73 | 4.37 | 0.64 |
| Self-esteem | 3.57 | 4.30 | 0.73 | 3.80 | 4.41 | 0.61 |
| Teambuilding | 3.64 | 4.22 | 0.58 | 3.83 | 4.43 | 0.60 |
| Leadership | 3.65 | 4.22 | 0.57 | 3.77 | 4.50 | 0.73 |
| Global Awareness | 3.05 | 4.14 | 1.09 | 3.53 | 4.40 | 0.87 |
| Business Communication | 3.35 | 4.17 | 0.82 | 3.80 | 4.57 | 0.77 |
| Research Skills | 3.35 | 4.26 | 0.91 | 3.87 | 4.63 | 0.76 |

**Table 5.** Students' Self-Evaluated Competence Before and After BUAD3270

| Core Aspect | Group 1 | | | Group 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BEFORE Mean | AFTER Mean | Competence Growth | BEFORE Mean | AFTER Mean | Competence Growth |
| Problem Solving | 3.94 | 4.59 | 0.65 | 4.09 | 4.70 | 0.61 |
| Confidence | 3.94 | 4.53 | 0.59 | 3.83 | 4.43 | 0.60 |
| Self-esteem | 4.00 | 4.59 | 0.59 | 3.83 | 4.43 | 0.60 |
| Teambuilding | 3.88 | 4.59 | 0.71 | 3.74 | 4.52 | 0.78 |
| Leadership | 4.00 | 4.59 | 0.59 | 3.74 | 4.52 | 0.78 |
| Global Awareness | 3.12 | 4.24 | 1.12 | 3.74 | 4.64 | 0.90 |
| Business Communication | 3.76 | 4.41 | 0.65 | 3.83 | 4.68 | 0.85 |
| Research Skills | 3.65 | 4.44 | 0.79 | 3.91 | 4.64 | 0.73 |

**Table 6.** Students' Self-Evaluated Competence Before and After BUAD3280

| Core Aspect | Group 1 | | | Group 2 | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BEFORE Mean | AFTER Mean | Competence Growth | BEFORE Mean | AFTER Mean | Competence Growth |
| Problem Solving | 3.73 | 4.36 | 0.63 | 4.00 | 4.75 | 0.75 |
| Confidence | 3.91 | 4.36 | 0.45 | 3.38 | 4.50 | 1.12 |
| Self-esteem | 3.82 | 4.36 | 0.54 | 3.38 | 4.38 | 1.00 |
| Teambuilding | 3.91 | 4.30 | 0.39 | 3.50 | 4.50 | 1.00 |
| Leadership | 3.91 | 4.36 | 0.45 | 3.38 | 4.25 | 0.87 |
| Global Awareness | 3.50 | 4.22 | 0.72 | 3.50 | 4.50 | 1.00 |
| Business Communication | 3.73 | 4.36 | 0.63 | 3.75 | 4.75 | 1.00 |
| Research Skills | 3.55 | 4.27 | 0.72 | 3.88 | 4.75 | 0.87 |

We ranked the courses by competence growth in each of the eight core global aspects of global competence for Group 1 (see Table 7) and Group 2 (see Table 8). For Group 1, the data suggest that MKTG3230 and BUAD3270 each rank 1st in competence growth in three of the eight core aspects of global competence; BUAD2200 ranks the 1st in the remaining two core aspects of global competence. For Group 2, BUAD3280 ranks the 1st in competence growth in six of the eight core global aspects. BUAD 2200 ranks the 1st in the remaining two aspects. Group 1 students' competence growth in core global aspect Global Awareness appears to be greater than all other core global aspects through all four courses with an exception in BUAD3280. In BUAD 3280, Group 1 students' competence growth of Global Awareness and Research Skills are the same. For Group 2's students, BUAD2200 provided the greatest competence growth for Business Communication; both MKTG3230 and BUAD3270 provided the greatest competence growth for Global Awareness; while BUAD3280 provided the greatest competence growth for Confidence.

**Table 7.** Rank of Competence Growth Over Core Aspects for Group 1

| Core Aspect | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Problem Solving | BUAD3270 | BUAD3280 | MKTG3230 | BUAD2200 |
| Confidence | MKTG3230 | BUAD3270 | BUAD2200 & BUAD3280 | |
| Self-esteem | MKTG3230 | BUAD2200 | BUAD3270 | BUAD3280 |
| Teambuilding | BUAD3270 | BUAD2200 | MKTG3230 | BUAD3280 |
| Leadership | BUAD2200 | BUAD3270 | MKTG3230 | BUAD3280 |
| Global Awareness | BUAD3270 | MKTG3230 | BUAD2200 | BUAD3280 |
| Business Communication | BUAD2200 | MKTG3230 | BUAD3270 | BUAD3280 |
| Research Skills | MKTG3230 | BUAD3270 | BUAD2200 | BUAD3280 |

**Table 8.** Rank of Competence Growth Over Core Aspects for Group 2

| Core Aspect | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Problem Solving | BUAD3280 | BUAD2200 | BUAD3270 | MKTG3230 |
| Confidence | BUAD3280 | BUAD2200 | BUAD3270 | MKTG3230 |
| Self-esteem | BUAD3280 | BUAD2200 | MKTG3230 | BUAD3270 |
| Teambuilding | BUAD3280 | BUAD3270 | MKTG3230 | BUAD2200 |
| Leadership | BUAD3280 | BUAD3270 | MKTG3230 | BUAD2200 |
| Global Awareness | BUAD2200 | BUAD3280 | BUAD3270 | MKTG3230 |
| Business Communication | BUAD2200 | BUAD3280 | BUAD3270 | MKTG3230 |
| Research Skills | BUAD3280 | MKTG3230 | BUAD2200 & BUAD3270 | |

Finally, we totaled the scores for each of the eight global core aspects of global competence and calculated the mean to determine an overall competence score for each respondent, then we conducted a one-tail $t$ test to compare the mean overall competence score before and after taking the course for each of the courses. At the 0.05 level of significance, we tested

- $H_0$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0$. Student acquired no more self-evaluated competence after taking the course.
- $H_a$: $\mu_1 - \mu_2 < 0$. Student acquired more self-evaluated competence after taking the course.

See Table 9 and Table 10 for the results. Because of the $p$-value of every course < 0.05, $t$ value of each course < - $t$ Critical, we rejected $H_0$ at the 0.05 level of significance.

Data collected through Questions 27-31 provided the information on our students' affordability for an international educational tour of one or two weeks and studying abroad as an exchange student for one or two semesters. Because these questions were all based on a "while in college" scenario, Group 1 and Group 2 were in the same context to answer this question. Therefore, we combined Group 1 and Group 2 data to give an overall result in this section. See Table 11 and Table 12.

**Table 9.** *T* test Results on Comparing Overall Competence for Group 1

| Statistic | BUAD2200 | | MKTG3230 | | BUAD3270 | | BUAD3280 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BEFORE | AFTER | BEFORE | AFTER | BEFORE | AFTER | BEFORE | AFTER |
| Mean | 3.4861 | 4.2037 | 3.4511 | 4.2011 | 3.7868 | 4.4632 | 3.7159 | 4.2765 |
| Variance | 0.6740 | 0.4559 | 0.5664 | 0.3136 | 0.5093 | 0.3355 | 0.6222 | 0.4390 |
| Observations | 24 | 24 | 23 | 23 | 17 | 17 | 11 | 11 |
| *df* | 46 | | 44 | | 32 | | 20 | |
| *t* Stat | -3.3073 | | -3.8344 | | -3.0346 | | -1.8050 | |
| *p (T<=t)* one-tail | .0009* | | .0002* | | .0024* | | .0431* | |
| *t* Critical one-tail | 1.6787 | | 1.6802 | | 1.6939 | | 1.7247 | |

*Note. *p* < .05*

**Table 10.** *T* test Results on Comparing Overall Competence for Group 2

| Statistic | BUAD2200 | | MKTG3230 | | BUAD3270 | | BUAD3280 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | BEFORE | AFTER | BEFORE | AFTER | BEFORE | AFTER | BEFORE | AFTER |
| Mean | 3.6553 | 4.4486 | 3.7875 | 4.4863 | 3.8377 | 4.4946 | 3.5938 | 4.5469 |
| Variance | 0.5823 | 0.2560 | 0.6327 | 0.2584 | 0.7838 | 0.4268 | 1.1373 | 0.1961 |
| Observations | 27 | 27 | 30 | 30 | 23 | 23 | 8 | 8 |
| *df* | 52 | | 58 | | 44 | | 14 | |
| *t* Stat | -4.5019 | | -4.0547 | | -2.8630 | | -2.3346 | |
| *p (T<=t)* one-tail | 1.9135E-05* | | .0001* | | .0032* | | .0175* | |
| *t* Critical one-tail | 1.6747 | | 1.6716 | | 1.6802 | | 1.7613 | |

*Note. *p* < .05*

Data analysis indicates while in college, only 5.6% respondents had a budget or a plan for an international educational tour of one or two weeks while 9.3% respondents had a budget or a plan to study abroad as an exchange student for one or two semesters. For an international educational tour of one or two weeks, 10.9% of respondents could have time during the regular semester while 16.7% of respondents could have time during school holidays. The data revealed that 12.7% of respondents could have time to study abroad as an exchange student for one or two semesters.

**Table 11.** Students' Affordability for an International Educational Tour

| Answer | Have/had a budget or a plan? (*n* = 54) | | Have/had time during regular semester time? (*n* = 55) | | Have/had time during school holidays? (*n* = 54) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Response count | Response % | Response count | Response % | Response count | Response % |
| Yes | 3 | 5.6 | 6 | 10.9 | 9 | 16.7 |
| No | 51 | 94.4 | 49 | 89.1 | 45 | 83.3 |

**Table 12.** Students' Affordability for Study Abroad as An Exchange Student

| Answer | Have/had a budget or a plan? (*n* = 54) | | Have/had time? (*n* = 55) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Response count | Response % | Response count | Response % |
| Yes | 5 | 9.3 | 7 | 12.7 |
| No | 49 | 90.7 | 48 | 87.3 |

## Conclusions and Implications

After reviewing our findings, we reached the following conclusions:  For Question 2, we concluded students had the highest level of satisfaction with their acquired global competency in two of the seven courses, which were MKTG3230 and BUAD3270. For Questions 3-26, we concluded students perceived their global competence had increased after taking these courses. For Questions 27-31, we concluded most of our business students lacked the money and the time for study abroad educational experiences. We also concluded there were six courses our students

felt satisfied with their acquired global competency. Finally, we concluded a regional higher education institution where students lack the money and time to have a global experience can implement international-relative projects and assessments in their courses.

This research has several implications. Theoretically, the study enhanced the effectiveness of the active learning model in areas which global educators are seeking to expose their students. The study also provided a survey instrument for global instructors to evaluate the effectiveness of active learning in the selected courses by measuring growth in eight core aspects of global competency. Practically, the study suggests we should continue to implement active learning in the courses researched as well as expand active learning to other courses to increase students' global competency. Other universities and colleges may find their students are in the same predicament in the same courses or in entirely different courses. The projects and assessments in these courses can be easily adopted and implemented to provide global perspectives for students. They can be used to bridge inherent skill gaps in the area of international business if the student population cannot indeed travel abroad. This study has the capability to provide a model to help educators expand learning opportunities and experiences and to help business students engage and enhance their knowledge and skills through active learning activities.

Thus, by bringing the world to students through multi-culture projects, simulations, and experiential learning such as the examples described in this article, students can gain global perspectives without leaving the comfort of their homes, campuses or the U.S. universities and colleges do not have to generate or find money to cover international travel-related expenses. Business and industry partners may want to replicate this active learning model in their training programs to prepare existing employees for global business. Finally, these types of learning opportunities provide minimal international travel risks for everyone–the university, students, and faculty members. For regional universities and many university students who have limited budgets and time, these learning opportunities and experiences are excellent options. These types of course global enhancements can have a significant impact on acquiring the global competency without leaving the comforts of home.

## Limitations and Future Research

This study has limitations. Since our findings were based on students' perceptions in specific courses, if the study were expanded to include all students, the findings might be different. Many factors influence a person's perception. As a result, their responses may differ due to new information which may correct beliefs and conceptions about global and cultural topics. Future studies could review the current survey instrument to determine if objective measurements could be added to enhance the evaluation. As such, future research might include a comparison among students by major, by course grade, by classification, by age, by region, by previous work experience and/or by life experiences. These factors could impact their perceptions and could impact their responses to our survey and our active learning activities.

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**Appendix A** Seven College-Level Courses with A Brief Description of How Global Active Learning Opportunities and Experiences are Implemented into Projects and Assessments

While in our school, BUAD2200, MKTG3230 and BUAD3270 are required by the business core curriculum while BUAD3280 is an advanced business elective for those students majoring in business administration, accounting, and computer information systems. Also, our business students could select to complete a minor in Hospitality Management and Tourism (HMT) where global business knowledge and skills opportunities and experiences are also presented and emphasized. The HMT courses below are at least three opportunities for students to gain exposure to international business concepts in HMT minor.

**BUAD2200**. Our business students' first exposure to global knowledge and skills is in a Sophomore level class that covers business communication skills: BUAD 2200 (Business Reports and Communications). This class provides students with global competency skills by utilizing a project which not only has an international flare, but it, also, incorporates team building, oral, and written communication skills. The project, Business Communication Group Country Report and Presentation is described below.

The framework of this project was provided by Guffey and Loewy (2016). Students assume the role of U.S. business consultants who are providing cultural and business knowledge to companies who want to expand their current business products or services to another country. The student groups must investigate the foreign country's business environment, synthesize what they have learned, and provide appropriate information needed for their U.S. business clients.

The course professors assign students to groups, then select four or five countries from Europe, Asia, and Latin America, and each student group randomly draws a country from the selected pool. Students are provided the following directions: the information must be relevant to completing a business endeavor in your selected country and do not provide any tourist-related information unless it impacts the business endeavor. As a group, students collect information related to doing business in the selected country and collectively write a 10- to 12-page formal paper with appropriate references and citations. As a group, students prepare a multi-media presentation to be used with their classroom presentations and all student must dress in appropriate business attire.

**MKTG3230.** Our business students' second exposure to global knowledge and experiences is in MKTG3230 (Principles of Marketing). This course is ideally taken in the fall semester of a student's junior year (60 earned credit hours). A prerequisite course is BUAD2200. Students in MKTG3230 complete a group project over the course of the whole semester. The project is described below.

Students are required to prepare a full marketing plan and a formal presentation to the class. The group project consists of creating a never-marketed, never-seen product and developing the product idea, design, and development as well as promotion and distribution plans for the company and the product. It is important to notice the level of creativity the students develop in this class

since the products presented cannot exist in the national market. The only exception to this setup is the fact that students can select a product which exists in another country but is not currently being sold in the U.S. market or products which are currently being sold in the U.S. market but not in other countries. In the latter case, the promotion and distribution of a U.S. product in a foreign country would have a stronger weight in the grading rubric than if the product is to be sold in the U.S. market. To support the students in this endeavor, MKTG3230 covers the different cultural aspects of doing business overseas with a specific focus on the marketing area. The class covers issues with product design, promotion, and distribution in foreign countries highlighting the similarities and differences with the U.S. market. Even though creating a product to be sold in a foreign market is not a requirement of the class, all students are introduced to the marketing issues which need to be fully understood if the product or products were to be sold overseas.

**BUAD3270.** Our business students' third exposure to global knowledge and experiences is in BUAD3270 (International Business). This course is ideally taken in the spring semester of a student's junior year. The project used is described below.

Student groups are formed at the beginning of the class and assigned the task to conduct research on a company going global. The main components of this research include setting up goals in international business, industry and business analysis, target market (country) selection, entry mode selection, and brief marketing research analysis on the product, pricing, promotion, and distribution. The project is assessed by a written international business plan and a group presentation of this report. Face-to-face class students have group presentations in the classroom. Online students are required to submit a group video online for presentation.

Online research resources are provided in detailed project instructions. Students will be immersed in foreign markets where they explore the legal, economic, and cultural environment of three potential target countries. Then they conduct quantitative analysis to determine which country will be selected as the target market for their company to enter. After selecting an entry mode (usually indirect or direct export), students then research how to modify the product, how to determine product price, and how to select the appropriate promotion and distribution to satisfy the demand of the target country.

This project provides students practical, real-life experience in a globalized business environment. The project requires students to use the knowledge and skills from BUAD3270, enhances students' communication proficiencies and provides them with useful resources and tools in international business.

**BUAD3280.** The fourth exposure for some of our students is provided at the junior level, where students are presented with the following scenario in BUAD 3280 (Cyber Business Law). Students are to create their own app company.  These students are the CEO's of their mock company.  As such, the students must provide the name of their company, a logo, and its product or service.  The students are tasked to check with various governmental sites to ensure their *fictitious* company does not already exist.

Throughout the class, students are given a plethora of topics and are required to look at these topics through the lens of a CEO.  They are tasked to manage cyber business law issues through policies. As CEOs of their global company, students must let their customers know which role their

company plays in the value chain and the laws which the company may encounter doing business globally. This information must be captured in a one-page business memorandum.

**HMT3050**. HMT3050 (Meal Management) students participate in a mid-semester project called *Ethnic Meals*. In this project, students are divided into self-selected groups of 3 to 5 students. Groups often form with a common interest in a foreign cuisine. The group researches the culture, agriculture, cuisine, family system, meal system, and etiquette for their pre-approved ethnic group (region, country, or specific sub-culture) and presents one group PowerPoint report with background information, description of the menu and occasion selected, recipes, food guide, and resources/references.

Resources are reviewed in class including the internet, encyclopedias, textbooks, magazines, cookbooks, and individual interviews. Typical foods for the culture are to be presented in a food guide, such as a pyramid or plate. If an *official* guide exists, it may be utilized with appropriate reference. This information gathering portion of the project gives students a path for exploring future cultures and cuisines. Students often self-report increased interest in other cuisines and duplication of this activity culminating in a dinner party for friends. The students translate their research into a food presentation for other class members and guests to sample. This includes reviewing recipes, researching ingredients, and preparing an organized shopping list of items to prepare the foods. Ingredient substitutions may be necessary, but the team is responsible for requesting the substitution ingredients. The students may assist with grocery shopping.

After making a time plan, students prepare and present the meal on a specific date. Prices are provided on the day of presentation and students are responsible for adding the prices to their organized shopping list in the final PowerPoint report. Before presenting their spread, the student group orally shares information about the culture and cuisine, the family system, etiquette, and the foods being presented. Typically, three groups present on one day and all class members and guests sample the cuisines. On a second class day, the remaining groups prepare and present for the class and guests. There is a time for questions and comments on each day of food presentation. Students commonly wear costumes and decorate their tables to highlight the culture and occasion. Pictures are encouraged to be included in the final PowerPoint report. A typical semester exposes enrolled students and invited guests to 5 or 6 cultures and cuisines.

The group PowerPoint is due following the *Ethnic Meal* presentations and provides an overview of each group's presentation as well as a visual for critiquing the activity. PowerPoints are shared with class members and are often requested by the guests for the recipes, as well as the information. Each student's grade is based on participation in the research and planning, the report, the food presentation, clean up and self-and group-critiquing. Once class attendance/participation is included, the entire project accounts for approximately 10%-12.5% of course grade.

**HMT3140.** HMT3140 (Global Tourism) provides students with numerous opportunities to learn about foreign countries, multi-cultural influences, geographic destinations, and the impact of tourism on a global economy. One major project of this class requires the students to stage an International Festival of Cultures and Cuisines which lasts 2 ½ hours.

The tourism students research destinations and determine various themes, design and paint the backdrops for booths, decorate the tables, select and provide music, entertainment, activities, wear indigenous costumes and serve food of the country prepared by the culinary arts students.

Typically, there are 10 booths with 3-4 students in each booth. For each booth, the students determine the cost of food and drinks. The festival involves a collaborative effort involving the University and community in a unified fashion.  To promote and ensure the success of the festival, the students work with the local Tourist Bureau, Police Department, Mayor's Office, Office of Community Development and Main Street Manager. The festival is open to the public, and eager guests purchase coupons for $1 each. Everyone strolls from booth to booth enjoying the music, street dancing, food and drinks which wine and other special activities. For example, one of the booths featured the country of Australia. Students dressed in cargo pants and safari jackets with pith helmets served shrimp on the Barbie from a grill borrowed from one of the local banks. Also, the students provided an activity-make your own boomerang-for children.

**HMT4030.** HMT4030 (Perspectives in HMT) students may demonstrate a working knowledge of proper international business etiquette necessary to maintain a competitive edge in today's global society. Students must not only learn acceptable "dos and don'ts" for the business lunch, professional dress and workplace behavior in the U.S. but also become acquainted with appropriate international etiquette.  In this class, each student selects a country and researches the appropriate business and social etiquette behavior of that country. The project requires a written research paper and presentation. Thus, the research findings provide an overall panoramic education gleaned from the selected countries.  To make this project even more fun and exciting, some of the students dress in appropriate business attire or native costumes while presenting and demonstrating specific topics. This class provides valuable business and social information crucial for students who are graduating and may find themselves traveling abroad for a business conference or important "make or break" business endeavors.

**Appendix B** Survey Instrument

We created two identical questionnaires at SurveyMonkey.com to designate between the graduated respondents (spring 2013 to fall 2016 graduates) and the spring 2017 graduating candidates. Both questionnaires used the same 38 questions.
**Question 1** asked the participant to select a choice from "Yes, I agree to be part of the study" and "No, I don't agree to be part of the study". If "Yes" choice was selected, the survey went on to question 2.

**Question 2**, using a 5-point ordinal Likert scale, respondents were asked, "Please rate your level of satisfaction with the global competency acquired in the following courses (you can select N/A if you did not complete the class)",  with five answer options under each of the seven courses: not at all satisfied, slightly satisfied, somewhat satisfied, very satisfied, and completely satisfied.

**Questions 3-26** were created to evaluate the impact of seven courses through a before- and after-comparison of the students' perceived global competencies. Seven courses were included in the survey: BUAD2200, MKTG3230, BUAD3270, BUAD3280, HMT3050, HMT3140, and HMT4030. Respondents were asked to rate their perceived satisfaction with problem-solving, confidence, self-esteem, teambuilding, leadership, global awareness, business communication, and research skills.  with six rating options: no competency or awareness; needs improvement; satisfactory; good, excellent and N/A. For example, the respondent was directed to Question # 6 - "Have you already completed MKTG3230–Business Report and Communication" with four answer options: "Yes", "No", "I am currently in the class", and "Not needed for my degree". If the respondent selected "Yes", the survey went to Question # 7-"Before taking MKTG3230, please

rate your self-evaluated competence in the following skills (if you have not taken the class yet, just select N/A)" and Question # 8–"After taking MKTG3230, please rate your self-evaluated competence in the following skills (if you have not taken the class yet, just select N/A)". The survey repeated this Before-and-After satisfaction process through Question 3 - 26 until the respondent finished rating competences for all his/her completed courses.

**Questions 27-32** were explored to address the main problem we proposed in the "Introduction" part of this study: "our business students cannot afford to travel or study abroad in another country for a variety of reasons such as cultural myopia or funding sources." We asked the recipient four questions: (1) While in college, did/do you have a budget or plan to afford an international educational tour? (2) While in college, did/do you have time to take an international educational tour of one or two weeks during the regular semester time? (3) While in college, did/do you have time to take an international educational tour of one- or two-weeks during school holidays? (4) While in college, did/do you have a budget or a plan to study abroad as an exchange student for one or two semesters? (5) While in college, did/do you have time to study abroad as an exchange student for one or two semesters? (6) Were/are you an international student?

**Questions 33-38** addressed demographic information. Respondents provided information about gender, age, school classification (freshman, sophomore, junior, senior or graduating senior), ethnicity, marital status, and employment status.