Broadening the Circle: A New Ethical Approach to Education Abroad

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FLIPPING THE SCRIPT

• Current ethical codes and guidelines within higher education and international education are:
  • Focused *largely* on operations – how do we operate ethically?
  • Focused *largely* on students – we ought to operate ethically in order to better serve our students.
  • Accept the world as is and strive to operate ethically within that world

• We advocate for a new ethics that:
  • Focuses on learning outcomes – explicitly teaches values in relation to choices and behaviors
  • Focuses not just on students but on other people and the environment
  • Rejects the world as it is and asks all of us to become change agents
Postmodernism – Social Constructivism

• Base concept is the same: We construct the worlds we live in (through language, or power structures, or community, or family, or all of the above)

• Social Constructivists were more interested in the how – the process of construction

• Postmodernists analyzed (and often critiqued) societal structures and institutions

• Postmodernists also believed that the constructed nature of reality results in permanent fluctuation
Critique of Cultural Relativism - Postmodernism

• If there is no truth and no one reality, then it doesn’t matter what how you behave

• “Relativists, for their part, have a sort of ethic too. It’s the ethic of ‘anything goes,’ brilliantly exemplified by so-called postmodernism. Eventually this ends up as an ethic of nihilism.”
  

• This can also lead to the idea that there are no “facts” and no physical reality
The Contemporary Ethical Problem

• The institutions associated with older ethical systems are weakened by a general de-institutionalizing:
  • Members come and go, the institution is forced to adapt, etc.
  • The postmodern suspicion of institutions and, by extension of grand- or meta-narratives, is applied to older ethical systems

• Human rights is probably the best existing framework
  • Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted in 1948 – before the world became postmodern
  • Doesn’t seem to work as a framework for how to live (30,000 foot ethics)
Capitalism to the Rescue!

VALUE
Living Ethically in the Postmodern World

• “For if relativism about ethics and morality were true, then, at the end of many discussions, we would each have to end up saying, ‘From where I stand, I am right. From where you stand, you are right.’ And there would be nothing further to say. From our different perspectives, we would be living effectively in different worlds. And without a shared world, what is there to discuss? People often recommend relativism because they think it will lead to tolerance. But if we cannot learn from one another what it is right to think and feel and do, then conversation between us will be pointless. Relativism of that sort isn’t a way to encourage conversation; it’s just a reason to fall silent.”

Ethics Beyond Relativity

• Relational, with a specific understanding of relationships as nodes in networks, and thus eco-centric, rather than anthropocentric

• Involving a self that resists its own urge towards power/control
  • Which requires a different way of thinking about the self
Ethics Beyond Relativity

- Immanent, rather than transcendent – focused on ethics as a continuous series of minute choices, an imperfect practice
- “And when it comes to change, what moves people is often not an argument from a principle, not a long discussion about values, but just a gradually acquired new way of seeing things.”
Ethics Beyond Relativity in Education Abroad

- Already ample resources about intercultural development and ways to support those learning outcomes – continue with this work
- Could also build the elements of this new ethics into our programs as learning outcomes:
  - Teach relationships as networks that exist across time
  - Challenge students to check their ego with their luggage
  - Work with students to deconstruct the concepts of power and self/identity
  - Engage students in the idea of ethics as a daily practice of small choices
Ethics Beyond Relativity in Education Abroad

• Strive towards this new ethics...and let the movement towards be enough as long as we continue moving.

• It doesn’t have to be a full program redesign or new reflection course or new curriculum.

• Small choices we can make as educators to move in this direction
  • To application materials, orientation content, reflection requirements, advising guidelines, websites, training for faculty leaders, program proposals, etc.

• Model this new ethics for our students (and colleagues)
  • Think about how we interact with others, with the environments and communities we exist in and move through
  • Think differently about ourselves and our role(s)

• Reward ourselves for this practice and keep practicing.
BROADENING THE CIRCLE:
A NEW ETHICAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION ABROAD
CRITICAL ECOPEDAGOGY FOR A SUSTAINABLE PLANET

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Consumption Footprint: 2.9; Biocapacity: 1.7; Deficit: -1.2; N° Earths: 1.6
World Ecological Footprint by Component

Number of Earths available and demanded

- Carbon
- Fishing Grounds
- Cropland
- Built-up Land
- Forest Products
- Grazing Land

ECOLOGICAL DEFICIT / RESERVE

An ecological deficit occurs when the Ecological Footprint of a population exceeds the biocapacity of the area available to that population. A national ecological deficit means that the nation is importing biocapacity through trade, liquidating national ecological assets or emitting carbon dioxide waste into the atmosphere. An ecological reserve exists when the biocapacity of a region exceeds its population’s Ecological Footprint.
ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT - UNITED STATES

Consumption Footprint: 8.6; Biocapacity: 3.8; Deficit: -4.8; N° Earths: 5.0; N° countries: 2.3
Figure 20: The Global Living Planet Index: 1970 to 2014

Average abundance of 16,704 populations representing 4,005 species monitored across the globe declined by 60%. The white line shows the index values and the shaded areas represent the statistical certainty surrounding the trend (range: -50% to -67%).

Key
- Green line: Global Living Planet Index
- Yellow line: Confidence limits
The Big Picture: Crisis Convergence

- Deforestation, soil loss, desertification, wildfire
- Air pollution, acid rain, micro-particles
- Loss of natural habitat and declining biodiversity
- Soil toxification and artificialization
- Declining agricultural yields; increasing population
- 41% decline in global insect mass since 2009
- 80% decline in flying insects in Europe
- Bee colony collapse and loss of natural pollinators
- 60% decline globally in wildlife since 1970
- Depletion of non-renewable natural resources
- Ocean warming, acidification, plastic pollution
- Ongoing depletion of marine food stocks
- Coral reef decline (.1% sea area home to 25% sea life)
- Decline of basic marine food source: Phytoplankton
- 40% increase in CO2 since 1750
- Increase in average global temperature
- Loss of glacial, polar, and pack ice with sea level rise
- A sixth great extinction of life on Earth

*Figure 1. The Perfect Storm*

Model courtesy of Richard Slimbach

*The Art of World Learning, 2016*
What Ethical Frameworks Help Educators Navigate This Reality?

Existing Codes, Principles, and Standards in Education Abroad
Responsive and Environmentally Sustainable Ecopedagogy
Eight Core Principles (2009)

- Integrity
- Respect for Law
- Quality
- Competence
- Diversity
- Transparency
- Access
- Responsiveness

Number of Pertinent References to:

- The environment 0
- Sustainability 0
- Biodiversity 0
- Conservation 0
- Impact 0

From the Preamble: Working in a global and multicultural environment, we are committed to the internationalization of education as a value-laden set of interactions that produces individuals who are more knowledgeable, reflective, broad-minded, and aware.
Code of Ethical Practice (2013)
• Quality
• Equity
• Inclusion
• Partnership

Statement of Principles (2014)
• 7 Principles of Internationalization

Number of Pertinent References to:
• The environment 0
• Sustainability 0
• Biodiversity 0
• Conservation 0
• Impact 0

Principle #1: Internationalization is a vital means to achieving global-level civic engagement, social justice and social responsibility, and ultimately is vital to the common good.
Seven Principles (2006)

- Autonomy
- Non-Malfeasance
- Beneficence
- Justice
- Fidelity
- Veracity
- Affiliation

Number of Pertinent References to:

- The environment 0
- Sustainability 0
- Biodiversity 0
- Conservation 0
- Impact 0

From the Preamble: CAS often cites George Washington, who said, “Let us raise a standard to which the wise and honest can repair.”
Academic Values in Internationalization of Higher Education (2012)

• 12 Values & Principles

Number of Pertinent References to:

• The environment 0
• Sustainability 0
• Biodiversity 0
• Conservation 0
• Impact 0

Principle #6: Engagement in the unprecedented opportunity to create international communities of research, learning, and practice to solve pressing global problems.
Standards of Professional Practice (2016)

• International Expertise (5 standards)
• Leadership & Management (6 standards)
• Advocacy (6 standards)
• Personal Effectiveness (5 standards)

Number of Pertinent References to:

• The environment 0
• Sustainability 0
• Biodiversity 0
• Conservation 0
• Impact 0

Standard #22: Has a deep commitment to preserving high ethical standards in all internationalization efforts.
Standards of Good Practice (5th ed. 2015)

1. Mission and Goals
2. Student Learning and Development
3. Academic Framework
4. Student Selection, Preparation, Advising
5. Code of Conduct
6. Policies and Procedures
7. Organizational and Program Resources
9. Ethics

Number of Pertinent References to:

- The environment 0
- Sustainability 0
- Biodiversity 0
- Conservation 0
- Impact 0

From Standard 9 on Ethics: The organization promotes respect for the cultures and values of the communities in which it operates.
Ethical Principle for EA (2nd ed. 2011)
1. Truthfulness and Transparency
2. Responsibility to Students
3. Relationships with Host Societies
4. Best Practices
5. Conflicts of Interest

Appendix A: Program Site Visits
Appendix B: Conflicts of Interest

Number of Pertinent References to:
- The environment 4
- Sustainability 0
- Biodiversity 0
- Impact 3
- Conservation 1
Section III.3. Relationships with Host Societies

• a. An awareness of and efforts to minimize any negative impact on the host society and community;

• c. The creation and enforcement of a code of conduct that appropriately consider host locale societal and cultural norms and environmental conditions;

• e. Establishing and maintaining policies and relationships that support environmentally responsible program management, including but not limited to:
  – i. Fostering an awareness of and minimizing harmful individual and program-related environmental and social impact;
  – ii. Considering and preparing for the environmental, economic, and social consequences of the presence (or departure) of the program, in both program design and management.
  – g. Supporting local community assets such as schools, libraries, health programs, and conservation projects, when feasible.

Section III.4. Best Practices

• d. Maintaining clear environmental standards
SECTION IV
THE FORUM COMPASS

FOUR QUESTIONS TO GUIDE ETHICAL DECISION MAKING IN EDUCATION ABROAD

1. Is it true, fair, and transparent?

2. Does it put the interests of the students first and contribute to their intellectual and personal growth and well being?

3. Does it reflect the best practices of the field?

4. Does it foster international understanding?
The 5 Axioms of Sustainability
(Richard Heinberg, 2007)

1. Unsustainable use of critical resources leads to societal collapse.
2. Increasing population or rates of consumption is unsustainable.
3. Use of renewable resources beyond the rate of natural replenishment is unsustainable.
4. Use of non-renewable resources towards depletion is unsustainable.
5. Introducing into the environment substances harmful to biosphere functions is unsustainable.
Principles of Critical Ecopedagogy
(Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, Herbert Marcuse, Richard Kahn)

1. Expose environmental costs of orthodox education
2. Counter learning premised on industrial consumerism
3. Defy greenwashing hidden within “sustainable development”
4. Resist anthropocentric cultural identity, worldview and behavior
5. End ecocidal dichotomy of human/nonhuman; nature/culture
6. Abolish human culture predicated on domination of nature
7. Oppose political economy/ideology hostile to the ecosystem
8. Contest extractive capitalism and neo-liberal globalization
9. Rebel against science & technology that instrumentalizes nature
## Educating for a Sustainable Planet

**Building Sustainability Literacy into the Ethos and Outcomes of Education Abroad**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students and Learning</th>
<th>Staff and Administration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Count and offset all travel-related CO₂</td>
<td>• Update mission and vision statement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Live below host ecological footprint</td>
<td>• Count and offset program-related CO₂</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Compare home and host footprints</td>
<td>• Calculate &amp; publish CO₂ program cost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enroll in sustainability courses</td>
<td>• Build offset fees into program cost</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Support community “green” programs</td>
<td>• Prioritize eco-education; 6th extinction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop sustainability literacy</td>
<td>• Choose “green” program locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning to recognize greenwashing</td>
<td>• Formally assess sustainability literacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Explore host wildlife habitats</td>
<td>• Use “green” staff hiring criteria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Recycle, reduce, reuse, refuse abroad</td>
<td>• Design “green” co-curricular programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Use cultural learning to address crisis</td>
<td>• Provide “green” staff training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Infuse home “green” habits with hosts</td>
<td>• Use only sustainable housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Export host “green” habits back home</td>
<td>• Expose students to indigenous lives</td>
</tr>
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A CALL TO ACTION: For Education Abroad Professionals

The environmental crisis we face is the central moral challenge of our times; the crisis of our age. As such...

• We must end both public blindness and our own long silence in the face of this crisis.

• We must wake up and respond to the times we live in and address, with students, the hard realities involved.

• We must end the marginalization of environment issues and eco-learning in our study abroad programs.

• We must adopt a critical eco-pedagogy that situates ecological ethics at the center of a new agenda for 21st century teaching and learning abroad.

• We must recognize that planetary sustainability is a vital, urgent, and necessary pedagogical concern...even abroad!
COMMUNITY-BASED GLOBAL LEARNING

The Theory and Practice of Ethical Engagement at Home and Abroad

Eric Hartman, Richard Kiely, Christopher Boettcher, and Jessica Friedrichs
Foreword by Rafia Zakaria

Eric Hartman, Executive Director of the Center for Peace and Global Citizenship—Haverford College
Co-founder and Editor, globalsl.org
How are our partnerships happening?

http://globalsl.org/ftl/
Examples: 2 of 12 Partnership Queries

• Do stakeholders, including several and diverse community members, agree on long-term mutuality of goals and aspirations?

• In terms of community impact, are the reasons for the partnership understood and embraced by multiple and diverse stakeholders?
First Year
- Intro Course: Critical Questions and Entry Experiences

Sophomore
- Entry Engaged Learning Opportunities in Discipline
- Exploratory Critical Questions / Coursework / Experiences

Junior
- Internship during Summer after 2nd or 3rd year
- Discipline-based engaged learning
- Senior Thesis Research
- Senior Seminar Projects
- Discipline-based engaged learning

Senior
COMMUNITY-BASED GLOBAL LEARNING
The Theory and Practice of Ethical Engagement at Home and Abroad

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The Center for Peace and Global Citizenship advances peace, social justice, and global citizenship through research, education, and action.
The Mexican Revival of Small-Town America

By Alfredo Corchado
Mr. Corchado is the Mexico border correspondent for The Dallas Morning News.

June 2, 2018

Leer en español
Find Your Watershed

How do I use this map?

To determine the watershed you live, work, or play in, enter an address in the box below and click Search. A marker will be placed at that address, and the background color on the map will correspond to the list of watersheds in the legend.
“A bay is a noun only if water is *dead*. When *bay* is a noun, it is defined by humans, trapped between its shores and contained by the word. But the verb *wiikwegamaa*-to *be* a bay- releases the water from bondage and lets it live. Robin Wall Kimmerer, *Braiding Sweetgrass*, p. 55
Concluding Points

• Ethics are emergent and evolving: that’s why a Fair Trade Learning approach to partnership assume stakeholders conversation as a core component

• In Western Higher Education, we operate from within a culture that operationally accepts extraordinary human inequity, and lacks an understanding of or plan for ecological sustainability. We must disrupt our settled ways of being and thinking. “It is what it is” is unacceptable.

• Part of our duty as global educators is to introduce, apply, critique, and advance transdisciplinary frames of reference that help us and our students consider how we might achieve a more just, inclusive, and sustainable world – through a patchwork of more just, inclusive, and sustainable communities

• This work is lifelong – and should be approached early and often in higher ed curricula

• If we can’t do this at home, we shouldn’t do it abroad.
Discussion

• What is one critical question that emerges from this session or from your thinking about ethics in Education Abroad?
• Do the current codes of ethics suffice for your work?