

CROSS-CULTURAL PRACTICES OF ADULT EDUCATORS  
IN BLENDED GLOBAL EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

### CROSS-CULTURAL PRACTICES OF ADULT EDUCATORS IN BLENDED GLOBAL EDUCATION

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This qualitative study explores how adult educators use a blended teaching format, that is, the use of face-to-face teaching combined with online technology, to promote cross-cultural understanding between students from different cultures. This study is based upon the following assumptions: (1) cross-cultural understanding can be achieved through blended global education; (2) technology and online international education can help students achieve the benefits of cross-cultural understanding; and (3) by promoting cross-cultural understanding, students will learn to challenge assumptions, create new perspectives, gain global competence, and embrace international diversity.

This study examines the dedicated work of adult educators who participated in an online international teaching program, to have students from different countries, use technology to collaborate on shared projects in order to foster and promote cross-cultural understanding. The primary sources of data were: in-depth interviews with 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico; a focus group of related academic and university professionals; and documentary analysis.

The bounded case study examined, among other things, the adult educators' perceptions of differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format; the activities used within a blended global context to promote understanding among students from different cultures; the ways in which adult educators learned how to

teach in this environment; and finally, those factors that facilitated or inhibited the process of cross-cultural understanding within this blended global format.

Key findings included the power paradox of synchronicity; the blended cultural diversity paradigm; the impact of international collegial partnerships; and the anxiety and embrace of language challenges. A key finding was that, based upon the level of technology interaction coupled with the academic content of the collaborative work, students can achieve different levels of cross-cultural understanding from awareness to appreciation to advocacy.

A primary recommendation from this study is that adult educators and institutions should embrace technology as a creative and innovative way to help students achieve cross-cultural understanding and global competence in today's changing economy.

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## Chapter I

### INTRODUCTION

The American Council on Education (ACE, 2010) states that today's workforce needs "college graduates who have global competencies—attitudes, skills, and knowledge—to live and work in our multicultural and interconnected world" (Green, 2010, p. 1). Similarly, Obst, Bhandari, and Witherell (2007) assert that in order for U.S. students to succeed in a global world, they must seek "international knowledge, gain intercultural communication skills and global perspectives" (p. 5). Globalization requires that students obtain international experience by engaging with people from other countries and cultures in order to gain a greater understanding and appreciation for cultural diversity (Berdan, Goodman, & Taylor, 2013). Students can gain international experience and develop global competencies by studying abroad, working abroad, or engaging in international service projects (Green, 2010).

A recent study conducted by the Institute for International Education (IIE, 2015) has shown, however, that only a very small percentage of U.S. college and university students actually study abroad; less than 10% of four-year undergraduate students have this opportunity. The cost to study abroad is a high barrier for many U.S. students. As such, colleges and universities must consider cost-effective alternatives to achieve globalization.

In order to address the gap of U.S. students lagging behind in studying abroad, technology offers a creative and affordable alternative to providing international content

in a student's curriculum (Ward, 2016). Specifically, online technology can connect international students and faculty in ways that are both culturally meaningful and, at the same time, accessible, affordable, and flexible (Ward, 2016). Online education has quadrupled over the past 15 years (Dusst & Winthrop, 2019). Blended learning, which is a combination of face-to-face learning and online teaching, is an effective way to enable students to experience cross-cultural learning in an innovative and collaborative environment (Kintu, Zhu, & Kagambe, 2016). Blended learning can enable students to gain global competencies without leaving their home campus. Taras et al. (2013) asserted that using technology to collaborate "with peers across cultures and time zones provides students with authentic cross-cultural interaction without the typical time and financial costs associated with travel or study abroad" (pp. 415-416).

Similarly, technology can enable adult educators on a home campus to have worldwide exposure and influence on students' cross-cultural experiences. Higher education institutions report using technology to educate faculty on ways to use technology for globalization, conduct virtual education-abroad sessions, and deliver global for-credit courses to students around the world (Ward, 2016).

Technology has enabled worldwide economic, cultural and environmental forces to directly impact a student's ability to succeed in a global economy. Using technology to place students in cross-cultural teams and providing substantive course work enables students to become global citizens poised to make a difference in the world.

Cultural differences, however, can have an impact on international online education. Liu, Liu, Lee, and Magjuka (2010) cautioned that these differences can influence students and adult educators in a blended environment in a variety of ways. Cultural differences in an online environment can have a negative effect on students, resulting in marginalization, alienation and even miscommunication (Shattuck, 2005). Alternatively, the online component can actually help students minimize cultural



differences by the creation of external identities and cultural negotiation among the participants (Goodfellow & Lamy, 2009; Walker-Fernandez, 1999).

Few formal studies, however, have shown the ways in which adult educators engage in cross-cultural practices in blended global education to enable students to learn within a global context. While global technologies have rapidly connected campuses worldwide, little research is available on how the U.S. adult educators use blended education to promote cross-cultural learning in an international context (Liu et al., 2010). As such, there is a need for additional research on how adult educators can create meaningful blended education programs to enable diverse students from different cultures to be successful within a global context.

### **Cross-Cultural Practices in Blended Global Education**

The advent of worldwide technology has significantly changed the global aspect of higher education. Instead of studying abroad to achieve a global perspective, many campuses are offering students the opportunity to remain on their home campus and engage in an online international experience with students around the world. As a result, teaching and learning in an online multicultural context on college campuses are often considered routine at many universities (Parrish & Linder-VanBerschoot, 2010). Understanding how cross-cultural practices and global competencies impact an online and face-to-face instructional environment is an important consideration for both adult educators and students.

Regardless of industry, one needs global competence to compete in today's international economy (Taras et al., 2013). Globalization is defined as a process that increases "the flow of people, culture, ideas, values, knowledge, technology, and economy across borders, resulting in a more interconnected and interdependent world" (Knight, 2006, p. 18).

## **Global Competence**

Global competence required in the 21st century includes analytic skills such as critical thinking and problem solving; interpersonal skills such as communication, collaboration, and team building; execution skills; technology literacy; and finally, flexibility and the capacity for change (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD] Survey, 2011). The 21st century workplace puts strong demands for workers to possess a creative mix of knowledge, skills, and attitudes in order to compete and succeed in this time of burgeoning economic and technological advancement. Intercultural competences are those skills, knowledge and abilities that can help individuals “adeptly navigate complex environments marked by a growing diversity of peoples, cultures and lifestyles” (UNESCO, 2013, p. 5). Global competence is defined as:

The acquisition of in-depth knowledge and understanding of international issues, an appreciation of and ability to work with people from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, proficiency in a foreign language, and the skills to function productively in an interdependent world community. (National Education Association, 2010, p. 1)

OECD/PISA (2018) defines global competency as a multidimensional concept that involves a variety of skills and knowledge within a worldwide context:

Globally competent individuals can examine local, global and intercultural issues, understand and appreciate different perspectives and world views, interact successfully and respectfully with others, and take responsible action toward sustainability and collective well-being. (p. 4)

Below is a graphic depiction of the OECD/PISA global competence framework:



Figure 1. OECD PISA Global Competence Framework. Reprinted from “PISA 2018 Global Competence” Retrieved from <http://www.oecd.org/pisa/pisa-2018-global-competence.htm>. Reprinted with permission from OECD.

**Globally competent students.** Schools have an important role in developing intercultural and global competence. In *Preparing Globally Competent Teachers*, Moss, Manise, and Soppelsa (2012) argue that students live productive and meaningful lives by learning how to engage as global citizens. Those global knowledge and skills include:

- Understanding of one’s own cultural identity;
- Valuing diverse cultures;
- Understanding the world as one interdependent system;
- Understanding prevailing world conditions, process of change and emerging trends; and
- Developing skills for constructive participation in a changing world (p. 2).

Students need to have key global competencies in order to be successful. Exposing college and university students to cross-cultural ideas and experiences can help to develop those global competencies (OECD, 2018). Students with global competence can

more effectively conduct themselves within a cross-cultural environment. Boix Mansilla and Jackson (2011, 2013) identify four global competences that students should have in today's economy: the ability to look beyond their immediate environment; the capacity to recognize and respect others' perspectives; the ability to communicate effectively across cultures; and the desire to be an active and reflective participant on the global stage.

The way students can acquire these competencies is by having access to a global education. Globalization in blended international education requires students, as future business leaders, to collaborate with individuals from other cultures in order to influence and achieve common goals. A key to an individual's competitive sustainable advantage in today's world is the ability to navigate cross-cultural complexities within a global context (Javidan & Walker, 2012).

**Globally competent adult educators.** If schools are where students can learn the global competencies to thrive in today's interconnected and interdependent society, then adult educators must be prepared to educate students accordingly. Adult educators teaching within a cross-cultural context require their own set of skills or global competencies in order to meet the needs of a diverse student population. Global competence in teachers is defined as a "set of essential knowledge, critical dispositions, and performances that foster development of learners' global competences" (NAFSA, 2015, p. 4). Specifically, a globally competent teacher:

1. has knowledge of the world, critical global issues, their local impact, and the cultural backgrounds of learners;
2. manifests intercultural sensitivity and acceptance of differences;
3. incorporates this knowledge and sensitivity into classroom practice; and
4. develops the skills to foster these dispositions: knowledge and performance in learners (p. 4).

Globally competent adult educators exist in face-to-face classrooms, in online learning, and in blended education. Those adult educators who have global competences, such as

knowledge of the world and critical global issues, along with a sensitivity to intercultural differences and fostering connection across cultures, can make an impact on a student's ability to learn about cross-cultural differences.

### **Challenges in Cross-Cultural Education**

Despite the need for global competence in an interconnected world, many individuals still bring certain biases or stereotypes when dealing with another culture. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's culture is superior to another (Lustig & Koester, 1993). Cultural relativism, on the other hand, is a theory that espouses that one's customs or beliefs or institutions is just as valid as another's set of beliefs or customs (Hartung, 1954, pp. 118-126). Parrish and Linder-VanBerschot (2010) state that a "common false assumption is when people take their own cultural ways of thinking and behaving as representative of human nature and therefore think there is a 'right way to behave'" (p. 10). Adult educators face a number of challenges when teaching students within a multi-cultural environment, among them, the need to:

1. Understand and appreciate cultural differences of students;
2. Be aware of one's own cultural biases to avoid false assumptions;
3. Seek to understand the difference between student's cultural values and cultural practices;
4. Be cognizant of the instructional need to balance cultural diversity with cultural assimilation; and
5. Acknowledge that certain teaching strategies may be culture-specific and not applicable in certain cross-cultural exercise. (Parrish and Linder-VanBerschot, 2010, pp. 10-11)

Based on the foregoing, it is imperative that adult educators in blended global educational environments adopt cross-cultural practices that appreciate cultural diversity and apply culturally specific teaching strategies where appropriate. Understanding how adult educators acquire, learn, and execute these teaching skills can improve cross-cultural awareness and promote global competence.

## **Problem Statement**

The above discussion provides a framework for examining the extent to which cross-cultural practices in blended global education impact an adult educator's ability to foster inclusiveness and encourage participation from two different cultures, Mexico and the U.S., for the students' benefit. Online education is inherently more challenging than face-to-face learning because behavioral cues and other forms of personal interaction are not readily apparent as when adult educators and students come together in person. Distance learning can impact one's ability to create relationships that are typical in a face-to-face environment. However, online international learning is a relatively new phenomenon and it is important to understand the role of the adult educator in this environment. Blended education, that is, both face-to-face and online education, appears to incorporate the benefits of both approaches. Therefore, this study sought to identify how adult educators' efforts in a blended instructional environment can promote student learning, understanding, and participation in a global context.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this interpretative case study was to explore with 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico, the cross-cultural practices they used to create an environment within a blended global education program that fosters learning and collaboration between students from two different cultures.

## **Research Questions**

To carry out this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How did adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?

2. What activities did adult educators engage in within a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?
3. How did adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?
4. What factors facilitated and/or inhibited cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?

### **Approach**

The researcher used a qualitative research approach within a bounded case study to interview in-depth 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico, who have participated in an online international cross-cultural education program. For the purpose of this study, the cross-cultural program was called GLOBE (Global Learning Online Blended Education), a pseudonym for the actual program. This is to protect the confidentiality of the program.

The university system in the United States that facilitates the GLOBE program is referred to as SUSA (State University of States of America). SUSA has multiple campuses that have participated in the GLOBE program and is simply referred to as “my campus” or “partner campus” or “U.S. campus.” The universities in Mexico are referred to as “my campus” or “partner campus” or “Mexican campus.”

First, the researcher gathered demographic information on each of the participants. Next, in-depth interviews were conducted to gather detailed information on what practices adult educators used to promote and engage the students in cross-cultural learning during a GLOBE program. To protect the anonymity of the individual participants, each was identified by individual pseudonyms. For triangulation purposes, the researcher used two additional research methods: (a) a focus group with four adult

educators or administrators of GLOBE who were not part of the study, but met the same criteria as the interviewees in order to supplement the interview data; and (b) a document review of relevant data, studies, and information regarding the GLOBE program and cross-cultural learning.

### **Study Sample and Site Information**

The study sample was comprised of adult educators who participated in a blended international cross-cultural program. This research used purposeful and snowball sampling to recruit 10 adult educators from the United States and 10 adult educators from Mexico who had participated in the GLOBE program and co-taught a GLOBE module with an adult educator from a different country. The researcher looked to a global education network to recruit adult educators who had used technology to connect international campuses to promote cross-cultural understanding. The Mexican adult educators recruited were located throughout Mexico. The U.S. adult educators recruited were located from the Northeast, Southeast, and Northwest parts of the U.S.

GLOBE is a program that uses online technologies to connect international institutions to enable college-level students from different cultures to work together to gain intercultural competencies. The goal is to enable students to participate in an international learning experience without ever leaving their home campus. Adult educators from two different international institutions, in two different countries, work together to combine their course content to create a GLOBE module of mutual interest. The partner adult educators create student learning objectives, design the course content, and create collaborative activities for their students to work together on academic projects to promote cross-cultural understanding.

The GLOBE module typically lasts four to eight weeks and occurs within an existing semester. Throughout the module, the partner adult educators use technology to



engage the students in a variety of activities, among them, icebreakers and collaborative cross-cultural teamwork. The goal is to connect students across cultures to gain an understanding of cultural diversity, challenge misperceptions, and create new perspectives.

### **Anticipated Outcomes**

The study will uncover insights into how adult educators are able to promote cross-cultural understanding in a blended international format. These insights will add value to the institutions, administrators, adult educators, and students who participate in the GLOBE program.

### **Assumptions**

The researcher had several assumptions regarding this study:

1. Cross-cultural understanding can be achieved through blended global education.
2. Technology and online international education can help students achieve the benefits of cross-cultural understanding by challenging ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice, and can enable students to appreciate diversity, gain global perspectives, and understand cultural learning differences.
3. Adult educators are interested in candidly sharing their teaching experiences in a cross-cultural blended program to improve future opportunities.
4. The institutions, the administration, the adult educators, and the students will benefit from the participants' information, ideas, and advice for future GLOBE programs.
5. Language issues will not be a barrier to conducting candid interviews.

## **Rationale and Significance**

The rationale for studying this topic is that cross-cultural learning enables students to experience global perspectives, challenge current assumptions, and reflect on current attitudes about culture and society at large (Little, Titarenko, & Bergelson, 2005). Significant advances in technology now provide affordable, accessible alternatives that allow students to experience global learning in new, innovative, and meaningful ways (Tallent-Runnels et al., 2006). Internet technology enables colleges and universities to virtually expand their campuses by globally connecting with multiple institutions (Liu et al., 2010). Students have the opportunity to engage with international students without leaving their home campus. The rapid expansion of a new online learning environment among students from two different international locations creates a new level of complexity to cross-cultural learning (Little et al., 2005). This perspective merits additional research and analysis to understand the benefits and challenges of a new paradigm in cross-cultural learning.

The significance of a study conveys the importance of a problem and why certain individuals may be interested in this information (Creswell, 2014). The significance of this cross-cultural study is that adult educators can learn to communicate and collaborate more effectively in an online and blended classroom setting. This mode of learning also allows students to increase their awareness, appreciation, and understanding of different cultures, gain tolerance for cultural differences and diversity, challenge stereotypes, and gain global competence.

In addition to benefitting adult educators and students on college campuses, this study offers potential ideas and activities for international businesses that use online technology to communicate in a global economy. By researching this topic and interviewing adult educators who have participated in this type of collaboration, the

researcher uncovered new insights, ideas, and cross-cultural activities that can add value to future international programs and interactions.

### **The Researcher**

The researcher is an attorney who works full-time for New York State. Previously, she worked for the IBM Corporation in an international sales and marketing capacity where she had various global responsibilities for certain Fortune 50 clients. While at IBM, she earned an M.B.A. in marketing with a designation in international business. For the past 10 years, in addition to working for New York State, she has been employed as a part-time adult educator at a state university, where she teaches law-related courses to undergraduate students.

As an adjunct, the researcher had the opportunity to participate in a government-sponsored initiative that partnered college adult educators from the U.S. and Latin America to collaborate and co-teach online and blended education modules to undergraduate students. During the initial stages of the training program, she used Blackboard, a school-sponsored learning management system to partner online with a professor from Latin America. Shortly thereafter, the researcher and her colleague met at a three-day face-to-face cross-cultural workshop in Mexico. There the co-adult educators discussed to how create a compelling online module around science and legal issues for their combined students. After much discussion, the researcher and her partner selected a mutual topic around science and the law and the cross-cultural perceptions associated with this topic. They also identified two different technology platforms, Edmodo and What's App, to enable the students to connect, communicate, and collaborate on their assigned projects.

The following semester, the researcher and her co-instructor embedded the online GLOBE module into their traditional face-to-face courses at their respective campuses

and placed the students in cross-cultural teams. Through the use of technology, the students engaged in a variety of collaborative activities, including icebreaker videos and substantive coursework on the GLOBE module. The students were tasked with researching global issues around a science/legal topic from various viewpoints—legal, religious, cultural, and political perspectives—within the context of the U.S., Latin America, and the world at large. The students collaborated on joint presentations that were ultimately delivered in person and on video at their respective campuses.

As a doctoral student at Teachers College, the researcher was interested in learning more about how the adult educators promoted, facilitated, and achieved cross-cultural understanding in a blended global format. The researcher wanted to learn about cross-cultural practices that adult educators used, within a blended global environment, to achieve the goal of cross-cultural understanding.

On a related note, based on her IBM experience, the researcher also thought that this study had broader applicability to the public and private sectors for individuals from different cultures who use online technology to collaborate on a global business scale. This cross-cultural research may help business individuals from different cultures communicate more effectively in an online international setting to achieve their mutual goals.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Blended Education:** Adult educators and students engage in a combination of face-to-face classroom teaching with an online teaching component for academic purposes.

**Culture:** A combination of beliefs, values, languages and ideas shared by a common group of people.

**Cross-Cultural Education:** Where students engage in a program of study that presents information, ideas and content about different cultures and the exchange and applicability of this information relative to their own culture.

**Face-to-Face Education:** Adult educators and students meet in a classroom setting for a specified period of time to engage in lecture and classroom activities for academic enrichment.

**Online Education:** Adult educators and students use online technologies to virtually connect for academic purposes.

**Global Competence/Competencies:** The knowledge, skills, and attitudes to interact, understand, and appreciate cultural differences and international diversity.

**GLOBE:** Global Learning Online Blended Education Exchange, an acronym created by the researcher to describe the name of the blended global cross-cultural program. The GLOBE acronym is a fictitious name for the purpose of this study and has no relationship to any official study or research.

**GLOBE Program:** Where an adult educator and students from one campus engage another adult educator and students from a different international campus and use technology to connect and collaborate on a mutually selected topic.

**SUSA:** State University State of America, the name of the university system for this study.

## Chapter II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this interpretative case study was to explore with 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico, the cross-cultural practices they used to create an environment, within a blended global education program, that fostered learning and collaboration among students from two different cultures. Online education is inherently more challenging than face-to-face learning because behavioral cues and other forms of personal interaction are not readily apparent as when adult educators and students come together in person. Distance learning can impact one's ability to create relationships that are typical in a face-to-face environment. However, online international learning is a relatively new phenomenon, and it is important to understand the role of the adult educator in this environment. Blended education—that is, both face-to-face and online education—appears to incorporate the benefits of both approaches. Therefore, this study sought to identify how adult educators' efforts in a blended instructional environment can promote student learning, understanding, and participation in a global context.

#### **Research Questions**

To carry out this purpose, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How did adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?

2. What activities did adult educators engage in within a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?
3. How did adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?
4. What factors facilitate and/or inhibited cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?

This chapter provides a general overview of the literature on how the blended format has significantly impacted this field of study and the challenges and benefits of promoting cross-cultural understanding in a global blended context.

A literature review provides a framework for conveying the importance of a study as well as a reference point for other findings in the field (Creswell, 2014). A literature review is also a synthesis of the existing research on a particular topic (Pan, 2013). It requires the researcher to gather and assimilate what is known about the topic (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). A variety of primary and secondary sources were researched and analyzed for this literature review.

This literature review examines three main bodies of literature related to adult educators who teach in global blended programs. Topic I explores teaching and learning for adult educators and students in a variety of educational environments, specifically, face-to-face, online, and blended formats with an emphasis on the impact of blended learning on global education. Topic II explores cross-cultural teaching and learning by examining definitions of culture, identifying cross-cultural perspectives, learning across cultures, cross-cultural communication and teaming across cultures. Finally, Topic III discusses adult learning theory and examines the following topics: formal vs. informal learning, experiential learning, trial and error, dialogue with others, and finally, research and reading.

The researcher has reviewed an extensive variety of resources, among them, Google Scholar and online databases such as JSTOR, ProQuest, and ERIC, which are available through Columbia University, along with books, articles, and government websites. Keywords for internet searches and online databases on Topic I include: “blended learning,” “hybrid learning,” “online learning,” “blended teaching,” “e-learning,” “blended learning across cultures,” “virtual learning,” “global blended learning,” and a combination of these words. Topic II includes: “cross-cultural learning and online education,” “cross-cultural teaching,” “global competencies,” “global competence,” “global mindset,” “intercultural competence,” “intercultural sensitivity,” “diversity,” “ethnocentrism,” “study abroad,” “online education,” “global teams,” “international education,” and combinations of these words. Keyword searches for Topic III include “adult educators,” “adult learning theory,” “learning from experience,” “critical reflection,” “informal learning,” “team learning,” “reading and research,” and a combination of these words.

The following is a list of books, articles, and journals that have been reviewed to date: *Cross-Cultural Research*, *Advances in Developing Human Resources*, *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture*, *International Journal of Artificial Intelligence in Education*, *British Journal of Educational Technology*, *Educational Technology and Society*, *Advances in Global Leadership*, *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, *Cross-Cultural Online Learning in Higher Education and Corporate Training*, *Cross-Cultural Teaching and Learning for Home and International Students*, *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks*, and *Review of Educational Research*.

The documents produced by the following organizations were also reviewed: American Council on Education, U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, the Asia Society, the Organisation of



Co-operative Economic Development, Programme for International Student Assessment, the National Education Association, and UNESCO.

### **Rationale**

The rationale for reviewing this body of this literature is to understand the current research and findings around how adult educators engage students from two different cultures to collaborate in a blended international education program. Adult educators and students need to be cognizant of the differences in cross-cultural education. Research and interviews with adult educators who have taught in collaborative online international settings will provide institutions, administrators, educators, and students with new insights, ideas and activities to promote cross-cultural learning and understanding.

This chapter concludes with a summary of the literature review. It will also include a narrative description of the conceptual framework that has been derived from the research questions and the literature review and serves as the infrastructure throughout each phase of the research.

### **Topic I: Blended Global Education**

Blended global education is a broad topic that includes both learning and teaching in various formats and platforms. Blended learning and teaching is greater than simply adding online technology to the traditional classroom. It is an innovative and effective way to promote new ways of teaching and learning for adult educators, students and educational institutions. Adult educators deliver content and students learn in a variety of environments, specifically, face-to-face, online or in a blended, which is often described as a combination of face-to-face and online environment. Heinze and Procter (2004) offer a simplified view of these teaching and learning environments across a continuum, with

face-to-face on one end, online on the other end, and blended learning in the middle, using elements of both.

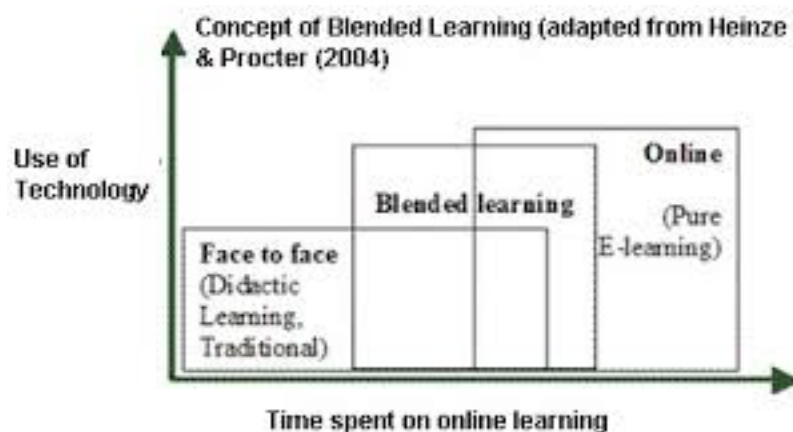


Figure 2. Heinze and Procter (2004) Concept of Blended Learning. Reprinted with permission

### Face-to-face Environment

Historically, formal education has been delivered in a traditional face-to-face format, that is, where the adult educator and students meet in a classroom, at regularly scheduled intervals, with a teacher-centric lecture style. Bonk and Graham (2006) describe face-to-face as a “teacher directed environment with person-to-person interaction in a live synchronous, high-fidelity environment” with a “priority on the human-[to]-human interaction” (p. 5). Savery (2005) further adds that during face-to-face classroom time, adult educators typically lecture, students interact, prompting a dialogue to occur, and all parties have the opportunity to observe visual clues, listen to the discussion in context, and form opinions based on their personal perception.

### Online Environment

According to the U.S. Department of Education (2018), online learning, open educational resources, and other technologies can increase student productivity and reduce costs. In an online environment, students can accelerate the learning at their own

pace, while saving costs on program fees and instructional materials. Where the adult educator and students meet in a virtual space, classroom dialogue is often replaced with discussion boards and student postings (Savery, 2005).

In the last decade, online learning has exploded in higher education. In 2003, approximately 10% of students took at least one online course. By 2009, that number expanded to 30% (Staker, 2011). In a Babson Survey conducted by Allen and Seaman (2014), almost 5 million college students take at least one online course. Between 2012 and 2016, online enrollment increased 17.2% at universities while overall enrollment declined (Abamu, 2018). By 2016, the number of students online grew to 5.8 million annually, and the trend is expected grow, indicating an important shift in the future of higher education (onlinelearningconsortium.org 2016). Online learning was projected to grow to \$107 billion in 2015, and it met that projection. Research indicates that by 2025, online learning will triple and become a \$325 billion-dollar market (Forbes.com 2018).

A new addition to the online landscape is the advent of MOOCs, or massive open online courses. They include companies such as Coursera, Udacity and edX, who provide wide access to learning at low or next-to-nothing costs. MOOCs are primarily online courses outside of the traditional higher education sector and, as such, are not the focus of this research.

Online learning, however, has its drawbacks, among them, lack of person-to-person contact and the impact on a less motivated student, lack of accreditation, little or no face-to-face interaction, more course work than a traditional class, and requires a high degree of self-discipline and self-direction (Heinze & Procter, 2004; Hickey, 2017, petersons.com).

### **The Blended Learning Environment**

While online technology and distance learning have been around for years, schools have added blended learning to enable the adult educator and the students to have more

control over the content. In a blended learning environment, the face-to-face and online teaching modalities are typically combined. In fact, blended learning is a growing option on campuses. According to the CDE Classroom Technology Survey (2014), 84% of higher education institutions offer blended and virtual learning options. Hilliard (2015) cites the Online Learning Survey, stating that blended learning is growing on a global basis at a rate of 46% or more per year. Blended learning is used by students, faculty, and staff in variety of ways and formats. More importantly, blended learning is also expanding globally (Vaughn, 2007). In response to the growing trends in blended education, in 2016 the Christensen Institute launched the Blended Learning Universe (BLU), an online site dedicated to educators to combine online and face-to-face education within an integrated learning experience.

While there is no universal definition of blended learning, the vast majority of educators simply define it as a combination of face-to-face and online learning. The U.S. Department of Education (2018) defines blended learning as those courses that “incorporate both face-to-face and online learning opportunities.” A more holistic definition is given by Savery (2005), who describes blended learning as the opportunity for the adult educator and students to meet face-to-face and develop a rapport with supplemental online work, that is influenced by the perceptions created in class, allowing the student to hear the adult educator’s classroom come through the online content. Other researchers provide variants of this definition as:

- “a combination of face-to-face and computer-mediated instruction.” (Spring & Graham, 2017, p. 338)
- “a combination of online and face-to-face activities for classroom instruction” (Hilliard, 2015, p. 179).
- “the effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning” (Procter, 2003, p. 3).

### **Blended Learning—A Disruptive Innovation**

Staker (2011) categorizes online and blended learning as a “disruptive innovation” in education because of the way it has transformed the traditional face-to-face classroom. Christensen, Raynor, and McDonald (2015) describe disruptive innovation as those entrants who move into a space and gain a foothold by offering more functionality at a lower price. Disruptive innovators tend to move upmarket while incumbents disparage their services. Disruption takes place when mainstream customers start accepting that alternative instead of the traditional offering.

Staker (2011) further states that “disruptive innovations fundamentally transform a sector by replacing expensive, complicated, and inaccessible products or services with much less expensive, similar, and more convenient alternatives” (p. 1). In that respect, she asserts, online learning is a “classic disruption” because of the way it fundamentally transformed traditional education. Most online learning began as distance learning to provide options for students who needed access to information from qualified adult educators who were beyond their geographic reach. Distance learning is also an ideal option for home-schooled students (Staker, 2011).

As a disruptive innovator, online education continued to advance in the academic space by offering more content and options in a flexible and cost-effective manner. Online education has now moved into the traditional classroom as a way to expand academic instruction beyond the regularly scheduled face-to-face classroom (Staker, 2011). Blended learning can be defined as follows: “Blended learning is any time a student learns at least part at a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home and in part through online delivery with some student control over time, place, path, and/or pace” (p. 5). This definition requires the presence of two components, a physical presence and an online connection. First, a “supervised-brick-and-mortar away from home” implies that the student physically attends a location that has an adult supervisor present. Second, the online component must be away from the physical location and the student

must have a level of control as to when, where and how to complete the activity or assignment (Staker, 2011).

The combination of online technology and face-to-face teaching is also often called hybrid learning. The word *hybrid* refers primarily to two teaching modalities that co-exist but fails to address the integration of teaching strategy and execution that is evident in blended learning. Christensen et al. (2013) discuss the theory of hybrid learning as it relates to technology and then apply that concept to blended education. In business, when a new technology breaks through an existing technology, the marrying of those two technologies is typically referred to as a “hybrid.” Similarly, combining the traditional with the new is often referred to as “the best of both worlds.” Christensen et al. cite industry examples of hybrid items, among them, steam shovels to hydraulic evacuators, sailing ships to steamboats and gasoline powered automobiles to electric cars, have all been identified as hybrid at one time or another. While the terms “blended” and “hybrid” are still debated, since 2003, “blended” has become the more popular term (Spring & Graham, 2017).

Christensen et al. (2013) argue that blended learning can go one of two ways—it can be a sustaining option or a disruptive option. As a sustaining option, online technology can be used in traditional classroom to offer “the best of both worlds”. For many, blended learning is described as “the best of both worlds” (Bonk & Graham, 2006). However, for blended learning to achieve a “disruptive” status, the authors assert that online learning must be applied in new and innovative ways beyond just the students in the classroom (Christensen et al., 2013).

Thus, blended learning, when applied in different and innovative ways, can achieve strategic integration of the two modalities to deliver a more effective, efficient and creative way to educate students. In 2013, the Clayton Christensen Institute (formerly the Innosight Institute) extended the blended learning definition by adding the importance of the integrated learning experience:

A formal education program in which a student learns at least part through online learning with some element of student control over time, place, path and/or pace; at least in part in a supervised brick-and-mortar location away from home; and the modalities along each student's learning path within a course or subject are connected to provide an integrated learning experience. (Christensen et al., 2013, p. 7)

In 2015, The International Association for K-12 Online Learning (Powell et al., 2015), noting its support for the Christensen Institute definition of blended learning, described it as follows:

Blended learning combines the best features of traditional schooling with the advantages of online learning to deliver personalized, differentiated instruction across a group of learners. Students in formal blended learning educational programs learn online part of the time yet have the benefit of face-to-face instruction and supervision to maximize their learning and to best fit their own need. (p. 5)

iNACOL states that face-to-face and online learning is not simply another theory or construct, but “an instructional model shift” that is impacting most schools and universities on a global basis. This perspective supports the notion that blended learning is a disruptive innovation that will have a significant impact on the future of education. Indeed, some experts predict that blended learning will become so prevalent, that the word “blended” will be dropped and an integrated online and face-to-face teaching approach will be presumed to be part of the student's educational experience (Bonk & Graham, 2006).

**Benefits of blended learning.** Technological advances and widespread adoption of digital technology is evident across all industries, including the classroom. The U.S. Department of Education (2009) conducted a meta-analysis of online learning and found that blended learning is the most effective learning model. The Center for Digital Education (2014) found that when blended learning had the right instruction and proper resources, it provided students with a powerful learning option. Their research indicates that students are more involved and more engaged in a blended environment. Further, for teachers, blended learning enables them to manage their instruction time differently and

differentiate course work and materials as needed for the student's benefit (Center for Digital Education 2014).

In the *Handbook of Blended Learning*, Bonk and Graham (2006) highlight a number of reasons why blended learning is an important option for students: (1) pedagogical richness, (2) access to knowledge, (3) social interaction, (4) personal agency, (5) cost-effectiveness, and (6) ease of revision (p. 8). Graham, Allen, and Ure (2003, 2005) underscore the three primary reasons that institutions implement blended learning: improved pedagogy, increased access, and flexibility and increased cost effectiveness (Bonk & Graham, 2006; Osguthorpe & Graham, 2003).

Francois (2013) asserts that both teaching and learning in a blended environment is transforming education and will become the standard mode of delivering education to students. For many, an online course is simply not enough because it lacks the personal connection. Blended, however, is the compromise, as it adds the human touch to the practical benefits of online teaching. Francois states:

One could have assumed that it will be a matter of time before face-to-face instruction becomes a matter of the past. Ironically, both distance learning and online learning have been challenged for lacking the human interactions between the students and the instructors, and among students. Blended learning and teaching has emerged as a compromise to online and face-to-face delivery modes. The alternative offered by blended learning and teaching conveys a message that while technology integration in teaching and learning is unavoidable in the 21st century, the warmth of the human experience for the authenticity of quality teaching and learning is inescapable. (p. 358)

**Blended learning critical success factors.** Although blended learning is a growing trend on campuses, simply adding an online component to a face-to-face class does not guarantee a successful or positive impact on a student's learning experience. Bonk and Graham (2006) state that while many praise the effectiveness of blended learning, it can be equally ineffective if poorly designed and poorly implemented. Hilliard (2015) agrees that an effective blended learning program requires informed and knowledgeable faculty



with adequate resources and training. Further, a successful blended learning program has a strong leadership team at the institutional level, well-documented policies for students and faculty, a robust technical infrastructure and support team, and a commitment to professional development for all faculty and staff involved with blended learning (Hilliard 2015).

iNACOL conducted a long-term study regarding the evolution of online and face-to-face education over a seven-year period from 2008 through 2015 (Powell et al., 2015). The study identified a number of critical success factors to consider when implementing a blended educational program, among them, teaching climate and school culture; educational goals and student benefits; professional development; technology challenges; and stakeholder buy-in.

First, institutions must understand how the school climate and culture can influence the successful implementation of a new teaching paradigm such as blended learning. Second, administration and faculty should develop clear educational goals and identify the student benefits around blended learning and the various models of implementation. Third, it is imperative to provide adult educators with professional development. Adult educators need to be educated on the best practices in blended learning while having the freedom to personalize and apply the blended learning in a meaningful way within their classroom. Fourth, it is important to acknowledge and address the technological barriers such as infrastructure, hardware and software deficiencies, inadequate internet access and financial limitations that can undermine a successful blended implementation. Finally, the key factor is ensuring that faculty and students are involved in the blended process. Gaining consensus on the idea of what blended learning is can be challenging, and as such, it is important to have all key stakeholders engage in the process, delivery, and implementation in order to successfully apply blended learning in the classroom (Powell et al., 2015).

**Blended learning in a global context.** Recent studies support that blended learning is an effective, efficient, and affordable way to promote global learning (Duus & Cooray, 2014; Kintu et al., 2016; Taras et al., 2013). Adding a global context to blended learning is a natural progression. Indeed, technology has enabled higher education to transform the way it delivers a global education. Technology can facilitate the idea of global virtual teams that enables local students to interact with international students across cultures and time zones (Taras et al., 2013). Global virtual teams (GVT) are “geographically dispersed teams that use Internet-mediated communication to collaborate on common goals, and typically consist of members who have diverse cultural backgrounds and who have not previously worked together in face-to-face settings” (Taras et al., 2013, p. 415).

Using a blended education approach in an international context can have cross-cultural implications. Students from different cultures may have varying reactions to the way data and information are presented. Styles that are appropriate in one country may not be acceptable in another country (Al-Hunaiyyan, Al-Huwail, & Al-Sharhan, 2008). Cross-cultural complexities in a blended environment are not always readily apparent and may require adult educators to delicately navigate cultural issues (Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009). As such, adult educators must be cognizant of the cross-cultural differences in blended global education programs.

## **Topic II: Cross-Cultural Teaching and Learning**

### **What is Meant by Cross-Cultural?**

**Defining culture.** Culture is broadly defined in a wide variety of ways. Hofstede (2011) defines culture as “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from the others” (p. 3). Spencer-Oatey (2008) defines culture as a “fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to

life, belief, policies ... that are shared by a group of people that influence (but do not determine) ... behavior” (p. 2). Parrish and Linder-VanBerschoot (2010) state that there are “many layers of culture, from work and family cultures to community and regional cultures” (p. 2) that are also shaped by national and international influences. Francois (2013) defines culture as:

the combination of beliefs, values, language, communicating styles, norms, history, and other habits that an individual acquires through education, and which influences one’s actions, thoughts, behavior and understanding. Cultures vary by countries and regions of the world ... and can vary within a national culture based on race, ethnicity, region or history. (p. xviii)

Culture can be described as a glimpse into one’s beliefs, attitudes, values, perceptions, and behaviors that are influenced by interactions with others in their surroundings as well as contact and conflict with other cultures (Cole, 1996). Culture is a “learned set of shared perceptions about beliefs, values and norms, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people” (Lustig & Koester, 1993, p. 41). Beechler and Javidan (2007) state that despite the many definitions of culture, researchers generally agree that culture “refers to the cognitive systems and behavioral repertoires that are shaped as a result of individuals’ experiences” (p. 142).

**Cross-cultural perspective.** If culture embodies the beliefs and attitudes of a particular group or category, then cross-cultural implies the *exchange* of these ideas and from two different and distinct entities. Cross-cultural exchange is important because it enables individuals to challenge assumptions, create new perspectives, fight prejudice and dissect stereotypes. In doing so, individuals can move from prejudice, toward diversity and learn to appreciate the universality of humankind. In *Communicating Across Cultures*, Ting-Toomey and Tenzin (2019) state that “all human beings want to be understood, respected, and affirmatively valued” and that “understanding the other, respecting the other, and affirming the other’s salient sociocultural membership and personal identities” requires that one be mindful, respectful, and observant of cultural

differences, both verbal and non-verbal (p. 7). Beechler and Javidan (2007) define cross-cultural leadership as “the process of influencing individuals or teams representing diverse cultural/meaning systems to contribute toward the achievement of the organization’s goals” (p. 145).

Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2010) is widely recognized as a leader in cross-cultural research. In *Culture’s Consequence*, Hofstede (1980) created a multidimensional cultural model that provides a substantive way to examine cultural differences that remains relevant today. Using research collected from an extensive IBM study, Hofstede created a “new paradigm in social science research: analyzing survey-based values data at the national level and quantifying differences between national cultures by positions on these dimensions” (p. 16). A dimension is “an aspect of culture that can be measured relative to other cultures” (p. 7). Initially, Hofstede created a four-dimensional model: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism vs. collectivism, and masculinity vs. femininity. He later included two additional dimensions.

In 1988, a fifth dimension entitled long term vs. short term was added based on the economic work of Bond (1987). In 2010, Hofstede added a sixth dimension, indulgence vs. restraint, based on the research of Bulgarian scholar Minkov (2007) and his work with the World Values Survey. Table 1 below describes the six dimensions and provides additional detail for each dimension.

Table 1. Summary of Hofstede's Six Dimensions of Culture (2011)

1. Power Distance	How to address inequality. Small and large power distances and the extent to which members of society accept the power inequality.
2. Uncertainty Avoidance	The level of stress that people feel regarding uncertainty and ambiguity. Uncertainty avoidance cultures have strict rules and regulations to avoid unstructured situations.
3. Individualism vs. Collectivism	The integration of individuals into primary groups. Individualist cultures have loose ties to others and low commitment to conformity. Collectivist cultures have a strong commitment to groups with a consciousness on the "we" as opposed to the "I."
4. Masculinity vs. Femininity	The division of emotional roles between men and women. The masculine is deemed a more assertive culture and the feminine is a more passive culture.
5. Long Term vs. Short Term Orientation	Focus on the past, present, or future based on an economic focus created by Bond (1987).
6. Indulgence vs. Restraint	Gratification vs. control on the basic human desires. Complementary to Long Term vs. Short Term and focuses on society's embrace on happiness, gratification, and restraint.

Hofstede, Hofstede, & Minkov. © Geert Hofstede B.V. quoted with permission

**Cross-cultural learning.** Understanding exactly how culture impacts teaching and learning is a complex idea. Many authors have agreed that Hofstede's multidimensional model is an important contribution to understanding cross-cultural learning. Yorks and Sauquet (2003) stated that Hofstede's "work remains an important starting point for studies on cross-cultural organizational dynamics and communication" and "national cultures have specific consequences on how people behave" (p. 17). Wang (2007) states that while culture can be examined from different perspectives, Hofstede's cultural dimensions are directly applicable to teaching and learning. Liu et al. (2010) acknowledge that Hofstede's framework, although criticized, can be useful and valid when interpreting findings around cultural and online learning.

Hofstede's (1986) dimensions can also categorize cultural behaviors among students and teachers from different geographies, in particular, the U.S. and Mexico. On the power distance dimension, the United States has a more student-centered education system (smaller power distance), while Latin American countries have a more teacher-centered approach to education (larger power distance). As for uncertainty avoidance, the

United States is more comfortable with ambiguity and chaos and tolerates teachers who do not have all the answers, thus indicating a weak avoidance of uncertainty (Hofstede, 2011).

Latin American countries, however, have a stronger need for clarity and structure and prefer teachers who have all the answers, indicating a strong avoidance of uncertainty. On the masculinity index, countries such as Mexico have a higher masculinity index than the United States. Turning to the long-term vs. short-term dimension, Hofstede (2011) stated that the United States and Mexico both fall within a short-term orientation with a past and present focus instead of a future orientation. Finally, on the indulgence dimension, Hofstede (2011) placed both the United States and Mexico in a more indulgent posture than other cultures around the world.

**Communicating across cultures.** With a strong framework and research data, Hofstede's research provides important contributions to studying cross-cultural communications. Yorks and Sauquet (2003) state that when an individual is confronted with a different culture, that experience can awaken the individual's own socio-historical context and shed light on his or her own assumptions and expectations vis-à-vis a different culture. Therefore, "social contexts shape the way we see, the way we think, and the way we interact with one another" and it would be "incorrect not to pay attention" to social contexts and their importance in understanding cross-cultural communication (p. 16). Yorks and Sauquet conclude that there are "strong indications that national cultures" can influence "values or attitudes" and drive behavior and interaction with individuals from another culture (p. 18). Yorks and Sauquet caution, however, that national cultures can vary across Hofstede's different dimensions, and it is important not to overgeneralize or stereotype whole cultures into one particular definition. Notwithstanding, starting with national culture and typical patterns of a particular society remains a powerful entry point to understanding cross-cultural influences on team dynamics (Yorks & Sauquet, 2003).

As such, research supports the notion that adult educators and institutions must take cross-cultural issues into consideration when creating international online education courses. In doing so, adult educators are better prepared to create and implement an online course that has a positive impact on a student's global learning experience.

**Cross-cultural teams.** Working in cross-cultural teams can be an effective way to promote diversity, break down barriers, challenge stereotypes and promote cultural understanding. Team learning is defined as “a process through which a group creates knowledge for its members, for itself as a system and for others” (Kasl, Marsick, & Dechant, 1997). Team learning can also be viewed as “a process in which a team takes action, obtains and reflects upon feedback, and makes changes to adapt or improve” (Edmonson, 2002, p. 129).

Team performance, however, can be impacted by cultural differences (Cauwelier, Ribiere, & Bennet, 2016). Sadykova and Dautermann (2009) discuss how teamwork is a predominant teaching strategy in the U.S. but can be problematic for an international student. By creating cross-cultural teams, the presumption is that the students will collaborate, communicate and benefit from the diverse backgrounds and perspectives. Sadykova and Dautermann caution, however, “while collaborating with peers of a dominant culture ... where the international student is in the minority, she/he is expected to play in accordance with dominant culture rules and agree with the majority when negotiating consensus” (p. 106).

Accordingly, Sadykova and Dautermann (2009) assert that the “teamwork needs to be designed to minimize the dominance of one culture” but advise that “achieving group cohesion, so important for successful teamwork, may be complex” (p. 106). Different cultures have different ways of resolving issues within a group and often times, cross-cultural teams need someone to be aware of those needs and bridge the gap (Sadykova & Dautermann, 2009).

Yorks, Marsick, Kasl, and Dechant (2003) offer six important considerations to facilitate team learning across cultures. First, individuals should be “mindful of crossing cultural boundaries and be prepared to be mentally flexible” (p. 110). Second, individuals should be cognizant of the politics of power dynamics and embrace how that might play out along cultural lines and impact team learning. Next, depending on whether it is an individualist vs. collectivist culture, teams should allow for face-saving opportunities. For example, where teams are “highly heterogeneous” and cultures are “fragmented,” it is typical for members to avoid being candid and instead say what they think is right (p. 112). Teams should make room for “equivocality and anonymity” on communication exchanges to allow individual members the opportunity to save face when necessary (p. 112). Further, the authors recommended the use of “metaphors” as a way to tackle diversity. Yorks et al. suggest the use of metaphors can be a powerful pathway to presentational knowing and a way to build empathy and trust across diverse cultures. Further, the authors note that procedural justice is an important element of facilitating respect and harmony when working in cross-cultural teams.

**Team safety.** “Team psychological safety” as defined by Edmundson (1999, 2002, 2012) is a belief that when team members feel safe, they are more likely to take risks. Team psychological safety is important because when teams feel safe, members are more likely to share ideas and suggestions, offer advice and counsel, address mistakes and errors, and generally engage more openly and confidently with team members (Edmundson, 1999, 2002). Further, the author states that when team leaders encourage members to speak up without fear of ridicule, team performance is enhanced, and team learning is increased.

Another important component of team performance is interpersonal risk-taking (Edmundson, 1999). In line with this, Cauwelier et al. (2016) state that cultural differences, cultural norms, and cultural values can have a significant impact on team performance. Culture can influence how individuals express themselves, deal with



authority, engage with colleagues, and respond to conflict (Cauwelier et al., 2016). Further, the authors state that teams should consider how national cultural traits can influence and impact how individuals experience and learn within a team-based environment.

In cross-cultural teams, how one interacts, speaks up, offers advice, responds to criticism, and contributes to group work is shaped by one's cultural backgrounds. As such, team dynamics across cultures should be considered when developing cross-cultural teams because the cultural differences are "both a compelling and daunting challenge" (Yorks & Sauquet 2003, p. 21). A team leader's behavior and inclusiveness across cross-cultural teams can influence how team members interact with one another (Cauwelier et al., 2016). A team leader should be aware that team members may be affected by cultural differences. The notion of team psychological safety in cross-cultural teams is "influenced by the cultural norms that exist in the countries where the team members grew up in" (Cauwelier et al., 2016, p. 459).

Cauwelier et al. (2016) conducted a mixed methods study to examine whether cultural differences had an impact on team psychological safety and team performance. Specifically, the researchers examined whether team learning behavior and team performance were affected when international teams with cultural differences were assigned to work on similar tasks. Premised on Edmundson's (2004) study confirming that teams perform better when there is psychological safety, Cauwelier et al.'s (2016) research looked at one global organization to determine if "elements affecting team psychological safety are different between cultures and their relative importance is different" (p. 461). The study evaluated 72 participants across nine engineering teams from the United States, France, and Thailand. The team members were given certain exercises that required direct interaction and involvement among the culturally diverse team members. The researchers evaluated, among other things, five team-learning

behaviors—feedback, help, speaking up, innovation, and boundary spanning—as either positive or negative to determine constructive and destructive team interactions.

The research indicated that in certain instances, cultural differences affected the level of team psychological safety and, as a result, the team’s productivity. The study “confirm[ed] that teams with higher team psychological safety [had] a higher level of asking for help than those with lower psychological team safety” (Cauwelier et al., 2016, p. 463). Data gathered around team leadership and team member interaction established clear differences in team collaboration and interaction that were directly attributable to cultural differences in the United States, Thailand, and France. The team members from Thailand, for example, presented as a “collectivist culture,” and as such, their behavior differed significantly from the more “diverse” United States and France and, as a result, the impact on the team’s psychological safety appeared to be culturally influenced. This research confirmed the proposition that “national culture has an impact on the elements affecting team psychological safety” (p. 466). The researchers concluded that additional study of different teams in different cultures could aid in the understanding of team dynamics and team psychological safety. Similar research indicates that blended learning with a face-to-face component enhances the teacher-student experiences and “lessens the psychological distance” between the teacher and students and “leads to greater learning” (Kintu et al., 2017, p. 6).

Cultural context is an integral part of understanding how team members actually learn and process information across cultures (Yorks et al., 2003). When teams are created, “culture is a critical contextual element that can have an inhibiting effect on the learning process. Because people do not have a culture but inhabit one, they are never free agents capable of transcending their situation” (p. 104). Culture affects team learning; as such, it is important to “understand how cultural factors facilitate or inhibit the behaviors, processes and conditions” in team learning and whether culture influences the way these attributes manifest themselves (p. 104). The authors further note that a

better understanding of how culture impacts teams can help individuals from different cultures navigate through difficult and diverse situations.

Yorks et al. (2003) described three ways in which culture influences team learning. First, culture provides a “frame of reference” or a point of view that affects how an individual processes information and enters a discussion. Second, culture influences how an individual determines what is relevant about a particular issue. Third, culture presents power dynamics that shape an individual’s meaning and response to particular solutions. In sum, the authors stated that “culture shapes the patterns of communication, influence and other forms of interaction as well as the orientation toward the group process itself” (p. 106).

### **Teaching Cross-Cultural Content**

Stereotyping and prejudice are two important barriers to team learning across cultures. Engaging students in cross-cultural teams can help to inform stereotypes and attack prejudice. Lustig and Koester (1993) credit journalist Walter Lippmann (1922) with creating the concept of stereotyping, defined as “a selection process used to organize and simplify perceptions of others” (p. 278). Lustig and Koester (1993) expand the definition as follows:

A form of generalization about some group of people. When people stereotype others, they take a category of people and make assertions about the characteristics of all peoples who belong to that category. The consequence of stereotyping is that the vast degree of differences that exist among the members of any one group may be overlooked and therefore not taken into account in the interpretation of messages. (p. 278)

Similarly, prejudice is a negative reaction to a particular group of people. Allport (1954) defined prejudiced people as those who ignore the truth and process information to fit their own beliefs. Prejudice and stereotypes are strongly connected in that prejudiced people rely on stereotypes to sustain their prejudices (Lustig & Koester, 1993).

Ethnocentrism is another construct closely related to stereotype and prejudice. Ethnocentrism is the “belief that one’s own culture, people and worldview are the center of the world” and “ethno-relativism admits that differences exist and are valid” (Messner, 2013, p. 67). Cross-cultural teams can help to challenge a student’s ethnocentrism and broaden one’s view towards ethno-relativism. By working with people from other cultures, individuals can acquire three important competencies: awareness, knowledge and skills around cultural diversity. Awareness is raised by exposure to, and appreciation of, cultural differences. Knowledge is acquired by learning the specifics of another culture relative to your own. Skills are acquired during the process of intercultural interaction (Messner, 2013).

Bennett (1986) observed how adults interact with individuals from different cultures and based on those observations, he created the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). Bennett describes this model as a framework to “explain how people experience and engage in cultural difference” (p. 1). The framework was developed based upon his observations in the business world and academia. Using “constructivist psychology and communication theory,” Bennett placed his observations across a continuum that begins with an aversion to cultural differences, grounded in ethnocentrism, and moves towards a cultural understanding or ethno-relativism (p. 1).

Bennett (2014) identifies six positions of cultural perception across the continuum that refer to one’s level of intercultural communication. Briefly, it begins with *denial*, where individuals, typically isolated from cultural interaction, are dismissive or disinterested of intercultural communication. *Defense* is next and typically occurs when one has a negative cultural interaction that gives one a stereotypical view and a sense of superiority over the other culture. *Minimization* follows, and that is where an individual presumes that his or her own view on cultural differences is similar to others. Bennett categorizes these three positions as an ethnocentric view of the world. Moving along the continuum, the next position is *acceptance* and is a move toward ethno-relativism.

*Acceptance* is a new and respectful way of looking at different cultures. This is followed by *adaptation*, where the individual is moving toward intercultural communication competence. In this phase, an individual is gaining intercultural empathy and intercultural sensitivity. Finally, *integration* is the extreme end of the continuum, where the individual is firmly rooted in ethno-relativism and has acquired intercultural sensitivities and reached a level intercultural sophistication (Bennett, 2014). Below is a graphic depiction of Bennett's DMIS continuum.

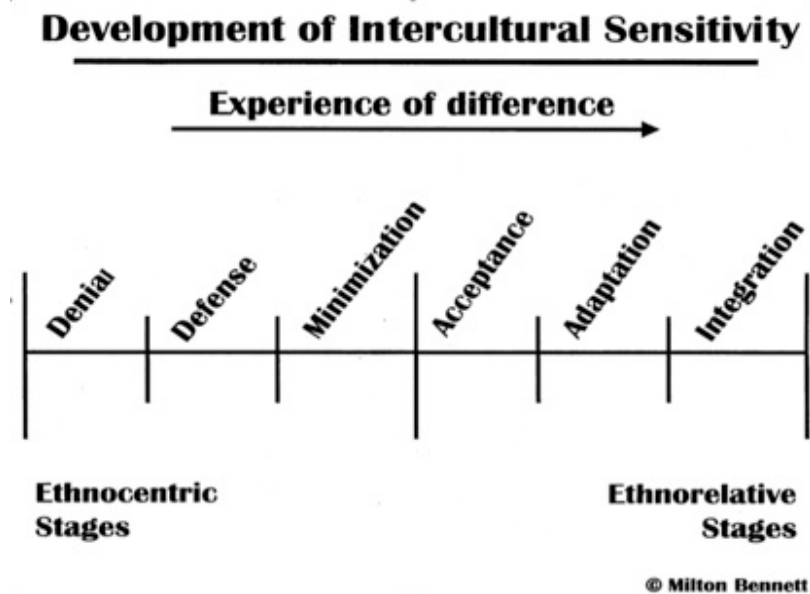


Figure 3. Bennett's (2014) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. Retrieved from <http://www.idrinstitute.org/page.asp?menu1=15>. Reprinted with permission.

As individuals move across the continuum, Bennett (2004) calls this the move from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. By using blended technology to place students from different countries in cross-cultural teams, students can move across Bennett's model from an ethnocentric position of denial, defense, and minimization and toward a view of acceptance, adaptation, and even integration. Cross-cultural teamwork will enable

students to work together in gaining intercultural competence that results in an awareness, appreciation, and understanding of other cultures.

### **Topic III: Adult Learning Theory**

#### **Formal vs. Informal Learning**

Andragogy, or adult learning, is “the art and science of how adults learn” (Knowles, 1980, p. 43). Adult education is defined as “activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles or self-perception, define them as adults” (Merriam & Brockett, 2007, p. 8). Adult education consists of “formal activities including basic skills training, apprenticeships, work-related courses, personal interest courses ... and part-time college or university degree programs” (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2007, p. 30).

Adult learners acquire knowledge in three ways: formal, non-formal, and informal. Formal learning takes “place within an educational institution and often leads to degrees or some sort of credit” (Merriam, Caffarella, & Baumgartner, 2007, p. 24). In 2005, NCES reported that 44% of all adults engaged in some type of formal educational event, on at least a part-time basis, that was related to either work or higher education. Formal learning implies an adult educator, specific course content and some type of review process (Kasworm, Rose, & Ross-Gordon, 2010).

Non-formal education is typically outside of the formal classroom but can include a variety of organized activities, among them, professional affiliations, business organizations, industry alliances, church, and community-based activities (Merriam et al., 2007). Although non-formal education generally occurs outside the classroom, certain activities can provide complementary, alternative and supplementary options, that serve to compensate for the failure or the limitations of the formal education process (Brennan, 1997).

Alternatively, informal learning can be scheduled or be spontaneous and has varying levels of cognitive awareness (Marsick & Watkins, 1992). In 2005, NCES reported that 70% of adults engaged in some type of informal learning that for personal interests and without the aid of a teacher. Informal learning can occur in a variety of ways and can include “self-directed learning, networking, coaching, mentoring and performance planning that includes opportunities to review learning needs” (Marsick & Watkins, 2001, p. 25).

Incidental learning, which is a part of informal learning, is defined as learning that occurs unintentionally and unnoticed by the individual (Cseh, Watkins, & Marsick, 1999). Incidental learning is less obvious and can happen in a variety of circumstances, including by chance (Marsick, Watkins, & Lovin, 2010). Informal and incidental learning can occur in a variety of circumstances: as part of a routine; as a result of a certain event; as a conscious or unconscious activity; and occurring on a whim or spurred by a particular event (Marsick & Volpe, 1999).

Marsick and Watkins (1990) juxtapose the definitions of formal, informal, and incidental learning as follows:

Formal learning is typically institutionally-sponsored, classroom-based, and highly structured. Informal learning, a category that includes incidental learning, may occur in institutions, but is typically not classroom-based or highly structured, and control of the learning rests primarily in the hands of the learner. Incidental learning is defined as a byproduct of some other activity such as task accomplishment, interpersonal interaction, sensing the organizational culture, trial and error experimentation, or even formal learning. (p. 12)

If placed on a continuum, formal learning would be at one extreme that includes a highly structured environment with purposeful learning. Incidental learning might be at the other end, in a loosely structured environment with little direct knowledge that actual learning was taking place. Informal learning can be placed in the middle of the continuum, at times embracing both extremes.

Adult education encompasses learning activities engaged in by adults. This learning can occur in a variety of settings, among them formal, non-formal, informal, and incidental formats. In some respects, the adult learning activities can overlap among all of the different learning formats (Merriam et al., 2007).

### **Experiential Learning**

Experiential learning can help adult educators learn to foster inclusiveness and encourage participation from two different cultures for the students' benefit. Learning from experience or "Experiential Learning" has been defined a number of different ways, among them, as a cognitive process that flows across formal, informal, and incidental learning environments (Marsick et al., 2010). This process enables individuals to learn based upon principles of continuity and interaction (Dewey, 1938) that ultimately become meaningful and sustainable when the individual critically reflects on the experience (Kolb, 1984). Kolb credits Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget with creating the theoretical underpinnings of this approach (Miettinen, 2010).

Fenwick (2000) organized and identified five contemporary theories on experiential learning in terms of a particular perspective or lens. First, as a *constructivist*, the learner reflects on lived experience and then interprets based on reflection. Second, from a *psychoanalytic* perspective, the individual learns and reflects as a way to approach the realm of the unconscious. Third, learning can occur in a situated environment, for example, in the location where the person is engaged. Fourth, a *critical cultural* perspective recognizes that learning in a particular cultural space is shaped by the discourses and signs associated with power in that group. Fifth and final, Fenwick described co-emergence as an *enactivist* perspective asserting that learning depends on the experiences and the environment. Given the nature of online education and different cultures, adult educators can learn to lead their teams through a variety of these experiential lenses in particular, the *critical cultural* perspective.



Kolb (1984) and Mezirow (1991) were constructivists who viewed experiential learning through the lens of “critical reflection,” which asserts that individuals reflect in order to make meaning of the experience (Fenwick, 2000). For constructivists, reflection can appear in a variety of ways. Reflective practice is defined as a “deliberate pause to assume an open perspective, to allow for higher-level thinking processes” to “examine beliefs, goals and practices to gain new or deeper understandings that lead to action that improve learning for students” (Yorks-Barr, Sommers, Ghere, & Montie, 2001, p. 6).

Educators often facilitate reflection in an open-forum dialogue that inspires learners to discuss and share their experiences (Merriam et al., 2007). In this model, adult educators can allow students to think through a complex problem, while serving as a guide to motivate and inspire individuals to make meaning of certain situations (Merriam et al., 2007).

Kolb (1984), a constructivist, expanded upon the ideas of Dewey and Lewin and created a circular model of four key abilities for action and reflection to explain learning from experience. Kolb asserts that all experiential learning by its nature is filled with tension, conflict and confrontation throughout the process:

New knowledge, skills or attitudes are achieved through confrontation among four modes of experiential learning. Learners, if they are to be effective, need four different kinds of abilities—concrete experience abilities (CE), reflective observation abilities (RO), abstract conceptualization abilities (AC) and active experimentation (AE) abilities. (p. 30)

The four abilities—concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation—are the process by which learners acquire and apply new information. A concrete experience is an openness and a willingness to engage in new experiences. Kolb (1984) asserts that learners must be able to accomplish these four abilities by themselves “fully, openly and without bias into the new experiences (CE)” (p. 30). Next, the learner uses observational and reflective skills to review the concrete experience from a number of different perspectives in a process

called reflective observation (RO). Third, the learner, based on this reflective observation, strategizes about new ideas and approaches in a concept called abstract conceptualization (AC). Finally, the learner puts the new ideas and strategies into actual practice in what Kolb called active experimentation (AE) and then, presumably, the process starts all over again.

For Kolb (1984), learning is an iterative process results in re-learning through each experience. The experiential model allows for constant reflection that enables the teacher, facilitator, and coach to add layers of richness to future lessons. Adult educators who use online technology to connect students from different countries into cross-cultural teams can use Kolb's model of experiential learning. Specifically, adult educators can educate students to embrace the concrete experience of collaborating across cultures "fully, openly and without bias." Next, the adult educator can guide the students through reflective observation exercises so that students can "reflect on and observe their experiences from many perspectives" (p. 30). The students can use these observations to understand how to collaborate across cultures. Finally, students can put these ideas, decisions and theories to work when creating cross-cultural team projects.

### **Trial and Error**

When adults are confronted with challenging situations, they often engage in experimenting with possible solutions in the hope that it will lead to the resolution of the issue at hand. This is a process commonly referred to as *trial and error* and is akin to what Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978), in more sophisticated terms, refer to as single-loop and double-loop learning. Decades ago, the authors hypothesized that what guides people is a theory of action. This theory predicts how people will act under certain conditions in order to achieve a desired goal. Argyris and Schön say when things go wrong, people try changing their tactics and they try another approach—this is what they call single loop learning.

Later, in 1996, Argyris and Schön more formally defined single-loop learning as “instrumental learning that changes strategies of action or assumptions underlying strategies in ways that leave the values of a theory of action unchanged” (p. 20). Single-loop learning maintains organizational performance within the existing values and norms.

When changing tactics does not work, people reconsider how they framed the problem or situation—this is the process of double-loop learning. Argyris and Schön (1996) say that double-loop learning is a deeper level of analysis that examines assumptions, values, beliefs and norms that influence action. An important aspect of the theory is the distinction between a person’s *espoused theory* (what they say they believe) and their *theory-in-use* and reconciling these two perspectives is what characterizes double-loop learning. It should be noted that interaction with others is necessary to identify the problem, issues or conflict at hand. In other words, problem solving about interpersonal or technical issues requires frequent public testing of theories-in-use.

Accordingly, whereas single loop learning is said to be present when goals, values, frameworks and, to a significant extent, strategies are taken for granted. In contrast, double loop learning occurs when errors are detected and corrected in ways that involve the adjustment of underlying norms, policies and objectives. In light of this, the researcher ascribes the reports of trial and error recounted by participants in her study as examples of both single-loop and double-loop learning. Adult educators can benefit from trial and error as they engage students in cross-cultural activities and project work in order to promote awareness, appreciation and understanding between the students from the U.S. and Mexico.

### **Dialogue with Others**

Dialogue is the art of engaging with another to discuss and explore a particular issue (Drago-Severson, 2009). In the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970) discusses the importance of dialogue to humankind. Freire states, among other things, that

“dialogue is the encounter between [people], mediated by the world, in order to name the world” (p. 88) and that “dialogue cannot exist ... in the absence of profound love for the world and people” (p. 89) and finally, that “dialogue cannot exist without humility” (p. 90). In sum, Freire eloquently states that dialogue “is founded upon love, humility and faith” and become the “horizontal relationship of which mutual trust between the dialoguers” occurs (p. 91).

Dialogue enables individuals to engage in “a practice to listen to different perspectives, promote cooperation, work on difficult issues, and build skills” (Ehiobuche, Tu, & Justus, 2012, p. 300). Vella (2002) asserts that dialogue is the key to adult education and sees it as “the words between us” that enable teachers to acquire new knowledge, attitudes, and skills through discourse. Dialogue requires “the sharing of ideas, connections and differences” and “it also requires a commitment to learning about each other and how we see the world” (Goetzman, 2012, p. 9).

Engaging in collegial inquiry “helps adults to explore, support and challenge their own and other adults’ thinking through different forms of writing and dialogue about thinking, feelings, ideas, proposals and assumptions” (Drago-Severson, 2009, p. 207). The process of dialogue can help adults challenge ideas, make decisions, solve problems and experience growth in an intellectual and emotional capacity (Drago-Severson, 2009). Vella (2016) identifies 12 principles and practices for dialogue and adult education, among them, respect, engagement, safety, open questions, and small groups. By applying certain principles and practices when engaging in dialogue, adults can facilitate transformative learning, and help the learner become knowledgeable about self and others.

### **Research and Reading**

Research and reading is an informal approach to learning where the adult takes the primary initiative and sole responsibility to get educated on a particular topic. Candy

(1991) identified research and reading as a solitary activity carried out in a library or at home, or perhaps students pursuing individual inquiry projects and presenting results for evaluation.

Research and reading is defined in terms of three main goals: (1) to enhance the ability of adult learners to be self-directed in their learning, (2) to foster transformational learning as central to research and reading, and (3) to promote emancipatory learning and social action as part of research and reading (Merriam et al., 2007).

The first goal is primarily the work of theorists Knowles (1984) and Tough (1978) and is grounded in humanistic philosophy, or the belief that personal growth is the goal of adult learning. The role of educators serves to help adults plan, carry out, and evaluate their own learning. The second goal seeks to foster transformational learning through experience, critical reflection, and reflective discourse and action, and is found primarily in the work of Mezirow (1991) and Brookfield (1993). These theorists posit that adults need to reflect critically on historical, cultural, and biological reasons for why they are pursuing independent research and reading. Third and last, this approach achieves emancipatory learning and social action through self-directed means.

Research and reading can be described in a number of different models and frameworks. Three specific models are linear, interactive, and instructional (Merriam et al., 2007). These models represent a combination of conceptual, empirical, and experientially derived views of research and reading.

First, the linear model represents a sequential set of steps that an adult learner will move through to achieve his or her learning goals. Tough (1978) stated that an adult's related learning sessions should add up to at least seven hours. Knowles's (1975) linear model of research and reading consists of six steps: (1) climate setting, (2) diagnosing learning needs, (3) formulating learning goals, (4) identifying resources, (5) choosing and implementing strategies, and (6) evaluating outcomes.

Second, the interactive model is a research and reading framework defined as “self-direction in learning” that has two dimensions: (a) an instructional method process, and (b) a personality component. For the instructional component, adult learners are the primary leaders in planning their educational content and educators are seen as agents or facilitators. In the personality component, adult learners take ownership of their learning, a concept grounded in humanism and human potential. This process is contextual and depends on situational factors that can drive the process (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991).

Third, the instructional model explores how teachers, in formal settings, can help students become more self-directed. This model has four distinct stages of learning identified as a “dependent,” “interested,” “involved,” or “self-directed” learner. The instructional model defines various roles for the teacher and the student at each stage of development (Grow, 1991). In sum, the three research and reading models create a framework for understanding how a self-directed learner acquires information and new ideas towards learning goals. Research and reading is a key way for adult educators to take the initiative to learn about a particular subject matter in order to create a GLOBE module with a partner adult educator from another country.

### **Literature Review Summary**

The review of the literature of cross-cultural practices of adult educators in blended global education establishes that gaps exist within this context and that future research can add value to the field. Blended international education has exploded across campuses worldwide, yet studies on how this technology advances or impedes cross-cultural understanding lag behind. The literature established that a blended approach to education is a natural progression within the classroom and a cost-effective, productive and valuable way to achieve global learning. The use of technology in a blended classroom is

and will continue to transform the way that adult educators provide a global education to students.

Further, the literature on culture examined, among other things, aspects on the historical perspectives of culture and how the beliefs, attitudes, and values can influence the way individuals view the world. The literature also examined how adult educators who create in cross-cultural teams must be mindful about how cultural differences impact learning, comfort level, and productivity.

Finally, the adult learning literature reviewed covered six areas: (1) informal and formal learning, (2) experiential learning, (3) reflective practice, (4) trial and error, (5) dialogue with others, and (6) research and reading. These topics were examined and presented as relevant and important ways by which adult educators in this study learned how to teach within a cross-cultural environment in order to foster awareness, appreciation, and advocacy of cultural differences.

### **Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework was derived from the research questions and the literature review and provides the infrastructure for the categories of this study. Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) defined a conceptual framework as a “repository for reporting the findings and guiding data analysis and interpretation” (p. 58). The conceptual framework is depicted in both a narrative and graphic format and provides “scaffolding” (p. 58) and an “organizing structure both for reporting the study’s findings as well as analysis, interpretation and synthesis” of the findings (p. 61). The conceptual framework consists of categories that are directly aligned with the research questions.

The categories in this conceptual framework are derived from the literature review as well as the researcher’s perspective and experience and are aligned with the four research questions. The first research question sought to understand how GLOBE adult

educators perceive differences among face-to-face, online, and blended teaching for international programs. Thus, this category is entitled “Participants’ Perceptions of Differences in Teaching.” The second research question explored the activities that GLOBE adult educators use to promote cross-cultural understanding and their perception of how these activities achieve that goal. This category is entitled “Adult Educators Activities Perceived to Promote Cross-Cultural Understanding.” The third research question sought to understand the ways in which adult educators learned how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended programs. This category is aptly called “How Adult Educators Learn to Promote Cross-Cultural Understanding.” Finally, the fourth research question examines the factors that facilitate or inhibit an adult educator’s ability to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended international education and therefore is simply titled “Factors That Influence.”

The bulleted descriptors under each of the categories delineate and further explain each of the respective categories. Each of the descriptors was revised and refined by the researcher throughout the data collection and analysis phases of the study. The categories and accompanying descriptors represent the final coding scheme that resulted from the iterative refinement process.

A graphic depiction of the final conceptual framework is found on the following page, and a more detailed conceptual framework can be found in Appendix H.





Figure 4. Conceptual Framework

## Chapter III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Introduction and Overview**

The purpose of this interpretative case study was to explore with 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico, the cross-cultural practices they used to create an environment within a blended global education program that fosters learning and collaboration among students from two different cultures. Online education is inherently more challenging than face-to-face learning because behavioral cues and other forms of personal interaction are not readily apparent as when adult educators and students come together in person. Distance learning can impact one's ability to create relationships that are typical in a face-to-face environment. However, online international learning is a relatively new phenomenon, and it is important to understand the role of the adult educator in this environment. Blended education, that is, both face-to-face and online, appears to incorporate the benefits of both approaches.

To carry out the purpose of this research, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How did adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?
2. What activities did adult educators engage in within a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?

3. How did adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?
4. What factors facilitated and/or inhibited cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?

This chapter presents the research design and methodology to carry out this purpose. The following topics are addressed: (a) the rationale for qualitative research; (b) description of the research sample; (c) overview of information needed; (d) an overview of the research design; (e) methods of data collection; (f) data analysis and synthesis; (g) ethical considerations; (h) issues of trustworthiness; (i) limitations of the study; and (j) chapter summary.

### **Rationale for Qualitative Research Approach**

Marshall and Rossman (2011) state that in qualitative research “researchers value and seek to discover participants’ perspectives on their worlds and view inquiry as an interactive process between the parties” (p. 30). According to the authors, this interactive process enables a researcher to ask probing questions to prompt a participant to share stories, viewpoints, observations, opinions, and insights about a particular topic. In turn, the researcher can analyze and interpret these data to generate new ideas, findings, and themes about a particular topic.

Creswell (2014) identified five major approaches in qualitative research:

(a) narrative research, which includes stories combining views of the participant’s life in collaboration with the researcher’s perspective; (b) phenomenological research, the purpose of which is to understand the lived experience of a few individuals around a particular phenomenon; (c) grounded theory, where the research is based around a social theory that is grounded in collecting data from the participants and includes constant comparative analysis; (d) ethnography, a research inquiry that comes from anthropology

and sociology that includes data collection and observation; and (e) case studies, which involve a detailed analysis of a program or event or activity that is wrapped within a particular time and sequence.

Qualitative research uses emerging methods and open-ended questions through the use of interview data, observation data, document data, and audiovisual data. Qualitative research is then measured through text and image analysis to identify themes, patterns, and specific interpretations (Creswell, 2014).

The goal of this research was to understand the participants' viewpoints, observations, opinions, and insights about how they facilitated cross-cultural learning in a blended international education program. Qualitative research enabled the researcher to ask probing interview questions that allowed the participants to tell their stories and share their perspectives on their cross-cultural experience in the GLOBE program. The use of multiple methods to achieve triangulation contributed to the methodological validity of the research. (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). As a result, the researcher was able to analyze the data to identify patterns and themes and make meaning of the collective experience.

Yin (2014) defined a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the ‘case’) in depth and within its real-world context” (p. 16). Using a case study method enabled the researcher to present a “holistic and real-world perspective” when studying a group of people or a particular organization (p. 4). Case studies are bounded by time and activity and enabled the researcher to use different collection methods to gather data on specific information over an extended period of time (Creswell, 2014; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The case study method also allowed the researcher to interview participants who have engaged in activities and record direct observations of the events. Further, using a case study provided a “relativist perspective”—that is, allowing different participants to offer multiple realities and divergent interpretations of their observations. For this research, a bounded case study of those adult educators who participated in the GLOBE program enabled the researcher to

study a segment of the population who had a shared experience co-teaching in that program.

### **Description of the Research Sample**

Using a purposeful and snowball sampling strategy, the researcher reached out to the GLOBE Coordinator by email for his assistance in identifying potential candidates. The Coordinator posted the researcher's email on the GLOBE network. The network represented a pool of at least 100 potential respondents. From this pool, the researcher received 50 responses from individuals seeking to participate in the study. The researcher then began a process of culling out only those people who met the main criteria for participation: they must have participated in at least one GLOBE module in the U.S. and Mexico cross-cultural educational program. As a result of this process the first twenty respondents who met the criteria were selected. The researcher then contacted the potential participants and explained the purpose of the study, the anticipated level of involvement and commitment, and the intent of the various methodologies the researcher would be using.

Prior to each interview, the researcher collected data on the participants' background described on the following page and which includes: gender, age range, ethnicity, country of origin, primary language, fluent in another language, education, years teaching, GLOBE module experience, and academic area of concentration. This information was collected so that it would be available for analysis purposes. The demographic inventory can be found in Appendix A.

Table 2. Demographic Data (N = 20)

Gender	Female: 12 Male: 8
Age Range	20 – 39: 4 40 – 49: 5 50 – 59: 5 60 – 69: 5 70+: 1
Ethnicity/Race	Hispanic / Latino / Mexican: 11 Caucasian / White: 5 African-American: 1 Mixed: 1 Asian: 1 Other: 1
Country of Origin	Mexico: 11 USA: 8 Other: 1
Primary Language	Spanish: 11 English: 9 Other: 1
Fluent in another language	No: 6 English: 10 Spanish: 2 Other: 2
Education	BS/BA: 1 Masters: 8 Doctorate: 11
Years Teaching	1-5: 3 6-10: 2 11-15: 7 16-20: 3 21-25: 2 26+: 3
GLOBE Module Experience	Yes: 20 No: 0
Academic Area of Concentration	Business-related: 8 Education: 3 Science: 3 Arts: 4 Psychology: 1 Coordinator: 1

All participants in the study the interviewees and the focus group members, were sent a formal letter of invitation (Appendix B) and were asked to sign a consent form (Appendix C). The researcher received confirmation of the participation and a completed signed consent forms in advance of the interviews and the focus group discussion. The

participants were informed that their participation would be used for research purposes only and were assured that their identities would remain confidential. At the end of the data collection phase, all participants were sent a Thank You email (Appendix D).

All interviews took place between December 2017 and February 2018 and subsequent data coding and analysis took place during February 2018.

### **Overview of Information Needed**

This multi-case study consisted of 20 adult educators who were asked to describe their experiences in promoting cross-cultural understanding in a blended international classroom. Consistent with the suggestion of Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), the researcher identified four main categories of information needed: contextual, perceptual, demographic, and theoretical.

#### **Contextual Information**

Contextually, the focus of this study was on adult educators from the U.S. and Mexico who participated in a cross-cultural university program entitled GLOBE. In this program, adult educators and students from two different international campuses engaged in a blended international learning experience centered on a particular topic of mutual interest. The contextual information was captured through a review of documents, including the GLOBE mission, overview and execution of program, course descriptions, student evaluations, conference proceedings and other documents deemed to be relevant. A list of documents reviewed is found in Appendix E. The aforementioned categories are described in further detail below:

#### **Demographic Information**

Demographic data were collected from each adult educator using a demographic inventory which was completed prior to the interview. As previously indicated, the

inventory aided the researcher in collecting essential data, including: age; gender; ethnicity; country of origin; primary language; fluency in another language; education; years teaching; GLOBE module experience, and academic area of concentration.

### **Perceptual Information**

The participants' perceptions of the GLOBE program and the ways in which they promoted cross-cultural understanding in a blended environment were uncovered primarily through in-depth interviews with twenty adult educators, 10 from the U.S. and 10 from Mexico. The interviews revealed the participants' perceptions of the GLOBE program, their experiences in cross-cultural teaching, their impressions of the technology in use, and their reflections on collaboration with a peer teacher. The participants in the focus group also provided an independent account of their perceptions of the program. These perceptions were the candid and subjective views of the participants' experiences in the GLOBE program. The Interview Protocol (Appendix F) which was developed based on the Research Questions and informed by the literature was pilot tested with two GLOBE adult educators similar to the actual study participants but who were not part of the study.

### **Theoretical Information**

Information collected from the literature review was ongoing and served to guide the research as it progressed. Theories from the literature provided support for existing content on this subject as well as guidance and perspective for the researcher during all phases of the research.

The following table provides a summary of contextual, demographic and perceptual information that was collected by the three data collection methods.



Table 3. Areas of Information Needed by Method

Areas of Information Needed	Data Collection Methods Used			
	Demographic Inventory	Documents	Interviews	Focus Group
<b>Demographic</b> Age range Ethnicity County of origin Primary language Education Years teaching GLOBE module experience Academic concentration	X X X X X X X X			
<b>Contextual</b> GLOBE mission Overview of program Course descriptions Student evaluations Conference proceedings		X X X X X		
<b>Perceptual</b> <b>Research Questions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?</li> <li>• What activities do adult educators engage in a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?</li> <li>• How do adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?</li> <li>• What factors facilitate and/or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?</li> </ul>			X   X   X   X	            X

## Overview of Research Design

This is a multi-case study that explored the practices used by adult educators within a blended global program that fosters learning and collaboration among students from two different cultures. The following table summarizes the steps that were taken to complete this study.

Table 4. Steps Taken to Complete This Study

Step 1	Identified Research Topic	The researcher's experience as an adult educator in the GLOBE program informed the selection of the topic for this study on Cross-Cultural Practices for Adult Educators in Blended Global Education
Step 2	Conducted Literature Review	The researcher investigated and conducted a review of the literature around global learning, online education, and cross-cultural issues, and Adult Learning Theory. The literature review and conceptual framework were used to inform the development of the approach to the study and its data collection methods. The literature was ongoing throughout each phase of the study.
Step 3	Identified Sample Participants	The researcher explored and reached out to adult educators from the United States and Mexico who have participated in the GLOBE program. The researcher contacted prospective interviewees to explain the purpose of the study, the anticipated level of their involvement and commitment and the intention of the data collection methods used. These initial meetings enabled the researcher to assess participants' attitude and willingness to participate in the study.
Step 4	Proposal Hearing	The researcher's proposal hearing with her dissertation advisor and second reader was held in the Fall 2017.
Step 5	IRB Approval	The researcher submitted the required documents to Teachers College IRB for approval to proceed with the study.
Step 6	Letter of Invitation and Consent Form	Following IRB approval, the researcher contacted all potential interviewees by email to confirm their willingness to participate in the study. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter of Invitation described the purpose of the research, approximate length of the interview and interview details (location, date, time).</li> <li>• Informed Consent Form reiterated the purpose of the study and explained participants' rights, confidentiality and data collection methods.</li> </ul>
Step 7	Demographic Inventory	Participants completed a demographic inventory prior to beginning the interview.

Table 4 (continued)

Step 8	Conducted Interviews	Twenty semi-structured interviews were held with 10 adult educators from the United States and 10 adult educators from Mexico. The interviews were conducted in-person, by phone or via internet technology. Each interview lasted approximately 45-60 minutes.
Step 9	Conducted Focus Group	For triangulation purposes, a focus group was conducted after the interviews. New participants who were not part of the study sample were selected based on their knowledge and involvement in the GLOBE program. These data were compared to the in-depth interviews.
Step 10	Interview Transcription and Coding	All interviews were audio recorded with permission of each interviewee, transcribed verbatim, coded and analyzed.
Step 11	Inter-Rater Reliability	To ensure inter-rater reliability, the researcher elicited the assistance of two doctoral candidates to code an interview using here coding scheme to compare their results with hers. After discussion of minor differences, the inter-raters arrived at consensus.
Step12	Data Analysis	All of the data collected were coded, analyzed, interpreted and synthesized consistent with the conceptual framework which guided the study and as presented at the end of Chapter II. The researcher engaged in a continual process of revising and refining the descriptors within the conceptual framework as data emerged.

### **Methods of Data Collection**

In this study, data collection was conducted in three ways: interviews, a focus group, and by document review. According to Yin (2014), multiple sources of data enable a study to benefit from a broader perspective, but most importantly, they provide “converging lines of inquiry” that make a study more “convincing and accurate” (p. 120). As such, the primary method of data collection in this study, interviews, was supplemented by a focus group discussion and a review of relevant documents.

### **Interviews**

Conducting in-depth interviews with GLOBE adult educators was the most important data collection method used in this study. The interview protocol developed by the researcher was directly aligned with the following research questions: (1) How do

adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online and blended format? (2) What activities do adult educators engage in within a blended global environment? (3) How do adult educators learn to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs? (4) What factors facilitate and/or impede cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format? All interviews followed a semi-structured format which promoted conversational interviews where questions flowed from previous responses in a natural way, thereby creating an atmosphere conducive to authentic engagement of the participants. According to Yin (2014), semi-structured interviews enables the researcher to ask two levels of questions simultaneously: ones that satisfy the researcher's need for data, and the other that support the comfort level of the participants.

Purposeful and snowballing sampling was used to recruit appropriate participants for the interviews. Creswell (2007) defined purposeful sampling as the selection of "individuals and sites for study because they can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem" (p. 125). The sample selected only individuals who have participated in a GLOBE program.

The interviews were conducted in a variety of ways, according to the preferences of the interviewees, either in-person, by telephone, or online via various Internet technologies including Skype and WhatsApp. Each interview took approximately 45-60 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewee and transcribed verbatim.

### **Focus Group**

Triangulation reinforces a study by combining different methods of acquiring data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). A focus group is a complementary qualitative data collection method to supplement interviews. Initially referred to as "group interviews," focus groups have expanded over the decades (Robson, 2011). Focus groups were

originally created to research military mood and later used in consumer market research (Yin, 2014). A focus group occurs when a group of people, knowledgeable about the subject matter, are asked a variety of questions in a group setting (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The researcher is required to gather, organize, and execute a focus group session (Yin, 2014).

The researcher conducted a focus group with four participants who were not part of the study but met the same criteria as the participants. The researcher recruited the focus group participants through the original email posted to the GLOBE network and through recommendations and referrals from the 20 interviewees.

The focus group was conducted via an international conference call, where the members were provided with a dial-in number. The conference call lasted approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes and was audio recorded.

The four female participants were all involved in some educational capacity in a GLOBE cross-cultural program between the U.S. and Mexico. Two focus group participants were U.S. adult educators who each conducted GLOBE modules with two different Mexican adult educators. Another focus group member was a GLOBE coordinator at a college in the U.S. Finally, the fourth member of the focus group was both a GLOBE coordinator and GLOBE adult educator from Mexico who had participated in a GLOBE exchange with a U.S. adult educator.

The researcher acted as moderator only in terms of introducing the topics for discussion and facilitating the organization and timekeeping of the call. The researcher asked that each member speak at least once before speaking twice. The focus group participants were each asked the following two primary questions:

1. As an individual involved in blended cross-cultural global programs, what factors facilitated a successful GLOBE program?
2. What factors inhibited the success of the program?

Each focus group member individually answered both questions. At the end of the discussion, the researcher thanked the focus group members and asked if they had any questions. The researcher stated that she would keep the contents of the focus group confidential and asked that the members do the same. The audio recording was subsequently transcribed. The researcher used the focus group data to triangulate the interviews and document review. See Appendix G for discussion group questions.

### **Document Review**

Document review is another form of triangulation that provides confirmation and validation (Stake, 2010). It is an important tool to supplement the primary method of data collection, the interviews, as well as the focus group discussion (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Marshall and Rossman (2011) state that different types of documents “can provide background and information that helps establish the rationale for selecting a particular site, program or methods proposal” (p. 160). As a research method, document review is particularly applicable to case studies, which produce rich descriptions of a single phenomenon (Yin, 2014).

As Bowen (2009) states, documents take a variety of forms, for example: mission statements, goals and objectives, agendas, meeting minutes, manuals, internal communications, and external communications such as books, journal articles, newspapers and press releases.

The document review provided the researcher with the opportunity to understand the context, that is, the environment in which the GLOBE adult educators interacted with students, partner adult educators and the administration responsible for overseeing the program. As such, documents provided a means of corroborating participants’ accounts of their experiences teaching in the program. As previously indicated a list of all documents reviewed can be found in Appendix F.

### **Methods for Data Analysis and Synthesis**

The conceptual framework guided the analysis of the research, and the categories created in that framework served as the repositories of the data collected (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). The goal of data analysis is to look for themes and patterns across the data. Robson (2011) stated that “analysis is a ‘breaking up’ of something complex into smaller parts and explaining the whole in terms of the properties of, and relation between, these parts”. The author further states that the “purpose of analysis is often seen as a search for causes,” while interpretation is “about shedding light on meaning” (p. 412). It is a thorough analysis of the data that can lead to rich interpretation. Data analysis is about making sense of the data, parsing them out, segmenting them, and then putting them together through synthesis (Creswell, 2014).

After the researcher completed the data collection phase, the three sources of raw data were analyzed and sorted according to the four categories in the conceptual framework. Using a process of deductive and inductive analysis, the researcher was able to create a meaningful coding scheme to inspect the data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), data analysis is a “complex procedure” that requires fluidity between the “concrete” and the “abstract,” movement between “inductive and deductive reasoning,” and straddling between “description” and “interpretation” (p. 202).

Inter-reliability is an important component of data analysis to assure the integrity and reliability of the data. Therefore, the researcher engaged two doctoral colleagues to apply the codes on her coding legend to one of the interview transcripts to determine the extent to which their coding agreed with that of the researcher. The researcher subsequently spoke with the two inter-rater colleagues in order to reconcile minor differences they had found. After discussion, the researcher and the two inter-raters were able to reconcile differences and arrive at a consensus. The researcher found that being

highly organized and maintaining good record keeping was essential in the data analysis process.

Once the researcher had developed the “final conceptual framework” it served to highlight the major findings and prepare the researcher to report them in the Findings chapter.

### **Literature on Methods**

Each of the three methods of data collection, interviews, focus groups, and document review, has advantages and disadvantages. According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), researchers must address the strengths and weaknesses of each data collection method to establish that they have conducted a critical review of the relevant literature. Below is an overview of the positive and negative aspects of each data collection method used in this study.

#### **Interviews: Advantages and Disadvantages**

The advantages of the interview method include the opportunity to elicit a variety of meaningful insights, perspectives, and opinions from various participants. Interviews also work well in combination with other data collection methods (Robson, 2011). Interviews were selected as the primary source of data collection because of their inherent and particular strengths. One such strength according to Marshall and Rossman (2006) is that in-depth interviews are designed to highlight the participant’s view and not those of the interviewer. Yin (2003) states that well-informed respondents can provide important insights as well as shortcuts to the history of a situation.

The disadvantages of interviews include the notions of “subjectivity and complexity” that can be interjected into the interview process which unintentionally influences the data collection process (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 129). Facing periods



of silence during the interview process can also be challenging to a novice researcher (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Further, interviewees' answers may be affected by poor recall, bias, or ability to communicate effectively (Yin, 2014). A researcher must be vigilant against these influences to protect the integrity of the data and the interview process.

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), researchers can protect the integrity of the interview process in a number of different ways. First, researchers should avoid asking confusing or compound questions. Next, researchers should refrain from using jargon or technical language so as not to confuse or bewilder a participant. Further, researchers should remove leading questions from their repertoire because these questions may unintentionally reflect a researcher's particular bias. Finally, researchers should strive to omit yes/no questions because they prevent participants from expanding on important and relevant data (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further advised that prior to the interviews, researchers should conduct a "ruthless review" of their questions and "ask the questions of yourself" to avoid placing the participant in an "uncomfortable" situation (p. 122). Finally, interviewers should maintain a neutral position during interviews, avoid being argumentative, work to shield bias, and seek to build rapport by promoting a respectful comfort level with each participant (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Focus Groups: Advantages and Disadvantages**

According to Robson (2011), a number of advantages and disadvantages are associated with focus groups. First, it is a highly efficient way to collect a fair amount of data for several people in a relatively short period of time. Next, participants in focus groups provide "checks and balances" on each other and radical views can be managed accordingly. Further, group dynamics can often facilitate a lively and robust conversation; the participants enjoy the experience and are given the latitude to express themselves freely (p. 294).

Alternatively, the disadvantages of a focus group include the fact that participants have a limited period of time to discuss the issues, “certain discussions may result in conflict, managing participant content may be difficult, and confidentiality may be compromised” (Robson, 2011, pp. 294-295).

### **Document Review: Advantages and Disadvantages**

The advantages of document review include providing insight into the values and beliefs of the participants. Further, these documents can be gathered during and after the interviews in a non-disruptive fashion (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). A disadvantage, however, is that the subjective perception of the researcher may skew the interpretation of the data (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

In all instances, it is the researcher’s responsibility to “minimize the methodological threats” that may occur as a result of these three data collection methods (Yin, 2014). Accordingly, it is imperative that during the data collection process, the researcher must always be cognizant of the potential negative pitfalls associated with each method and work diligently to prevent these issues from creeping into the collection process.

### **Ethical Considerations**

A commitment to maintaining the highest level of ethical standards during research is a primary concern of all researchers. Protecting the rights of participants, maintaining confidentiality, and obtaining informed consent are all important safeguards in establishing an ethical study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Creswell (2007) maintained that an ethical researcher is one who “protects the anonymity” of the participants, creates a “composite case study” rather than an individual picture, properly conveys the nature and purpose of the study, and never engages in deceptive practices (pp. 141-142).

Creswell also states that “study participants should be appraised of the motivation of the researcher for their selection, granted anonymity (if they desire it) and told by the researcher about the purpose of the study” (p. 124).

Here, the researcher was committed throughout this research to maintaining the highest ethical standards by adhering to the established ethical codes and guidelines, among them, obtaining informed consent, maintaining confidentiality, and allowing a participant to withdraw from the study at any time. A sample of the consent form that was used in this study is found in Appendix D.

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is an important element of a qualitative study. Good research requires a commitment to quality and adherence to certain standards, among them, validity, reliability, credibility, truthfulness, and rigor (Corbin & Strauss 2015). Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that a study is considered trustworthy and rigorous when it applies well-developed standards that are accepted by the research community. Further, they assert that qualitative research must always be conducted with a level of rigor that ensures validity and reliability in its content (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). A researcher should always use strategies to ensure a commitment to validity and reliability during the course of the study (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). Validity implies that it comports with industry knowledge, while reliability presumes that different researchers could obtain similar results (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2008). Validity, however, is relative and must be viewed contextually (Maxwell, 2013).

Words such as credibility, dependability, and transferability are widely accepted as alternative words to describe validity, reliability, and objectivity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Instead of reliability and validity, Lincoln and Guba (1985) prefer the terms “credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability” (pp. 294-301). According

to Bloomberg and Volpe (2008), the word *credibility* parallels the essence of validity and *dependability* is equivalent to reliability.

### **Credibility**

Qualitative researchers may never embrace a truly objective viewpoint, but certain techniques, such as triangulation, can enhance the credulity of a study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Corbin and Strauss (2015) prefer the word *credibility* to describe “findings that are trustworthy and believable” over validity and reliability (p. 346). Robson (2011) cited Shipman (2007) by stating that studies need to go further than validity and reliability when seeking trustworthiness, and questioning credibility is a way to achieve a more rigorous result.

### **Dependability**

Bloomberg and Volpe (2008) stated that dependability in a study allows “one to track the processes and procedures used to collect and interpret the data” (p. 78). Triangulation is a strategy that can provide an infrastructure for consistency, dependability, and reliability (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

### **Transferability**

Transferability refers to how well the context of the researcher’s study can transfer to the context of the reader (Bloomberg & Volpe 2008). Transferability, also referred to as “external validity,” is about whether one study can be applied in different situations (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Merriam and Tisdell state that the statement “rich, thick description” is often used to describe how the essence of a study can be “transferred” to the reader and applied to different situations (p. 256).

### **Limitations of the Study**

1. Given that the researcher is a GLOBE adult educator, she may hold innate biases and opinions about the program that may influence certain questions, responses, and analysis of the data. As such, the researcher made every attempt to guard her biases and suspend her opinions.
2. Some adult educators may not be as candid because they are reluctant to be critical of their institution or the GLOBE program. A related limitation is that participants would try to provide the researcher with what they perceived to be the “right” answers to the interview questions.
3. The responses to interview questions were subject to the recall of participants.
4. The entire study was conducted in English and, as such, there may have been language or translation issues with the interviews. Further, at least half of the participants interviewed were conversing in their native language. The researcher was cognizant of language and translation issues and attempted to address any issues promptly during the interviews.
5. This study was conducted between the U.S. and Mexico, and due to its limited scope, it may not be applicable to a wider cross-cultural online audience.

### **Chapter Summary**

This chapter presented the research design and methodology to accomplish this research. The following topics were addressed: the rationale for qualitative research; a description of the research sample; the overview of information needed; steps in the research design; methods of data collection and data analysis and synthesis; ethical considerations; issues of trustworthiness; and the limitations of the study.

In-depth interviews were the primary method of data collection and, as such enabled the researcher to gather perceptual information about the experiences of adult

educators as it related to teaching in the GLOBE international blended education program. Coincident with interviews, participants were asked to complete a demographic inventory that provided background information including: gender; ethnicity; country of origin; primary language; fluency in another language; education; years teaching; GLOBE module experience and academic concentration. To achieve triangulation, the researcher reviewed relevant documents and held a focus group discussion with four adult educators who were not part of the study but met the same criteria as the participants. The focus group was asked to discuss what they perceived would help and/or hinder adult educators in carrying out their teaching in the international blended program.

The chapter provided a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the data collection methods used in the study. Further, it underscored the importance of abiding to ethical standards and considerations and ensuring consistency with issues of credibility, dependability, and transferability characteristic of qualitative research. The chapter concludes with identification of the limitations of this research centering specifically on researcher bias participant recall and candor, lack of generalizability and, at the same time, a commitment to be mindful of these limitations.

## Chapter IV

### RESEARCH FINDINGS 1 AND 2

#### **Introduction**

This interpretive case study explored with 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico, the cross-cultural practices they used to create an environment within a blended global education program that fostered learning and collaboration among students from two different cultures. To carry out the purpose of this research, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How do adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?
2. What activities do adult educators engage in within a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?
3. How do adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?
4. What factors facilitate and/or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?

This chapter will begin with an overview of the four major findings that emerged from the interviews conducted with participants from both Mexico and the U.S. In addition, these data will be supplemented by comments made during a focus group conducted by the researcher and further supplemented by a review of documents relevant to this topic.

## Major Findings

This discussion begins with an examination of the preferences adult educators described with respect to teaching modalities; the activities they engaged in to create a safe learning environment; a description of how they learned to promote understanding; and the factors that facilitated and/or inhibited cross-cultural understanding.

The four major findings uncovered are as follows:

1. A majority of the participants (65%) indicated that a blended format was the most flexible teaching modality.
2. All participants (100%) stated that they had their students engage in icebreakers to promote cultural awareness, and 95% engaged the students in project work in international teams to promote cross-cultural understanding.
3. All participants (100%) indicated that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding through discussions with colleagues, while 95% learned by drawing on their past experience.
4. An overwhelming number of participants (95%) stated that the collegial relationship with their partner adult educator facilitated cross-cultural understanding, while 75% indicated that language was a barrier to those practices.

Chapter IV provides an overview of findings #1 and findings #2. Chapter V will focus on findings #3 and findings #4.

### Finding #1

*A majority of the participants (65%) indicated that a blended format was the most flexible teaching modality.*

Adult educators in both Mexico and the U.S. were asked to describe their preferred teaching modality. In this regard, participants were asked their perceptions of the similarities and differences among three teaching modalities: face-to-face, online, and



blended formats. See Appendix J for a complete list of how participants described the various teaching modalities. Table 5 below summarizes Finding #1.

Table 5. Outline of Finding #1

<p><b><u>FINDING #1 – TEACHING MODALITIES</u></b></p> <p>A majority of the participants (65%) indicated that a blended format was the most flexible teaching modality. Participants described the three teaching modalities as follows:</p> <p><b>Blended: Blended Education is the most flexible modality (13 of 20, 65%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adult educators broadly define blended education</li> <li>• Blended combines the best of both worlds – face-to-face and online teaching</li> <li>• Blended fills in the gaps between classes</li> <li>• Blended enhances student learning and enables a cross-cultural experience</li> </ul> <p><b>Online: Online teaching is more difficult for some (10 out of 20, 50%), yet more flexible for others (7 out of 20, 35%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online education is a learning curve for students</li> <li>• Online teaching is more challenging for adult educators</li> <li>• Online learning presents safety concerns for some students</li> <li>• Online allows for more flexibility</li> <li>• Online teaching is an effective pedagogy and a necessary teaching option</li> </ul> <p><b>Face-to-Face: Face-to-Face teaching is easier to facilitate (8 out of 20, 40%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ideal mode of learning</li> <li>• Students feel more secure in a classroom environment</li> <li>• Face-to-Face classroom discussions benefit the whole class</li> </ul>
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**Blended education—the most flexible teaching modality.**

*Adult educators broadly define blended education.* A majority of the participants (65%) stated that a blended education was the most flexible teaching modality. While blended learning is considered a “contemporary trend in education” (Hubackova & Semradova, 2016, p. 552), adult educators vary in their definitions of a blended education. Kintu et al. (2017) describe blended education as a combination of face-to-face learning and online teaching and consider it to be an effective way to enable students to experience cross-cultural learning in an innovative and collaborative environment.

Here, a number of participants also defined a blended learning environment as a mixture of face-to-face teaching with online instruction. Maggie, defined blended as:

Partially online and partially face to face, but the definition of blended is not always very clear, and the percentage of time that is face to face versus online is not a hard and fast rule. Sometimes it'll be 50-50, sometimes it'll be less, sometimes it'll be more, but it's a combination of, you know, the classroom and technology.

Walter defined blended as “some degree of online and some degree of face-to-face.” Ben viewed blended as a “combination of online and face- to-face.” Kara stated that “blended is sort of a combination of using technology” connected with “aspects ... of the traditional in-person classroom work” to “augment” the learning. Katie shared that “blended is [when] you have some online component and then you have a face-to-face meeting or, you know, encounter.”

Many participants used the words *blended* and *hybrid* interchangeably. Roxanne stated that her university calls “*blended* a hybrid.” Maggie stated that *blended* and *hybrid* are “exactly the same, just two words for the same thing.” Catalina stated that a blended or hybrid class is about making technology an integral part of a face-to-face class:

Well, when I think blended or hybrid, I think it's like you're introducing technology to your class, but it's not only the percentage or how you're using—the uses of technology is more than using just making a PowerPoint. It's an important part of the class.

Debra stated that “hybrid for me was that part—like, what I did with [my partner] online as I was running my class live” in the U.S. Similarly, Annie explained how she used a blended format to teach her cross-cultural GLOBE module with her partner in the U.S.:

I worked face-to-face with my students, she works face-to-face with her students, and sometimes, well for example this time I recorded a video for her students and she recorded a video for my students and we met with the students on our class time.

Mary stated that her college defines blended and hybrid courses differently:

So, our blended courses are like our face-support-face courses that use online LMS support. So, it's face to face, but there is online support, so when I think "blended," that's what I think. Our "hybrid" courses, that initiative, it's a 50/50 split, so 50 percent of the course is face to face, 50 percent of the course takes place online, and so I saw my students once a week, where the course would normally be scheduled twice a week.

So, one of those days was geared towards online, one of those days was all face-to-face. So, that's our university language.... I think it's a state language that's coming out.... So, if I can get students on campus once a day versus twice a day, it may be easier for them.

Accordingly, most participants defined blended education as a teaching modality that includes some form of in-class instruction combined with an online component. Accordingly, blended or hybrid education in this cross-cultural context is defined as in-class face-to-face teaching, augmented with online instruction.

***Blended combines the best of both worlds.*** Several participants indicated that blended learning combines the best of both worlds: face-to-face teaching with online content. Mary stated that a blended strategy combines two teaching scenarios that, in her opinion, provide the best combination for student instruction:

And then, in hybrid, it's literally setting up a combination, the best combination of those two scenarios. I think it's the best because—I think there is something that happens in the interim of being exposed to ideas that is valuable and important, because people need to sit with stuff they haven't been exposed to before, and so in a hybrid situation, you can let that happen.

Maggie agreed that a blended classroom provides students with options: access to the latest online research and a lab environment for experiential learning:

Blended is nice because you can—you kind of have the best of both.... I really felt for the adult learners, it was a really good blend, or a combination, because I didn't even use a textbook in that class. It was all, you know, open resources, articles, websites, videos ... and they loved all of the non-textbook resources, because in entrepreneurship.... In fact, the textbook is outdated, you know, the second it comes off the press.... They liked all the different videos and the TED talks and the articles from Fortune and Forbes and the websites. And then we used the classroom for them to, you know, do all the experiential learning.... So, it almost became a lab—the face-to-face piece of the blended learning almost became a lab.... So that kind of gives you, you know, the best of both in a way.

Maggie concluded her definition of blended by declaring that next time she “could do it even better” and would load her future blended classroom time with “even more hands-on activities” for the students. For Katie, a blended class provided the best of both worlds by allowing her to combine online content with class trips to local museums:

I just proposed a blended course ... we go to different museums in New York City. Actually, even in face-to-face version, we don't use a classroom. Maybe we meet first class and then maybe last class, but then during the semester we meet at various sites. So that's why I proposed blended. So we will have classroom meetings in the online environment, like discussions or meetings, and then we actually meet face to face in various museums.

***Blended fills in the gap between classes.*** Some participants viewed blended education as a way to fill in the gaps between regularly scheduled classes. For Mary, a blended format enabled her to keep the students engaged in a substantive dialogue beyond the face-to-face class time:

When it's blended, it's like we can start something in class and then finish it online, or I can advise them—I can send an announcement via an online thing and say, “Hey, take a look at this. Discuss it. Let me know what you think. Have a group discussion, a dialogue, whatever, and bring it back,” and there's a way to fill in gaps in the meantime. So, you can drop a new piece of information, or a new thing to think about, or expose them to an idea in a way they've never considered it.... Something may have popped up ... it's like, “Hey, this is exactly what we were talking about.”

***Blended enhances student learning and enables a cross-cultural experience.*** Finally, a number of participants stated that a blended classroom is advantageous for student learning and enables a meaningful cross-cultural exchange. Katie explained that the blended format allows her to emphasize a particular learning experience for students:

Advantageous because—in terms of students' learning experience because I can emphasize certain areas, right? For example, if I meet them after—let's say two modules are online, but I meet them in person in the third module, then I can sort of summarize what happened.... And then I can sort of preview what will happen.... I like it very much.

For Roxanne, blended learning is advantageous because it offers “a little more independence and flexibility for the students.”

Jane used a blended teaching approach in her cross-cultural partnership with a science professor in Mexico. Jane expressed, that in her experience, a blended format allows a teacher to better facilitate a student's cross-cultural experience:

When you're working online and blended, you have the ability to kind of look at the participants, gauge reactions and offer kind of just in time cultural help. You can see when they're not understanding something, and you can easily facilitate a better discussion or a better experience. So, I think that the teacher can help ease the participants in much better to the experience.

Kara described her cross-cultural collaboration as a blended class:

Yes, it was blended. My course was blended because students did go to a class on a regular basis, right. So students came to my class, and the students virtually went to their class, and then we joined [our Mexico partner] virtually throughout the semester.

For Debra, blended technology enabled her to challenge her traditional teaching boundaries to engage the students in a cross-cultural experience:

In general, I like to break the boundaries or go outside of my comfort zone. That's kind of my thing. And I kind of pushed my students to do so. And this was definitely—I was out of my comfort zone so many times, but because of that, I learned the technology. [My partner] and I became very good friends. And the students really, like, at the end, came and said that they were so glad that programs like that were happening at the University.

Chad talked about how technology has created a new era of teaching and can enable universities to offer different cross-cultural programs:

I think it's something that we have to promote to take advantage of all the tools that we have in this era of information. I think it is really great that the universities are starting to integrate all that—types of programs, of new programs. I think this is just the beginning.

For Walter, online and blended teaching modalities pushes the boundaries of traditional teaching and creates new opportunities for cross-cultural interaction and teamwork:

So, I think cross-cultural projects is a way different test than online learning. You know, you're not trying to do content. You're not trying to communicate content. What you're trying to do is take content and develop skills of cross-cultural interactions and teamwork. So that's a far different

thing than online learning, and it's a far different thing for me than what a blended class is.

Accordingly, a number of participants agreed that a blended format and changes in technology provides new and exciting ways for adult educators and students to engage in international learning and achieve cross-cultural understanding. The GLOBE 2013 report supports that a majority of adult educators use a blended format for the GLOBE modules.

**Online teaching is both difficult and flexible.** Turning to online education, participants were mixed in their perceptions about the difficulty versus the flexibility of online teaching. While 50% (10 out of 20) of the participants indicated that online teaching was difficult, 35% (7 out of 10) found that online teaching was a flexible and necessary option for today's educational environment.

**Online education is a learning curve for students.** Some participants expressed that online education presented a learning curve for students, and a challenge that was not always readily apparent. For students who might be looking for an easy online course, Maggie said, "You know, it's interesting. Students sometimes think that online learning is going to be easier, but I think it's harder." Katie shared that in her experience, students need to ramp up for online learning and she often gets personally involved to help students manage their online assignments: "You know, it's definitely a learning curve for students to take an online course.... I actually email them to come and see me ... then I actually show them in my office how to go to the site...."

Roxanne stated that online classes present a learning curve for students. She opined that success in the online space often depends on the student's level of commitment and motivation:

I think it has to be a student who is self-motivated and able to really manage — properly manage time and not just, you know, take advantage of the fact that it's not face-to-face, but to realize that there's also a commitment to the online component.

**Online teaching is more challenging for adult educators.** Several participants declared that online teaching was more challenging and generally required more teaching

than in a traditional face-to-face classroom. Maggie, who has taught both online and face-to-face, highlighted the hard work associated with building an online class:

You can't take a traditional course and just slap it online. That's not how it works. You have to start from the ground up because it's a whole different way of teaching. So a face-to-face class has to be rebuilt for an online environment. Anyone who teaches online kind of has to know that and be willing to accept that extra work.

Walter believed that students in an online environment essentially teach themselves in a solitary fashion and lose the rich dialogue that ebbs and flows during a face-to-face session:

You know, I had videos and I had discussions and—but the student said basically, let's face it—basically, we're teaching ourselves. And I think that's true. It's what I didn't like about it much. You can do discussion groups, but they're—you know, it seems like it's kind of grudging in a way. When people have individual questions that are kind of interesting, you know, it's almost a one-to-one; it takes a lot of time to read through all that stuff. It takes a lot of time to answer that stuff. And if you ... answer one person's question in a face-to-face class, everybody gets to hear that, and we can refine it, we can go back and forth. You pretty much lose that in an online environment ... it's hard to do that because you're not synchronous most of the time, and so it's just awkward for me. So, I never liked it very much.

Leo explained that the cross-cultural GLOBE blended program was his first foray into online education or “real-time education” as he called it. Leo stated that his concerns in an online environment prompted him to work even harder to prepare for his cross-cultural class:

I don't trust it to be teaching in real time, so I prepare my presentation first. In this case, I am so careful to do it first. That's something that I don't normally do in my class, that's one difference. On the other hand, you have to be prepared with something else, just in case the technology, sometimes the technology fails, so that makes me nervous and I have to be prepared with something else to be out of the problem of teaching. That frightens me, I'm so fearful about teaching in this way, because it was my first experience, actually.

Katie expressed that online teaching does not capture her full presence as an educator, and this can have an impact on a student's expectations with the course:

Students have expectations that I give a great lecture in front of them, you know. We always have image, you know, accompanied lecture, right, so they really expect those. So, you know, I try to meet their expectations, but in my online class, because I cannot have that kind of presence of myself.

Katie concluded by stating that she prefers a blended class “so they can see some of me, and you know, [have] online learning” as well.

***Online learning creates safety concerns.*** Certain participants commented on the notion of “student safety” in an online environment. Jane expressed concern that in an online class, a student might not feel as safe as in a traditional or blended class where the adult educator has access to the student:

I’ve encountered a few more people who were unwilling to do it online, who didn’t want to have—they worried about safety concerns, and that’s never happened in a face-to-face or blended class when I’m able to talk to them. So not being able to talk through some of those issues, I think, can stop some of the good things that happen.

Mary, too, raised the issue of student safety, suggesting that the isolated nature of online learning might impact a young person’s ability to be candid and open:

They don’t necessarily interact with others. So, there’s a self-exploration that happens in that with content and ideas, but there isn’t necessarily a group interaction, which—because if you can’t read people’s faces, it’s really hard to—especially with younger adults, it’s really hard to get them to be truthful and honest and feel like they’re safe in that honesty.

***Online allows for more flexibility for students and adult educators.*** Conversely, a number of participants held that online education is a flexible and valuable option for both the adult educators and the students. Annie stated, “As a teacher, online is easier. You just give the information, review the activities, and give a grade.” Chad viewed online education as a cost-effective way to achieve cross-cultural education:

For me, there is a lot of benefits in the online classes because—like we have said before—it saves a lot of money. We can integrate, for example, classes from the United States and from Mexico in a really, really low cost because we can use all the tools that we have today, using the internet, and for me that is a great opportunity. For me, that is only a benefit in this kind of lessons.



Ben indicated that online education provides a quality teaching option and a convenient way to address course content and assignments. Ben stated that online education gives an individual the opportunity to think about a response and the flexibility to communicate at one's own pace:

I'm most interested in the asynchronous communication, either by text or by photos, because it allows the students to communicate when they are available. It also gives them a little time to think before they respond. It allows the students to communicate at a time that's convenient for them. In other words, somebody doesn't have to get up in the middle of the night, and you don't have to spend a lot of time figuring out when you can find a time to communicate, you just write down your thoughts, and then the other part of the team reads them at their convenience, and they come back. I didn't think that it was necessary to respond in real time in order to get quality responses.

Maggie agreed that the students benefit from online learning because “they have time to better plan what they're going to say and be more comfortable once they, you know, hit click on their mouse,” and that the online option presents a “a benefit for a student who is not really willing or able to participate in a traditional environment.” Debra also thought that online teaching has potential. Although she has yet to find the right online technology platform, Debra is open to exploring different options:

I think it has a lot of potential. And I still need to research in terms of how to do it more efficiently with technology because definitely Skype didn't work that well for us, and I was recommended to use Zoom, but Zoom is a more—like, you can see just windows of people, not the whole class. So I think I want to keep exploring it, but I've yet to find the right ... platform.

***Online teaching is an effective pedagogy and a necessary teaching option.***

Regardless of a participant's viewpoint on the difficulty or flexibility of online teaching, many agreed that online education is an effective pedagogy that provides a necessary option for today's college campuses. Maggie, who likes both online and face-to-face teaching, asserted that online education is now a fixture on college campuses:

So, I like them both. I really don't think that one is better than the other. I think the—you know, there's still, believe it or not, resistance to online

learning, but I think that horse has left the barn and anybody who, you know, doesn't get on board is missing a major way that we—that people learn now.

While a number of participants indicated a preference for face-to-face teaching, many acknowledged that online instruction is becoming an integral part of the classroom experience. Kara, who prefers teaching face-to-face, acknowledged that online access is a pragmatic and necessary option for today's busy students:

I also appreciate [online] and support it because I think it catches students that are not—I don't like this word, either—so-called traditional, right. Students that can't make it to a campus. Students that work during the day. Students that have families. Students that have been out of school and, you know. So I think practically, in a pragmatic level, I think we have to offer multiple modes of pedagogy to learners. At the same time, philosophically, I just prefer the in-person.

Leo also agreed that technology improvements would permit more opportunities in online international education:

What I do, is face-to-face. But I can tell you that, with those improvements on communication techniques, there isn't much difference now. We could get involved in those sorts of experiments of international education, because we have enough technology to get through, and that won't make much difference, I think, in the future.

Walter praised the value of online technology as a way to connect students across cultures and create opportunities to build sustainable relationships:

So, we're having this kind of an impact. Some of the students, I think, will be friends for life, you know. They continue to interact and talk. Because of the change in the online environment in which they can communicate—there's Facetime and Skype and all of the different ways to communicate—I think the possibility for developing long-term relationships is much greater.

Finally, Ben thought that online education was a practical and effective teaching modality that enhances a student's ability to learn:

Well, I think it's part of effective pedagogy. Your student can't be there all the time, or maybe the mind was wandering when you made a point, and they can go back. I tell them, you can go back, and you can listen again. If something didn't make sense then, they could go back and listen to it again. So I just think it makes my time more effectively spent.

**Face-to-face teaching is easier to facilitate.** Participants shared their perceptions of teaching in a face-to-face environment. A fair number of participants indicated that face-to-face teaching was a more effective way to teach, easier to administer, and oftentimes, their preferred method of teaching.

***Face-to-face is the ideal mode of learning.*** A number of participants commented on how face-to-face instruction is ideal because it allows for more flexibility and the ability to gauge the student reaction. Katie stated that face-to-face learning was a privilege and enabled her students to experience her full presence in the classroom:

I mean, in terms of like an effectiveness of learning, certainly face-to-face would be an ideal mode of learning. I mean, it's a great—nowadays it's a privilege, you know. And that they see me. And, you know, it's not only the content, but they can get the whole personality of me—and, again, the whole person to that.

Felix stated that a face-to-face class gives him the flexibility to more easily arrange activities and engage the students in groups:

When I teach face-to-face, I have to work with different activities because the students get bored. And I have to teach the lessons with activities they can work together in groups. So, I think in an online course, it is not as easy to replicate that technique.

Finally, Mary stated, that in a face-to-face classroom, she was better able to gauge a student's reaction and direct the discussion accordingly:

In a face-to-face course, that's a relatively easy thing to manage and guide because you see immediate results. So, we bring up an issue that is unfamiliar or uncomfortable, whatever—you can read a room, and you can see it.

***Students feel more secure in a face-to-face class.*** Participants also addressed student safety concerns in a face-to-face environment. Roxanne expressed that students appear more comfortable in a face-to-face classroom:

Well, for face to face, I think students—it's for the student who really needs to or feels more comfortable being in the classroom and having that one on—almost like a one-on-one experience.

*Face-to-face classroom discussions benefit the whole class.* Several participants shared the benefits of student interactions in a face-to-face classroom. Participants stated that one student's question in front of the whole class can benefit all students and facilitate a meaningful discussion. Walter stated:

So the kind of interaction that I like in the [face-to-face] classroom where, you know, one idea leads to another idea, and then we go back and forth. And if you—you know, you answer one person's question in a face-to-face class, everybody gets to hear that, and we can refine it, we can go back and forth.

In sum, all of the participants shared their perceptions and preferences regarding the three different teaching modalities: face-to-face, online and blended, and how those options impacted an adult educator's ability to effectively teach undergraduate students.

## **Finding #2**

*All participants (100%) had their students engage in icebreakers for cultural awareness and 95% engaged the students in project work in international teams to promote cross-cultural understanding.*

Adult educators in both Mexico and the United States were asked to describe what activities they used to promote cross-cultural understanding among students from different countries. Adult educators' activities fell into three major categories: icebreakers, international teamwork and visiting a partner's campus. See Appendix K for a complete list of how the participants described the various cross-cultural activities. Table 6 below summarizes Finding #2.

Table 6. Outline of Finding #2

**FINDING #2 –ACTIVITIES THAT PROMOTED CROSS-CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING**

All participants (100%) stated that they had their students engage in icebreakers to cultural awareness and 95% engaged the students in project work in international teams to promote cross-cultural understanding

**Icebreakers: 100% (20 out of 20) used icebreakers as a catalyst to promote cross-cultural awareness**

- Break down barriers
- Establish common ground
- Challenge stereotypes
- Foster cross-cultural communication about similarities and differences
- Provide a safe space for students
- Promote fun, friendship and build relationship

**Project Work in Teams: 95% (19 out of 20) engaged the students in international teams to conduct project work, collaborate across cultures, learn new skills to develop cross-cultural appreciation**

- Conduct cross-cultural research and analysis to foster cultural appreciation
- Negotiate and collaborate across cultures
- Project work to mutual Student Learning Objectives (SLO)
- Challenge perceptions and create new perspectives
- Experience insights about humankind

**International Campus Visits: 85% (17 out of 20) of adult educators visited a partner campus to promote cross-cultural understanding while 25% of the campuses (5 out of 20) sponsored students campus visits to enhance cross-cultural understanding**

- Enhance the Teaching Collaboration
- Provide perspective and appreciation of partner's university
- Heighten cultural awareness through cross-cultural presentations and student meetings
- Provide impactful cross-cultural experience for students

**Icebreaker activities.** All of the participants (100%) had their students engage in icebreaker activities to promote cultural awareness and establish relationships. Every participant, in tandem with their GLOBE partner adult educator, began their cross-cultural module with at least one, sometimes two or more, icebreaker activities. The use of icebreakers to begin the cross-cultural process is supported by the GLOBE documentation.

Icebreakers are generally defined as warm-up activities or “getting-to-know-each-other” exercises that individuals will conduct in order to break the ice and facilitate communication. These activities allow a group leader to break-down barriers within groups, challenge assumptions and foster relationships (Forbess-Greene, 1983). There are different types of icebreakers that can achieve a variety of goals, among them, “Getting Acquainted; Energizers and Tension Reducers; Games and Brainteasers; and Feedback and Disclosure” (Preziosi, 1999, p. 1). Within a group context, “getting acquainted” icebreakers typically serve two purposes: a non-confrontational way to introduce oneself and the opportunity to promote familiarity amongst the group members (Preziosi, 1999).

Although all the participants used the term “icebreaker” to define the student warm-up exercises, it appears the Spanish translation is slightly different. Chad, a Mexican participant, stated that icebreakers are defined as “introduccion o encuadre del tema” in Spanish, which means “introduction or framing of the subject.” Cesar stated that in his class, his Mexican students would refer to an “icebreaker activity” as a “dive-in activity.” With that translation in mind, all of the participants explained how the icebreaker or “dive in” activities served to promote a cultural awareness for the students, among them, by breaking down barriers, establishing common ground, challenging stereotypes, fostering cross-cultural communication and connection, providing a sense of safety and finally, promoting fun, friendship, and relationship building.

***Icebreaker activities break down barriers.*** Many participants viewed the icebreaker activities as an opportunity to break down barriers between cultures in the areas of politics, language, and economics. From a political perspective, Kara’s students broke down barriers by directly informing their Mexican counterparts what they did not represent as it related to the recent election in the United States:

My students in particular made a point to tell the students in Mexico that they—of what they were not, right, in terms of—at that time, it was after the election, so many of my students wanted to make it known immediately what they weren’t, or what they didn’t represent immediately.

Josh, who has taught multiple GLOBE modules, indicated that a strong icebreaker can break down barriers and provide the foundation for sustainable project work:

The more engaged I get the students in with the ice breaker, where they get to know a little bit about each other, they find the commonality, and they kind of hold on to that to get through the project... I find that every one of these projects breaks down barriers, because people are like—they're just like me, or we're keeping in touch. Some people have had—like they wanna visit each other someday. Whether that happens or not, it's making them think outside of the community where they're currently living.

Kara highlighted language as a potential barrier and used a creative icebreaker activity to sensitize students to language differences and promote a change in behavior:

One of the things that could be a barrier to learning about another or being close to another or developing friendships is language. And so—my students—the American students viewed a video—of what English sounds like to a non-native English speaker ... and similarly, the students in Mexico watched a video—of what Spanish sounds like to non-Spanish native speakers, [and] write down the words that they heard and then sort of reflect on it. What will they do differently now that they have this knowledge.... So, as expected, students enjoyed it quite a bit. They couldn't hear many—understand many of the words, but most importantly, students thought it was necessary to change their behavior, right.

Felix agreed that it was important to communicate about language. He shared how certain Facebook activities enabled the students to break those barriers:

But the more complicated thing was the language. I think that was the barrier, so they had to figure out how to communicate with one another. So, I think that was their most difficult thing they do. Because some of my students, they add themselves in Facebook, so they made some friends in that group. So, I think it was really good. Yes, it was.

Ben pointed out that economic differences can often be a barrier to international travel and study abroad. Ben saw the GLOBAL program in blended education as an opportunity to give students a global experience despite economic disparity:

I see it as an opportunity ... for students to have some cross-cultural experience without having to spend the money to actually go someplace. That is, the financial part is a significant barrier to several students, so it allowed them to have some cross-cultural, international experience, without having to go through the expense of physically having to travel someplace.

*Icebreaker activities establish common ground.* A number of participants used the icebreaker activities to establish common ground between the U.S. and Mexican students. Many participants directed their students to create videos answering either a series of specific questions or allowing a free-form exchange. Catalina had her Mexican students create a video icebreaker to establish common ground with their U.S. counterparts. The Mexican and U.S. students were given the freedom to share whatever information they liked and post it on Facebook. Catalina stated:

What [the students] do, they use Facebook and they introduce themselves through a video where they say who they are. The first time we did it, we did it very general, with just like who they are, and they talk about whatever they wanted.

On the other hand, Annie and her U.S. counterpart directed their students to answer specific questions over two different icebreakers as a way to establish common ground. In the first icebreaker, each student created an individual video answering a prescribed list of questions about his or her favorite things. In the second icebreaker, Annie and her U.S. partner created international cross-cultural teams directing the students to jointly select something representative from the U.S. and/or Mexico and share it with the entire class:

Each team has to record the video, like introducing their self, talking about their name, their favorite things, favorite movie, favorite song, something very, very personal and particular. For the second icebreaker, we mixed the teams, Mexico and [the U.S.] on a team, so we called them international teams. On an international team, they worked on the second icebreaker. They as a team had to choose about a song or a picture or something from Mexico or from [the U.S.] that really represents the country that they are talking about. It is interesting because some of the teams chose something from Mexico and some of the teams chose something from [the U.S.].

Amy discussed how her Mexican students loved the Facebook icebreaker activity with their U.S. counterparts because it established common ground across cultures by identifying similar student hobbies and mutual interests:



They loved it because they started knowing each other and it was good for them that they can—before they start talking to the others, they know the others, because they have to introduce each of them and say, for example, their name, their hobbies.... They see their faces and they know their hobbies and how they are, etc. That worked very well as an icebreaker.

Mary and her Mexican partner used an icebreaker exercise to encourage their students to move beyond traditional labels and find alternate ways to describe themselves. Mary shared how this unique icebreaker activity prompted new and creative ways to establish common ground and build community between the two cultures:

We each made a video introducing our students to each other ... describe themselves using something that wasn't like a normal moniker of description. So, it couldn't be about their language ... space in the family, about their relationships with boys or girls.... For example, "[I said] my name is Mary, and I'm a traveler." Right? So, the people then got to know a little bit more about me from things they wouldn't automatically recognize or understand. It opened up—and then we did the video so that our students could see, so that we kind of built a community in our class, interestingly enough, to see, you know, what do people know about each other, and, "Oh, you travel, and I travel." And, "Oh, where do you like to go, and where's your favorite place?" so it just started the conversation in a different way.

For Felix, he organized the students in teams and had them answer certain questions to establish common ground:

I asked them to answer, for example, how old are you, what are your interests, your favorite meal, the places you have been, something like that. So, simple questions in order to break the ice and that way they can, I don't know, maybe they can know each other to be friends. So, that's why we started with that activity.

For Jane's icebreaker, she and her Mexican partner used technology, photographs, and the topic of travel to get their respective students to establish common ground and generate cultural awareness:

We had them do a board where they introduced themselves to each other using photographs, so it was kind of a digital storyboard—and then we had them doing another digital meeting of each other. They used a platform where they chose three places that they've been and shared those with each other. They appeared—they had geographic links, so it appeared, you know, on a map so people could kind of hone in on the map, and then they uploaded pictures and text onto that.

There were two good ways of getting to know each other, and that was completely online. It's called Tripline. So you just go on and you choose three places and upload your picture, and then it shows it geographically, so it does it for you.

*Icebreaker activities challenge stereotypes.* Some participants discussed how they used the icebreaker activity to challenge stereotypes and have students address sensitive cultural topics. Walter used icebreakers, grounded within a certain context, to breakthrough stereotypes and generate meaningful discussions among the students:

We had a section on stereotypes, which was always amusing.... You know, there's lots of different stereotypes.... Americans are, you know, obese and shop all the time and are rich.... I think the context is to expose the stereotypes, you know. It's not to offend the other country. It's to say, you know, these things are out there, so let's kind of poke fun at them. And to see past them. So I think it could be risky, but I think the context is the important thing. You know, it's a cross-cultural learning experience, so I think it's well worthwhile to explore, you know, some of the terrible rhetoric, for instance, between Mexico and the U.S. that's going on right now. And to see each other as human beings and fellow students rather than all of these stereotypes that are flying around.

Maggie's concern was that using icebreakers to address cultural stereotypes "was a little risky." Her students used a variety of technologies including Pixton, a cartoon-making tool, and PowerPoint to describe American and Mexican stereotypes. Maggie stressed to the students that they be "mindful" not to "hurt any feelings" or "be insulting." Maggie urged the students to think more deeply about why these cultural stereotypes exist:

[The students] each had to put down what are the stereotypes that we have of the other culture.... I emphasized to them, you know, be mindful that we don't want to hurt any feelings and we don't want to be insulting, but at the same time, let's be as honest as we can because it will be interesting to see ... that they're not true.... The other thing that I added is ... why do we have these stereotypes ... because I kind of just didn't want them to put down all this stuff and then just kind of leave it hanging. I wanted them to think a little bit more deeply about it and think about maybe why this isn't such a good thing and why do we have them....

For Felix, his Mexican students were concerned that the U.S. students would be more advanced in the group activities. Felix found that as his students began working with their U.S. counterparts, they were able to break through that stereotype:

Well, I think the principle of stereotype was about how you can work together, because they thought that these types of groups were advanced, more intelligent, I think. And when they were working together, they saw that it is not in that way. They could figure out that they are the same level. So, yes, I think they broke that stereotype in both ways, you know?

Margarita and her U.S. partner had the students create videos about their respective cultures as a way to visually challenge cultural stereotypes:

Our students, the Mexican part, they did a video to present the city. The historical romance, the culture of the city, the customs, the food that we used to eat, the most typical food; and also, the American students, so it was very interesting that they learned and they, like, broke stereotypes about the Mexican people, or also about the American people. You know? When they saw the videos, they catch a lot of things that normally we have, like stereotypes, you know?

Walter used icebreakers to address cultural stereotypes in different areas in Latin America. Walter shared how this type of activity prompted meaningful questions from his Latin American counterpart and generated insightful answers based upon one's cultural perspective:

The first one was the stereotypes and the cross-cultural research on economics, government history—history was a great one. Like, what are the five most powerful events in each other's country's history. So that was good. And then [my partner] came up with a great question.... You know, what's the one event that you think ... brings shame to your culture? So that was interesting, you know. And when I came up with it, it was, you know—my first thing—for the U.S., I said slavery. But from his perspective, he said colonialism. So that's what it looks like from Latin America.

***Icebreaker activities foster cross-cultural communication about similarities and differences.*** A number of participants used the icebreakers to generate awareness about cultural differences and similarities by including a cultural information exchange as part of the exercise. Katie, a U.S. adult educator, has participated in several GLOBE modules

with the same Mexican professor. Based on their experience, Katie and her partner decided to make subsequent icebreakers more fun and include a cultural exchange component:

The first one is more like an individual introduction, or more like teams introducing themselves. You know interests. And then ice-breaker two is, you know, a combined team of our students and Mexican students together. They have to do something, like a fun activity. Of course, we give the task. So, you know, some students came up with, like a—let's say, Lindo Mexico.... You know, like what a beautiful country it is. So it was actually very interesting. The students picked something about New York City. Like a lot of them chose the empire state of New York, you know. And then movies—you know, somebody mentioned "Home Alone." It's an old movie, but, you know, Mexican students said they watched it on TV. It's interesting to see, you know, what's out there. Sometimes they really mentioned current affairs as well. So that involves a lot of chatting, and that's sort of a—that's really an ice-breaker to see, you know, how they established their communication line, right. Like, how they are interacting with each other. You know, everybody's participating. So that's, you know, the second one. And then we had sort of a common meeting or sort of a discussion.

Walter and his Latin American partner engaged in a "phase zero" icebreaker to kick off the collaboration and foster cross-cultural communications:

A really nice thing that we did was ... called phase zero ... before we started working together, you know, we got to know each other. So the phase zero was—we matched people.... And those students, before the project even began, had an assignment to share something about themselves—a day in the life. You know, do a video of what your life is like. And we had some leading questions, you know. What's your favorite activity, you know, what's your best memory, what was your best birthday? And then they did these videos back and forth, so they could see what life looked like in the other country.

Fabio stated that he generated cultural awareness having the students discuss cultural differences in pets; for example, his students were surprised to learn that some U.S. students have chickens as pets:

And we start at the base, very simple activities, like exchanging photos and some experiences with pets.... We have an interchange of some activities, so that Mexican and U.S. students do about—in this case, about pets. And they start recognizing the difference of the pets, and the way they treat them, and different kind of services they offer to their pets in both

countries. And they've started recognizing the difference, and also the coincidence. And even with the difference, they can recognize some interest in cultural difference. For example, the kind of pets they have in [the U.S.]—sometimes, they find very different pets they can care for in the home [in Mexico]. And they couldn't imagine it could be that way. Some kind of pets in USA, you can find some—I don't know the name exactly.... It's some kind of chicken. I can imagine they are recognized the difference in—it's interesting for them to see the different cultures that they have.

Some participants used the icebreaker activities to create cultural awareness by having the students act as tour guides to share cultural highlights about their respective countries. Roxanne stated:

There was a Facebook introduction, which they had to do, where they had to tell each—answer questions. If a student from Mexico were to come to [the U.S.] to visit you, where would you want to take them. Where's your favorite place—what's it like on your campus. It was a ... list of questions we had.

Similarly, Felix used the icebreaker activity to create cultural awareness by exchanging videos: “Well, the students had to upload some videos in order to break the ice. So, that's how we start this GLOBE course. For my students, it was really nice because they could know other people and other cultures....” Josh used photographs to generate cultural awareness. He had his students “share the different campuses, photographically, [to] allow the students to see how similar or how different places are.”

For Amy's icebreaker activity, her students generated cultural awareness by comparing and contrasting their respective communities on Facebook:

[The students created] a video about their university and also the city they live in. So, they had to show the most they could to the students of the other country. They were comparing the way we live, and they live, according to their facilities, to their environment, etc.—we created a page on Facebook for cultural aspects.... The questions were about culture, like, for example, what is your favorite dish and show me a picture, and explain to me what it is made with, for example. Another was show me the place you like to visit every week in your city and show me a picture and explain to me what that is about.

Catalina and her U.S. partner used the icebreaker activity to create cultural awareness by having the students communicate via video, give personal information, and then act as a

tour guide for their respective campuses (either Mexico or the U.S.). Catalina said that they used “the icebreakers for the teams to find similarities and things that they could use to work together”:

One [icebreaker] was themselves telling who they were and introducing their place and saying what they liked, and the other one was kind of explaining more about—for example, their name—what was their name and so they could introduce something more personal. If they knew, like, the origin of their name and what did it mean. The first one, they had to talk about their name, the place they live. Since one of them, they live in Rochester, and this one was living in Cancun. Make like an introduction of what would you tell them if somebody came here, and talk about—something about the restaurants or the places or the Mexican food that they really—or the food that they enjoyed. Some of them—it didn’t have to be Mexican. Some of them loved pizza and obviously they got that. The other does love pizza. . . . What we did is try to use the ice-breakers for the teams to find similarities and things that they could use to work together.

Kara and her Mexican partner used the icebreaker activity for students to communicate about themselves and their campuses. In turn, they conducted a synchronous meeting where the U.S. and Mexican students engaged in a meaningful cultural exchange around ethnocentrism and cultural relativism:

So, [we] had a synchronous meeting, and then the first assignment was for students to create a video showing their school and describing different aspects of themselves, like what they study, what they do for fun, you know, what do people do where they live and things like that. And posted their videos in groups . . . on Moodle. The second module of the course was sort of tackling sensitive issues regarding the question of culture and cultural difference, and sort of dispelling myths about others broadly. So it was really like a module around critical thinking and to encourage students to exercise sort of a relativistic framework.

One U.S. focus group participant stated that it was important for adult educators to be a “guide on the side” to help students through the early icebreaker stages. In her opinion, when using the icebreakers to promote cultural awareness, there should be appropriate guidelines for fostering cross-cultural communication during that time:

I think what doesn’t support the students is just to have the whole class meet the whole class, and not have that really choreographed, because they’ll just look at each other like deer in the headlights; so if there’s a way that, at

the beginning, the students can really share about themselves and that whole process is really the honeymoon period of the collaboration, where everybody's still excited to meet each other. The more that we give specific guidelines and we give them questions to ask each other, and we get them into their teams, and so also, I think it was said "the guide on the side," like, facilitating the interaction to be positive in terms of just creating a good, clear structure....

Ben stated that an icebreaker exchange around food was a "cultural awakening experience" for his U.S. students:

The first was an icebreaker, wherein the instructors asked all the students to share their favorite food. *Mi comida favorita*, if I remember correctly. I think our students learned quite a bit from the students in Mexico. I don't know if I told you this, but when we were asking the students what their favorite food was, several of the students in Mexico, their favorite food was sushi. I thought, really?! And then I thought, well, it's Mexico City, one of the largest cities in the world, they can probably get whatever they want, but it was an eye opener that, probably, the students in Mexico were more cosmopolitan than the students in [the U.S.]. So I think they shared a few interesting insights, and I think the students in [New York] did have a little bit of a cultural awakening experience.... I think it was a general feeling that there's a world beyond [New York]. I think they were exposed to the concept that there are people who have more choices, in terms of food and in terms of entertainment, than we have around here, in [New York].

***Icebreaker activities provide a safe space for students.*** During the icebreaker phase, some participants felt the need to provide students with a safe space around language and a fear of the unknown. Some participants described their perceptions of the students' fears. Mary expressed her opinion that there were fears on the part of the Mexican students:

Fear. Fear of other. Fear of judgment from other, I guess is best way to put it. You know, this is right after the election, so there was a fear on the Mexican students' side of how they were perceived by the U.S., and so they were very hesitant to reach out.

For Omar, his Mexican students expressed certain fears around nervousness regarding first impressions with the U.S. students:

The [Mexican students] said they felt, the first impression was that they felt nervous. Some students felt nervous, because it was different from the

activities they normally have with their information, because the students from [the USA] were students from different programs, or different disciplines.... My students, the students from Mexico, they told me that, personally, they felt shy and nervous, they felt that they needed to practice.

Several participants discussed how the icebreaker activity provided an opportunity to address student safety concerns early on in the process. Olivia stated that if “you have a good ice breaker, you can diminish these kinds of fears.” Maggie said, “Well, I always think that the warm-up stuff—the icebreakers—are very important in this stuff because that will lead to some of that safety.” Maggie further stated:

For instance, the first thing that they did was, they made videos and they posted them in the Facebook page, you know, about their lives, and a lot of them—there were some questions that we positioned to them that they could answer, and I kind of made it optional for my students because I don’t like to—I felt that—you know, they’re kind of uncomfortable making videos and posting them, so I wanted them to really feel comfortable with whatever they were doing.... Being mindful of any students that might be uncomfortable... you know, other students may be uncomfortable, too, and you have to kind of like just be sensitive to that, and if you sense it, talk to the students and just see what’s up with them.

Chad thought that the icebreaker activity was a meaningful way to alleviate student fears:

One ice-breaking activity that worked really, really good was that they had to record a video. In that video, they presented themselves and they talked about their interests, and I think that worked perfect because we see all the videos in the class, and they started, like, interest in the course—like, loosened the fear of the course. I think that worked really, really good.

Kara stated that it was important to address safety concerns early in the process, prior to putting the students in cross-cultural teams:

I believe that we did things prior to [teams] where students could feel that sense of safety in order to—work directly with each other. So during the videos, thinking about sort of the things—particularly the American students—to take advantage of—things that they take advantage of with regard to their language. So, all of those things—students weren’t working directly with each other. They were just talking with each other through Moodle, and so once we sort of got through those layers, we thought, OK, now it’s time that they now can do some work together.



*Icebreaker activities promote fun, friendship, and build relationships.* Finally, several adult educators commented on how the penalty-free aspect of the icebreaker activities created a congenial atmosphere that sparked friendships and built collegial relationships among the students. Using icebreakers as an “energizer” or “tension reducer” (Preziosi, 1999), several participants reflected on how the tone of the icebreaker activity set the foundation for a positive cultural exchange. Annie, who has done several GLOBE modules with her U.S. partner, acknowledged that “the first time the icebreakers were like too serious, and we didn’t see that connection. We changed the icebreaker to funniest ones.” Annie further stated how important it was to keep the icebreakers simple and allow the students to have some fun in getting to know one another across cultures:

It was kind of fun because when we started the orientation course, the things that they kept telling us was, please think outside the box ... keep it simple, have fun, but as a teacher you think no, they have to work on a project. They have to do something. I have to grade something. It is the same recommendation. Keep it simple. Really, really you have to keep it simple, have fun, make them have fun, and the main objective is knowing of each other for a cross-cultural component.

Omar found that encouraging the U.S. and Mexican students to have some fun and take some risks in the icebreaker exchange was an important element of the course and one of his primary goals for the program:

After that, we had another online session, but very funny, I think it was one of the funniest sessions because, the session was to review the dancing and body movement aspects that were necessary to learn, to know, for developing the final project. I saw them having fun, enjoying the experience. Maybe it was the most important thing but, at the same time, I wanted them to feel good, enjoying it, getting funny and feeling funny during the complete course.

Felix stated that one of his fondest memories of the GLOBE module was how the students enjoyed the icebreaker videos: “I think it was the best moment for them because some of the videos were funny and they decided to use different apps. So, they were very cool.” Felix further stated that making friends across cultures was an important

component of the icebreaker activities: “Yeah, it was the intention to make friends in other cultures, in other countries. It wasn’t 100%, but it was like maybe 30%.”

Chad discussed how the icebreaker activity helped the students share common interests and enabled some students to make friends:

Also, I think they made some friends.... They talked about different things, different aspects. For example, students told me, teacher, yesterday I was talking with a student from the United States and we shared a lot of interests in common. Or, we both liked the same kind of music, for example. And I think they shared a lot of things.

Maggie said that when icebreaker activities are successful, it can make a huge difference in creating friendships and building sustainable relationships:

And I’ve seen the icebreakers work really well and not as well, you know. But when they work really well, you do have situations where people—I have seen these students—and this is not just this project—I have seen these students form relationships that last well beyond—well beyond the GLOBE project, you know? Where they become friends and they stay in touch with each other. I’ve seen that happen many times.

Jane shared how the friendships formed during the icebreaker phase helped to facilitate the team project phase: “So people enjoyed making new friends, making connections, and then working on something together. You know, a lot of them, I think, will continue to be friends.” Kara stated that there are no guarantees around fun and friendship, but when it happens, it is very meaningful: “It’s not going to happen for everyone, but just to know that a few did, is really special.”

Based on the foregoing, the participants discussed how the icebreaker activities promoted cross-cultural awareness by breaking down barriers, establishing common ground, challenging stereotypes, fostering cross-cultural communication and connection, providing student safety and promoting fun, friendship, and relationship building. Many participants agreed that the icebreaker activities were instrumental in promoting greater cross-cultural awareness among students from different countries.

**Project work in cross-cultural teams.** Turning to the project work in cross-cultural teams, 95% of the participants (19 out of 20) had their students conduct project work in international teams to develop an appreciation across cultures. The U.S. and Mexican participants worked with their respective GLOBE partners to organize international teams, jointly assign project work, and identify team deliverables. The participants discussed how the international teams enabled the students to gain a deeper appreciation across cultures, by conducting cross-cultural research and analysis; negotiating across cultures; achieving their mutual student learning objectives (SLOs); challenging their perceptions and creating new perspectives, and finally, experiencing insights about humankind.

***Project work to conduct cross-cultural research and analysis to foster cultural appreciation.*** The international project work enabled the students to engage in cross-cultural research and analysis as a way to promote a deeper appreciation between cultures. Many participants had the students compare and contrast various aspects and issues between the United States and Mexico and, in some instances, the world at large.

Kara and her Mexican partner created a GLOBE module that required the students to participate in two main activities. The purpose was to improve the relationship between the students and to have a meaningful dialogue around cultural differences. The first activity was for the cross-cultural teams to use Facebook or any social media platform as a collaboration tool to promote cross-cultural understanding. The second activity required the cross-cultural teams to choose from three different options: (1) analyze a research article; (2) create an advertisement that appealed to both Mexican and American consumers; or (3) choose an economic issue that the U.S. and Mexico disagreed upon. Kara explained the process in detail:

The first project ... was to use any sort of social media platform as a collaboration tool. And what they had to do with their group—so this is really the first time that they're actually having to work with their virtual partners—so virtual and in-person group to design a social media page that

outlines the ways to improve relationships between Americans and Mexicans by using what they learned in the prior units and in their respective classes. The second project ... they had to choose from three different projects ... so the first one was an analysis of a research article. The second one was to create an advertisement that appeals to both American and Mexican consumers.... Third project that they could choose from was strengthening economic and political relations between Mexico and the United States. What students had to do was to identify an economic issue—and this was broadly defined—that the United States and Mexico disagree on. And so they would summarize the area of disagreement and then, using what they've learned in their respective classes, come up with ways to transform areas of disagreement into constructive engagement. So not necessarily come up with a solution, but how can we—they could, but what are ways where we could find a midpoint ... and they had to, at the end of the semester, present their social media and whatever project they chose.

In Roxanne's class, she and her partner designed a GLOBE module around cross-cultural leadership. Together, the adult educators assigned international teams and directed the students to jointly research US and Mexican leaders. The students were required to research leaders in complementary industries, such as fashion or business, and analyze the similarities and differences across cultures:

The assignment was for them to interview a leader in each of their countries and to write a report on the leader ... then there were questions that we gave them in the interview form so that everyone had the same questions and would get the same kind of information.... So they had to identify the differences or special—or whatever the connections were between the two industries, and then talk about the leader's experiences. And then they all had to write—do a PowerPoint presentation, which they presented to—they had to submit to us.

Maggie and her partner had their students conduct research and analyze a variety of topics around environmental issues. She and her partner used synchronous class time to have the students work on their research:

Within each topic, we had four or five questions for them to research. And so then they had to research those four or five questions and then develop a PowerPoint presentation—a joint PowerPoint presentation between each half of the team. So it was one presentation for each team, which was half U.S. students and half Mexican students.... They were able to be working on their research while they were communicating with their partners and talking about the progress the partners had made, the progress that they had made, the next steps, you know, so they were able to plan

during those—you know, review what they had done and then plan next steps during that 30 minutes.

Margarita and her partner created teams with students from each country to research texture prints from the two different cultures, and for Margarita it “was an exercise that we did that I liked very much, when [the students] delivered some sketches from the project and we sat back at the same time, just teachers, on Skype.” She explained the project process:

The project was design a texture print from the two cultures. It was mixed into cultures. So the students presented [their] culture and the American and the Mexican have to research about the tribes here and the American tribes, so they can decide before their research about what draws them about they put on the print design.... We made Mexican teams and American teams, so they have to research the two cultures and then they have to present sketches. Then the teachers, we sent back the sketches and they had to present a collection, and we monitor it always how in class ... how they work and how they were advanced and also we made a goal file where they have the opportunity to upload all their work ... and the teacher had the chance to feedback and review the files. That was a big step, so how we did.

For Chad, his students partnered with U.S. students to study the cultural differences around bioethics and present their research findings to the university:

The [students] had to present to me an oral presentation about the different points of view [of euthanasia]. In this presentation, they had to include the information from the students from the United States. So they gave the presentation and at the end of the semester, in my school it was like a presentation of different projects, and they had to talk about the GLOBE experience in front of all the university, and they showed some pictures, some photos.

Ben discussed how he and his partner put the students in cross-cultural teams to research diet trends in the United States and Mexico:

Now, initially, that would have been a comparison against their diet and a standard American diet, or average American diet. Then, with the international component, I'd have them compare it with the diet of Mexico, in this case, the country we were collaborating with. It would be the job of our students to come up with an average American diet, and share that, and the job of the Mexican students to come up with an average Mexican diet and share that. Then, kind of working together, they would build the

comparisons and do some kind of analysis. The goal of this was to have each student reflect on how this information might apply to them, in terms of changing or influencing their future diet choices. So I basically framed this as a term paper assignment, and we had about seven different assignments in it.

For Fabio, his finance students partnered with a veterinary class to discuss the financial issues around pet care:

In the Mexican side we have a certain number of students by team.... And then, my [U.S.] partner integrates the same number of teams with the correspondent and students in each, so we have a mix of students, Mexican and U.S. students. We have the same number [of students per team]—well, sometimes it's different, but the same number of teams is the key. Each team had to do a financial project about veterinary business activity in the U.S.

Debra and her partner created a cross-cultural research project to teach students to gain a deeper appreciation of dance and chemistry across cultures:

So I participated in combining dance and chemistry with my partner ... in Mexico. I'm here in [the U.S.] but I'm also from Mexico, so we had some—or lots of things in common. But that was not the case in terms of the dance and chemistry because there was lots of things that were different. So we had to make a lot of exercises to familiarize both students with both our disciplines, and it was challenging in many ways but really rich in others.

***Project work to negotiate and collaborate across cultures.*** Many participants stated that part of the exercise within the international teams was for the students to experience the art of negotiation and collaboration across cultures and have the opportunity to appreciate those differences. Many participants gave their students the freedom and the latitude to negotiate a number of issues, among them, team assignments, team decisions, and team deliverables.

Chad's students were placed in cross-cultural teams and tasked with researching and analyzing cross-cultural differences around bioethics in the United States and Mexico. The students had to compromise on how to present the data:

They developed different topics about [the right to die in Mexico vs. the United States]. For example, different points of view they would each use. For example, the medical, the legal—that they had to cooperate between the teams. We created themes including students from the United States and

Mexico, and in that way, we tried to promote the interaction. They had to talk, to reach a level of compromise of things that they have to do together. That was, for example, one aspect that we promoted.

Mary stated that she and her partner placed the students in cross-cultural teams and made up a difficult problem for the students to solve. While in a recorded Skype session, the students had to negotiate and collaborate on how to run a project on the border of the United States and Mexico. Mary stated that many of the students were unable to resolve a number of complex issues:

We had them solve a problem that was—if the Olympics were coming and they were going to be housed half in Mexico, half in the United States, like right on the border, and what were some of the issues, and problems, and expectations, and barriers—how would they solve that problem? And they had to do that in a Skype, so they could give us a video of that session, and they sounded very interesting, and most of them were like, “We can’t solve this problem.” Right? “These are kind of unsolvable problems, like you’re talking about—” There were so many things that they found as a collective, like there were some things they thought would be very easy, right. You know? So, you know, like, how do you start? Which language is going to be spoken first? And who really gets control if it’s a 50/50, and who’s in charge, and do you make one person in charge of one side and one person in charge of the other side? There were all sorts of things that they thought of that we hadn’t thought of, but they were like, “This is really hard.” It was like, “Yeah, it is. It’s really hard.”

Catalina partnered with a U.S. professor for a GLOBE module on product development. For their research project, the students had to create a product and design a marketing strategy. Ultimately, the cross-cultural teams had to negotiate which products were most appropriate for Mexico or the United States:

We started in 2016—autumn of 2016—fall of 2016 and then in fall of 2018 we did it again. It’s called GLOBE international joint venture. The idea is that the kids have to create—my students are international economic students, and my partner’s students are usually business administration. We’ve tried to make them think of a product that is needed either in Mexico or the states. They have to look for the product, present the product, and make then at the end credo—like the campaign of how to promote that product in either one of the countries that they decide is going to be better accepted.

In Amy's class, the Mexican and U.S. students researched the cultural differences around important social issues such as drug abuse, abortion and sustainability. Students were told to negotiate any issues regarding the project deliverables. Amy said that because of cultural differences, it was not always easy for the students to negotiate the challenges, but in the end, the students learned from the experience:

They had to make to negotiate the topic they have to work on. And then we gave them, like, a list of topics, and then we created teams. It was international teams for students, two Americans and two Mexicans.... They loved the Facebook and they loved the ice-breaker but when they started working in teams, and when they had the responsibility to do some part of the assignment, that was a problem. When they had to negotiate, when they had to—when they had deadlines, when they had to accomplish some requirements, that was when they were saying there was a problem. Most of them were working very well, but some of them, they were complaining because of the deadlines. For examples, Americans, they're used to finish—most of the Americans, they wanted to finish one week before the deadline, and for the Mexicans it was like, no, the deadline is in one week, so we have time to finish.

One focus group participant echoed Amy's comments on how cultural differences requires careful negotiation among the students.

They wanted the students in our partner country, to have everything on time, to work exactly like they did, to have exactly the schedules that they had, and for them to understand that it's OK for everybody to have a little lenience and it's OK to have different work-styles and personalities, it took them some time to work with that, but I think this is one of the great benefits of the GLOBE program, that it trains students to really understand what it means to get to know another culture and to respect differences among cultures.

***Project work to achieve student learning objectives (SLO).*** Many participants and their partner adult educators created joint student learning objectives (SLOs) to achieve their educational goals during the four- to eight-week partnerships. Placing the students in international teams to conduct substantive research and learn about cultural differences enabled the students to achieve a variety of different student learning objectives.



For Jane, her second semester writing students in the U.S. were paired with fourth-year artificial intelligence students from Mexico to learn about cultural competence. Together, Jane and partner from Mexico had the mutual goal of improving their students' cultural sensitivity and becoming better global citizens. Jane stated that their cross-cultural project work enabled the students to achieve those student learning objectives:

For our student learning objectives together, we focused on cultural competence, being able to interact respectfully and constructively across, you know, cultural boundaries or differences. Both of them centered on that, in their interactions and in doing their projects. That's what we want to have—you know, to improve their cultural sensitivity and their cultural knowledge so that they be competent global citizens and work globally.

Comparably, Amy stated that the cross-cultural team projects helped individuals to achieve the student learning objectives of inter-cultural communications and global citizenship:

The objectives were that after they taken the GLOBE module, they're supposed to explain how communication is synonymous with culture, and define culture, and demonstrate the necessary communication skills to work on a team to analyze common U.S./Mexican problems, and also define the characteristics of a global citizen.

Chad discussed that, despite having different objectives than his partner in the U.S., the teamwork gave his students the extra opportunity to practice their English:

It was from my English courses, so I wanted to promote the participation between the students to promote, for example, the speaking and the writing between them because in this course we had the opportunity to work with students from the United States, and it was a totally new experience, a challenging experience, and really, really rich experience for my students. [My partner] and me had different, like, different goals. Like, different aspects that we wanted to cover, and it worked really, really, really good for both, because my students had the opportunity to practice the language, and students from [my partner's class] had the opportunity to see different legal aspects, but in a different point of view, in a different situation and a different background.

Katie's students worked in international teams to achieve the student learning objectives of "cross-cultural communication skills," "understanding of others," and

developing “skills of global learning.” For Debra, the most important student learning objective was simply “to gain confidence in general about speaking in English and deal with new things that were not just what they are used to studying, like science or—because they were not so connected to art.”

Felix stated that a general student learning objective for his students was to learn about environmental issues across cultures. As such, he organized the team project around that objective:

And the general objective was by the end of the module, students will analyze how global change phenomena influence our lives across cultural boundaries and will promote business ideas that makes effects of environmental issues.

The GLOBE online training documentation supports the creation of joint student learning objectives among the partner teachers.

***Project work to challenge perceptions and create new perspectives.*** Participants discussed how the cross-cultural team projects forced their students to re-evaluate their perceptions of their international counterparts. Jane discussed how the work ethic across cultures challenged her U.S. students’ perceptions about Mexican students:

There were a few problems with the work ethic being a little different. The [Mexican] students had a much higher work ethic, we found out. I teach in a rural community, so a lot of [my] students tend to think of Mexicans as just working in the fields around here, not, you know, being dedicated students—we’re going to call them to task, not having their part done on time or—so it was [my students] learning that they have colleagues and they have to meet a standard that’s, you know, set for everybody in the class. So people enjoyed making new friends, making connections, and then working on something together.

Katie stated that after working together, her U.S. students had a new perspective on Mexico and Mexican students:

Anyhow, students actually made comments like, oh, your campus is so nice, you know. Or, you know, like a lot of them speak really good English and, you know, they somehow sort of—you know how hard it is to learn Spanish. They were, you know, very impressed with those.

Kara created cross-cultural activities across teams to challenge the students' perspectives and to think more broadly about the difference cultures:

So, I tell students that today we are going to be thinking deeply about how we think about the world and how we think about people. And I introduced them to two concepts—when it comes to things or people that are unfamiliar to us. So, one of them is the “relativistic” kind of framework where we—essentially, it’s not judging another, or another culture based on what one does in our own culture. And “ethnocentrism” is the opposite of that, where we do—right—that we place sort of moral values on another culture based on our own. So, introduce these ideas to students and ask them broadly where they kind of land, right.

Olivia commented that, in her opinion, many American students start with an attitude that says “I have no need to—get in touch with Mexicans. They have nothing to teach me.” But by the end of the project work, Olivia observed how U.S. students “changed their mind in only six weeks” and “at the end, they are really very happy.... they say, ‘I learned a lot of things, and Mexicans are great, and I want to come to Mexico. It’s a great country, and there are great people.’”

Similarly, Catalina stated that initially, her Mexican students believed that the American students were “better” than them. By the end of the GLOBE module, however, Catalina observed how her students’ perceptions of themselves and their perspectives of Americans had changed:

I don’t like to say it like this—but sometimes like in Mexico you can think that they’re going to say, well, the Americans are able to do everything better than we are. At the end, I think that they found out—my students found out that they could do the same, or they were able—that their learning was in the same level, speaking of an economic objective, not about the English, but even with this advantage of the language, they were able to be in the same level as the other students.

Walter commented on how the American students were surprised at the Mexican students’ level of sophistication with their graphics and presentation skills:

It was interesting—last year in Mexico, my [American] students—in my ethics class, my students were really surprised at that, because the Mexican students were actually much better—much more sophisticated with their

graphics. So that ... they had, you know, globes that moved and ... and lots of graphics. So, they were much more sophisticated than our [American] students, which was sort of an interesting revelation for them. These are people in a developing country, the students are actually advanced more than we are.

Amy stated that she and her U.S. partner are committed to continuing their GLOBE partnership because they personally observed how the international team work transformed their students' perceptions about the respective cultures:

We want to do it and do it and do it again, because we saw that the students, they changed their views—their points of view about—not just about the culture but also about the problems, that they see that we also have the same problems, even if they are Americans and we are Mexicans, and they are a developed country and we are not. We face the same problems. And the problem is not just for the country. It's for the humans also.... You cannot judge any culture and you can also contribute to humanity with your students and to open their minds and to make them think about—they are the future of the world....

Margarita stated that the teamwork challenged both the U.S. and Mexican perceptions and created new perspectives. Margarita personally observed how the team projects created meaningful exchanges among the students and the adult educators:

It was amazing ... the American students said, "Oh, I want to go to Mexico. I didn't know it was like that." At the end of the course, the American students talked about they didn't know how Mexican people work, and "you guys, you work very well and very professional. We learned a lot about you." And also, my students expressed things like that about America. There were some surprises.... For example, "Oh, I didn't know," my student [said], "Oh, I didn't that the American was so easygoing."

For Catalina, the cross-cultural collaboration was an interesting experience. Despite being raised in international environment, she acknowledged that she gained insights about the students, her peers, and even herself:

It has been an interesting experience. I come from a cross-cultural background because of my family, so for me, it's kind of normal to engage with cross-cultural practices. But it has been interesting because as a teacher, one thing is what you do as a person and in your regular life day by day, but then when you have to talk to another teacher, you find out even different ways of applying things or the same techniques. At the end, I think it has been very enriching, either for the teachers, for both of us, and it has been

enriching also for the students. There's always some kind of, like, prejudice you have and, at the end, you learn about those things too.

***Project work provides insights about humankind.*** Some participants shared that during certain moments throughout their multi-week GLOBE collaboration, they observed their students experience important moments around humankind. Oftentimes, these moments occurred during and after the project teamwork. Katie, for example, said that this type of cross-cultural work was “important, you know, discovering some sort of universal component of human life.” Mary thought that the Skype session where the teams discussed running a global project on the U.S./Mexico border was insightful moment for the students. She said: “I think as far as activities, the one that promoted that cross-cultural learning really would've been that ... Skype session.”

For Ben, the project work between the U.S. and Mexico students “was most fruitful in terms of increasing their cultural awareness.” After the project work was over, Debra and her U.S. partner surveyed the students: “At the end, [the students] came and said that they were so glad that programs like that were happening at the University.”

Many of the participants discussed how the project work and the team experience enabled the students to understand that they are all just human beings. For example, Walter stated that this project enabled his students to have an international experience that humanized the cultural differences:

Even if they don't go to Mexico, they've had some experience of another culture. This is why I got involved because most of our students are not going to go study abroad in a community college environment. But to have this kind of environment where they—they may have someone that they're on Facebook for many years after this that lives in [another country] and they can see, oh, that person—you know, there are some differences in that culture, but essentially, they're the same kind of human being that I am.

Amy also talked about team work and how in the end, students are generally the same:

They can come up with some solutions, even if the rest of the teams are not working well, or if they have problems—that they can become friends at the end if they want. And at the end, all students, they are the same....

Mexicans, Americans, Canadians. They all are the same at the end. They are humans.

Margarita also stated that after the project work, her students realized the similarities with their international counterparts:

So, I think that they learned a lot of, for example how Americans work or how Americans do this ... and they have a feeling at the end. They told me we feel a little when we started working because they are in [the U.S.] and we are here in a town in Mexico. And when we ended the project, we feel like OK, we are similar, and we have the similar ... similar feelings.

Katie, too, discussed how these types of projects enable students to experience diversity on a global scale:

Also, I think this greatly benefits our students. That's really the motivation. I know how it is—I mean, how important it is to have diverse views on global affairs, and I was an international student, so I know how it's like. I lived in Paris, or I lived in London, then I'm living here, and then I now go to other Asian countries and I see how different everything is. But in the end, there is a universal component of it. And most of our students are majoring in business, like fashion business management, or like graphic design. You know, eventually it's a really global workplace. They cannot just think about one group of people.

Finally, Catalina said, “So I think that students are—18- and 20-year-old students are the same everywhere. It was interesting.”

**International campus visits.** A number of participants identified the visit to their partner's campus as a key activity that deepened the cross-cultural understanding, for both the adult educators and the students. Eighty-five percent of the adult educators (17 out of 20) had the opportunity to visit their partner's campus. An overwhelming number of these adult educators expressed that the international visit greatly influenced their cross-cultural teaching practices in blended global education. The participants shared how the campus visits with student meetings and campus presentations enhanced their teaching collaboration, provided a global perspective, and heightened their cultural understanding.

***Enhance the teaching collaboration.*** Many of the participants discussed how the international campus visit influenced their perspective on cross-cultural teaching. Some participants shared how the campus visit enhanced the teaching collaboration. Others discussed how the campus visit served as catalyst for building a collegial relationship and in many instances established the foundation to build future professional collaborations. Jane, for example, credited her partner campus visit as a critical success factor in developing her GLOBE partnership. Jane stated how that visit was the basis for creating a sustainable professional collaboration:

It made a huge difference because I got to see his lab and I got to meet his colleagues, and we were able to talk about the issues that we both face as professors and found that we have so many commonalities, even though he's a lot younger than I am and in a whole different field. And we've been able to do many presentations together since and give each other resources, so it's been a very collegial working relationship. I think if we hadn't met each other face to face, it wouldn't have been as comfortable working with each other, and we wouldn't have been able to share as many resources.

Olivia attributed her initial campus visit as the beginning of a worthwhile working relationship with her partner stating, "Well, we had the opportunity to work—at the very starting point, worked together face to face, because I went to [the U.S.]." Similarly, Annie stated that the campus visit facilitated the partnership "because we can meet personally and talk to each other." Debra expressed how much she enjoyed visiting her partner's campus because it enabled her to learn about the university, meet some students, and most importantly, connect with her partner:

I really enjoyed it. It was more about getting to know the university. I think I met a couple of his future students for the class, but I didn't connect with them that much. So, it was more connecting with [my partner].

Many participants indicated that the official campus visit was one of the first steps toward building a meaningful collegial relationship. Fabio's comments reflected a number of participants' perceptions when he stated that his campus visit "was great, because we have a—not only an official activity, but a friendship." The interviews

revealed that one of the most significant facilitation factors in the cross-cultural GLOBE program was the collegial relationship among the adult educators—which often found its roots in this type of initial campus visit.

*Provide perspective and appreciation for a partner’s campus.* In addition to building a collegial relationship, many participants discussed how campus visits impacted their perspective and deepened their understanding of cultural teaching difference. When Catalina described her trip, she said, “For me, it was impressive to go to the campus, see what they do on campus.” Chad said that when his partner came to his campus, it was beneficial for her to observe his class and meet his students:

[My U.S. partner] also came to Mexico, and she also saw some of my classes.... And I think it works a lot because we had the opportunity to see the real situations, the real day-to-day classes. For me, it was a really great experience.

Katie shared that visiting the partner campus made a “huge difference” because it impacted her perceptions of the professors and enabled her to share the campus visit with her own students:

Understanding the physical environment. I mean, in the beginning, I thought that [Mexico] and their campus looked big, right? And then the weather. For instance, now, like New York City and everybody’s indoors, you know. But it was so important that I met [my Mexican] colleagues.... They are exactly the same type of professors, very dedicated professors that I see on my own campus as well.... So that made me feel really good ... they also care a lot about their students. My [U.S. campus] is such a unique place. It’s not like, you know, a university in the movies, right. Seven story—like nine-story buildings in the whole block. Students are so busy and, you know, streets are full of cars and, you know. So it’s very important ... you know, like I just have some understanding and, again, I can explain to my students better what it is like being a student in Cancun.

Josh has participated in eight GLOBE collaborations and has visited three different campuses in Latin America. Josh stated that visiting partner campuses “absolutely made a difference” in his perspective about teaching arts-related GLOBE modules between



countries. Omar agreed that visiting a partner's campus was a valuable and meaningful experience:

Obviously, the part of the visiting the place, the visiting the university is a very rich experience, because I could know the kind of organization, the place, how the infrastructure, how the installations you have, or they have in [the USA], how they develop the GLOBE programs. It was a very interesting thing that I could experience.

***Heighten cultural understanding through cross-cultural presentations and meetings.*** During their international visits, the participants went on campus tours and met with students, faculty and college administrators. Most participants attended their partner's class and engaged in cross-cultural discussions with the students. Many participants conducted guest lectures at the partner university and discussed the benefits and challenges of conducting a blended global program between the U.S. and Mexico. All of the participants expressed the various ways in which the campus visit heightened their cultural awareness and generated an appreciation for cross-cultural differences.

Roxanne stated that she was surprised when her partner in Mexico asked her to present to his students in Spanish, "that was really interesting because he made me introduce myself in Spanish, and he waited until I was on the stage to make me do it!" In addition to presenting to the students, Roxanne found that socializing with the faculty at her partner's campus was worthwhile:

And then there were so many other faculty members there that were involved in GLOBE. Monterrey has a very large contingency of faculty, so I got to see a lot of those faculty also. We had a nice little dinner party they gave when I was there, so it was really bringing together everybody that I had been in Mexico with, because we all did training together.

Felix stated that he went to his partner's campus where he met his colleague "face-to-face" and he "gave a little talk to the students." Debra discussed how she purposely scheduled her class around her partner's visit, because she knew that his presence would make an impact on her students: "So since he was coming, obviously we kind of like tried to do it at the same time of my class. And since I know the power of having the

professor in person, I kind of like tried to make it happen.” Roxanne stated that she visited her partner’s campus for a “few days” and she got to “speak to the engineering students ... and gave a little presentation.”

Chad stated that when he attended his partner’s class, he was happy to hear the U.S. students praise his students for their English-speaking skills:

From my visit to the school, that was an amazing experience because I had the opportunity to meet the [U.S.] students, to talk with them, to see their point of view of the course, and it was great ... but something really interesting was when I came to the United States, students from [the U.S. class] said that my students have a great level of English, and then when I returned to Mexico, I told to my students that [the NY] students had said that, and they were, like, really, really happy to hear that.

Overall, the participants who traveled to a partner’s campus indicated that this experience was impactful in several ways, among them, enhancing their teaching collaborations, providing an appreciation for a different campus, and heightening their cultural sensitivity.

***Provide impactful cross-cultural experience for students.*** Additionally, 25% of the campuses (5 out of 20) sponsored student-to-student international campus visits. For those adult educators who participated in or observed the student international exchange, they shared how these visits made a remarkable and memorable impression on the students and had an impact on their cross-cultural perceptions. Indeed, a popular response was that the cross-cultural experience was “amazing” for all parties involved. Walter described what happened when a number of students visited his campus:

So that was an amazing cross-cultural experience, for both of them. You know, we had this great party and the Mexican students all sang and danced, you know, as part of their culture. It was an experience, I think, for both of them. The students from Mexico were amazed. It was in the fall. They’d never seen leaves before. We’re very rural and, you know, the weather was cold, so these are all things that they’d never experienced as well.

Maggie also stated that it was an “amazing experience” when approximately 20 international students visited her New York campus. She shared how the visiting students engaged in both social events and substantive activities during the campus visit:

So a whole bunch of them came to visit us, which was so amazing—but the screaming that went on when they finally met each other and the hugging and then—it was unbelievable. And so what we had an opportunity to do is that the school put together—or the GLOBE folks put together a presentation for the campus of all the different GLOBE projects that were going on with the [Mexico campus]. So my students got to present pieces of the climate change presentation with some of the students from Mexico.

You know, the kids took them out to dinner. There was a—they had never carved pumpkins. There was a pumpkin carving thing at—one of the faculty members had them over to her house for dinner, and then they all carved pumpkins because it was in October.

Kara found that the student campus visit was a meaningful experience for her students. She shared how one student’s story was special to her:

And one student in particular came that was really special to me because I don’t think she had ever left her city, so I don’t think she had even left [her village] because she doesn’t have that much money. And for her to be able to come to [U.S.], it just—for all of them, it was a dream come true. Everybody wants to come to [the U.S.], everybody. So to be able to give that to them at such a young age made it so much more worth it.

One focus group participant recounted the excitement when a large student group from Mexico visited her U.S. campus. She stated that this student cross-cultural exchange was “phenomenal” and that it took cultural understanding to a new level:

We had the students from six GLOBE collaborations come from the university that we were working with and they came to our campus and they did presentations together, and they were together for a week, and it was phenomenal for the students to push their understanding of each other to a higher level, and the students from the school we were working with were so articulate, and they were so gracious, and it was so great for our students, who honestly were less articulate and who definitely have had biases in the media about this culture and these students, and so for them to meet them face to face after working with them on a GLOBE collaboration for a month was huge. Huge!

The focus group member acknowledged, however, that student international campus visits are not the norm and that this element is “sort of is GLOBE-plus, to get folks to be able to be face-to-face.”

Kara shared that she wished that all of her students could experience an international trip. Initially, she was concerned that the trip funding was only for American students to travel to Mexico and not for the Mexican students to come to the U.S. For Kara, this type of inequity was not fair:

So the GLOBE funding, unfortunately, was only to send my students to Mexico. It wasn't vice versa, and that's something that I was unhappy about. I was unhappy about it and so, again, spoke to sort of the unevenness of things like this, unfortunately—the thing that I don't like is sort of the privileged American having the opportunity and not having it be returned.

When Kara raised this issue to the GLOBE coordinators, they were able to find funding to enable several Mexican students to visit the U.S. campus.

Leo stated that when his students returned from the U.S., they were thrilled to share their experience with fellow classmates in Mexico and with the entire campus:

When [my students] arrived back, we had a meeting to see what had happened in [the U.S.] and they came excited about it, mostly about other things different from education. What they did got around [to the campus].

Finally, Walter stated that the student visits were meaningful to everyone, including the students and the faculty:

You know, some of our students have never been to New York City. Never been out of the county. And for them to begin to think about, I can go to Mexico, is, I think, just like a whole new expansion of the world, which is so satisfying to me.

Accordingly, an overwhelming number of participants indicated that the international campus visits significantly impacted their perspective, perception, and pedagogical approach in teaching across cultures. The participants shared how these visits abroad facilitated deeper partner relationships, influenced their perceptions of partner campuses and students, and heightened their cultural sensitivity around language

and diversity. For those adult educators who personally observed the international student exchange, the comments were positive—it was a success for the students and a major factor in promoting and experiencing a deeper sense of cross-cultural understanding.

Chapter V continues with findings #3 and #4.

## Chapter V

### RESEARCH FINDINGS 3 AND 4

#### **Introduction**

This interpretative case study explored with 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico, the cross-cultural practices they used to create an environment within a blended global education program that fosters learning and collaboration among students from two different cultures.

To carry out the purpose of this research, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How do adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?
2. What activities do adult educators engage in within a blended global environment that they perceive promotes understanding among students from different cultures?
3. How do adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?
4. What factors facilitate and/or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?

This chapter continues the discussion of the findings, in particular findings #3 and #4, that emerged from the interviews conducted with participants from Mexico and the U.S. In addition, these data will be supplemented by comments made during a focus

group conducted by the researcher and further supplemented by a review of documents relevant to this topic.

### **Major Findings**

The four major findings uncovered are as follows:

1. A majority of the participants (65%) indicated that a blended format was the most flexible teaching modality.
2. All participants (100%) stated that they had their students engage in icebreakers to promote cultural awareness, and 95% engaged the students in project work in international teams to promote cross-cultural understanding.
3. All participants (100%) indicated that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding through discussions with colleagues, while 95% learned by drawing on their past experience.
4. An overwhelming number of participants (95%) stated that the collegial relationship with their partner adult educator facilitated cross-cultural understanding, while 75% indicated that language was a barrier to those practices.

In this chapter, the researcher will continue the discussion on findings #3 and findings #4. The first two findings are contained Chapter IV. Findings #3 and #4 are continued below.

#### **Finding #3**

*All participants (100%) indicated that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding through discussions with colleagues, while 95% learned by drawing on their past experience*

The participants reported five major ways that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding within blended global education: 100% reported dialogue with

others; 95% reported experiential learning; 85% attended formal training; 50% engaged in research and reading; and finally 20% reported trial and error. See Appendix L for a complete list of how participants described the ways they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding. Table 7 below summarizes Finding #3.

Table 7. Outline of Finding #3

<p><b><u>FINDING #3 – HOW THE ADULT EDUCATORS LEARNED</u></b></p> <p>All participants (100%) indicated that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding through discussions with colleagues while 95% learned by drawing on their past experience.</p> <p><b>Dialogue with Others: (20 of 20, 100%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dialogue with colleagues</li> <li>• Dialogue with students</li> <li>• Dialogue with GLOBE support and administrative coordinators</li> </ul> <p><b>Experiential Learning: (19 out of 20, 95%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drawing on experience</li> <li>• Reflective observation on current experience</li> </ul> <p><b>Formal Learning: (17 out of 20, 85%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Face-to-face training in Mexico</li> <li>• Online GLOBE training</li> <li>• Attend workshops and conferences</li> </ul> <p><b>Reading &amp; Research: (10 out of 20, 50%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research and reading around subject matter and technology</li> <li>• Research and reading for course content</li> </ul> <p><b>Trial &amp; Error (4 out of 20, 20%)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lessons from experimentation</li> </ul>
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**Dialogue with others.** When adult learners engage in dialogue, control the content of the data, and acknowledge and embrace each other's personal and cultural context, they are better poised to more effectively learn and produce results (Vella, 2014). Here, 100% of the participants stated that dialogue with others was the most effective way to learn how to design and deliver their cross-cultural GLOBE modules. The participants reported that their discussions with others centered around three key areas: dialogue with



colleagues, dialogue with students, and discussions with GLOBE staff and administrative support.

***Dialogue with colleagues.*** Many participants overwhelmingly described the dialogue with their partner as a “collaboration” throughout the entire GLOBE project. Debra said, “In general, I think the collaboration—like it was—for me was a wonderful experience.” Kara said it “was a collaborative endeavor” with her partner and they “talked a lot.” Catalina stated, “We—in some way, I think we just collaborated.” Walter thought that “the collaborations were fantastic. They were all wonderful.”

Margarita used the word “magic” to describe the essence of her collaborations and what she called “brainstorming” with her partner:

So it was very easy. At the end, we start—It was like magic. We start to speak and we—I mean we did the collection with the project and that stuff. The ideas actually were very collaborative because I don’t know, I have like—how do you say a [brain]storm? [Brain]storm ideas?

Omar used a number of adjectives to describe his collaboration with his U.S. partner, among them, *nice*, *excellent*, *interesting*, and *intense*:

The collaboration with [my U.S. partner] was very enthusiastic, very interesting. I think it was a very nice collaboration. I enjoyed it a lot because we had a lot of, our brainstorming was intense. We had many, many ideas, but because the time was short, we could not do many of them.

Ben stated that his engagement with his Mexican partner was a “collaborative” experience from both sides:

I think I would call it collaborative. There were different inputs from different sides, at different stages, but I think there was collaboration on both sides. If I recall, I did do some Skype sessions with that professor before the course started. But, primarily, the organization occurred through email.

For Felix, the cross-cultural GLOBE module was his first experience collaborating with a U.S. partner. He shared how this opportunity was different and interesting.

Yeah, because it is first time I have this collaborative work with a professor in the United States. It is a different experience and I love this experience because I learn a lot to know how professors work and how they

run these classes and how they—I don't know. They collaborate together. So, it was very interesting for me.

Josh is currently on his eighth GLOBE collaboration and is optimistic that his next GLOBE partnership will also be a successful collaboration on mutual subject matter:

I think all of them stem, initially, from the classes that we're teaching, and then trying to find a common area. I mean, now I'm collaborating—I'm trying to collaborate with, and I think it's gonna happen, [with] somebody that teaches business.

Mary shared that she and her partner adult educator continuously engaged in an open dialogue that was free from a particular agenda. For Mary, that was the key to a successful collaboration and partnership:

[My partner] didn't have an agenda, I didn't have an agenda. Neither one of us were completely tied to our ideas ... it was nice, and for me, that's the way a collaboration and a partnership should work ... and we kind of shared with each other, and it was one of those, like, "Hey, what do you think about this?" "Oh, that sounds like a great idea. Maybe if we change it to this." There was just a lot of dialogue between us, and we really worked well together, so it wasn't difficult....

A number of participants indicated that their dialogue involved a level of negotiation to vet the myriad of ideas around teaching in a cross-cultural context. Leo stated that he and his U.S. partner spent a great deal of time negotiating the syllabus and the course content: "We spent a long time preparing the syllabus, because we didn't reach agreements quickly, so we were negotiating long before we were ready to engage on it."

Kara discussed how reaching the initial collaboration was challenging, but that she and her Mexican partner talked through it:

The two disciplines intersect in a way that would be interesting for students—so when we were writing, like, that initial one-page application where you had to kind of talk about how the two courses kind of meet in some way, I mean, it was initially a struggle for us to kind of see that.

Walter described the dialogue with his Latin American colleagues as a "back and forth" process to develop and refine the course content:

With [my partner] and I, the courses were different, so we had to ... you know, go back and forth to find an area that we thought could fit within both

of our curriculums.... And then we kept refining it back and forth as we went.

Ben also described his collaboration with his partner as a back and forth process. He shared his vision with his partner, who responded positively, and together they “fleshed out” the details:

I offered what my vision was for this project, and the professor seemed to take to it pretty well. Then, we kind of fleshed out the assignment from there, from the general idea that we wanted them to do a team term paper, to what would be the subject, what would be the topics that they would be expected to cover, and then a rough outline for the schedule of that.

Annie, too, essentially described her discussions as a back and forth exchange to create the international content:

Actually, when I came up with an idea, she was like okay, let me see, and she goes through the idea step by step and I am like yes, that’s what I want. It has been very, very, very easy.... For example, when we worked on the syllabus, I sent her the first sketch and then she wrote something, and I received it and I was like okay. We both worked on everything.

Katie described her collaboration as a dialogue that involved “compromise” with her partner:

I kind of compromised my class so that my students can work not only [with arts], but also people in [business] right.... And then [my partner], of course—she made a lot of compromise to focus on [my topic] ... so it was a good compromise and I am very thankful that....

Several participants reported that their dialogue focused on teamwork and how to clearly define the course objectives with their partners. Some partners discussed their relative strengths and divided their coursework accordingly. Omar stated how he and his partner used their respective strengths to create the course content:

[For] the activities related to the part of chemistry, I had the main idea. The component of the dancing was the object of the task, the main idea was given by [my U.S. partner], Yes, I think it was, compared with the other partners, it was different. And different, well, sometimes a little difficult, because we had to look for the best activity that could have the requirements we wanted to develop, or to teach the students. It was not easy, because the schematic, the topics are a little different, but we were very enthusiastic, I think. I really would like to have another opportunity to work with her.

For Katie, she and her partner had a dialogue regarding their respective strengths in order to make the partnership an equal and enjoyable collaboration:

Yes. And then, you know, for example, I wrote a lot of course descriptions and, you know, the paperwork. [My partner] is very good with digital technology.... She created a lot of Google Drive folders ... she's more savvy in technology than I am. But, you know, it was, in fact, a really equal collaboration. It was actually very enjoyable.

Ben talked about how his partner took the lead in creating discussion groups for the team activity and how that was acceptable to him:

As I recall, the other professor did quite a bit of work, in terms of forming discussion groups for different parts of the paper. As I recall, she kind of set up the different discussion groups at different weeks, so it kind of worked. I knew what was going on, but she kind of took care of that and, as far as I was concerned, it was working fine.

Many participants had a dialogue around creating a joint syllabus and clearly defining the course objectives. The American Council on Education (2018) supports faculty members working together across countries to design a joint syllabus for a GLOBE module.

Catalina discussed how she and her partner had a dialogue to jointly create the syllabus and the calendar. Together they divided the work accordingly:

Yeah, it's a joint syllabus. We've done a joint calendar, because we do the syllabus and then we do, like, a specific calendar where we tell them all the dates and we're more specific about the requirements they need.... I'm the one that does the map, but she enriches it after she sees it and she makes comments so that we do it together. But we try to do it like—obviously, we try to take advantage of our positive things that each one has. So that way, at the end, we get a product that—the project is something that works for both ... it's something that we do together.

Felix stated that it was a balanced collaboration: “It was like 50/50. [My U.S. partner] suggested some of them and then I suggested other assignments. Actually, the syllabus I have, we made it together.” Jane discussed how she and her Mexican partner worked together to provide their students with the resources to be successful throughout the collaboration:

Yes, because we were able to present them with rubrics and with a well-ordered succession of what was going to happen, and I think that made students feel safe and secure. They didn't have to do anything that was too difficult, you know. We gave them the resources, so the focus was on them communicating with each other and getting a good written product and a good, you know, PowerPoint demonstration out. So they were able to focus on that.

Participants discussed how listening was critical to a successful dialogue with their partners. Katie said she was fortunate because her Mexican partner let her “decide what would be studied or what should be read—and then she really listened to my point of view on [on my topic].” Katie further stated that her partner also reined her in and created reasonable boundaries for the student activities:

And then [my partner] actually put the rein on me. Like, I am very serious. I give a lot of activities. [She said] well, you know, stop and you should think, you know, how much they can do this, you know. Or she sometimes said, you know, this should be limited to a certain number of slides. And then she always brings the business strategies.

A number of participants organized their peer discussions around scheduled meetings or regular intervals to keep dialogue open and fresh. A fair number of participants used various technology platforms to conduct their meetings. Roxanne and her Mexican partner “had weekly meetings or bi-weekly meetings” and used “Skype ... we just called each other from our offices, but usually it was Skype” to communicate on a regular basis. Josh found that communicating on a regular basis was key to success: “Communication. Like, being able to talk to people on a weekly basis is essential. When you kind of let things slack a little bit, it doesn't work.” Kara and her partner spoke every week to discuss and refine the GLOBE content:

I think we met virtually every week to try and ... see the two disciplines [psychology and economics] intersecting, but we still couldn't think about what that would mean in terms of specific pragmatic activities. So we met a lot and I think that we then had a good sort of working model that—where students could use—particularly in the content part—could use what they were learning in their class and bring it together with what the students were learning in their other class.

Maggie and her Mexican partner used the instant text messaging platform WhatsApp to communicate on a regular basis:

We talked often. I mean, at the beginning of the project, we had—in addition to during the synchronous time, we had a Monday afternoon steady—the class was Tuesday and Thursday, so we had a Monday afternoon meeting.... And we stopped that, you know once the project got underway and we didn't need it. Then it was kind of on an as-needed basis. But we communicated, she and I, through WhatsApp.

Debra too, used the WhatsApp platform to communicate with her partner in Mexico:

“[we] were using WhatsApp ... we did Skype several times. We called each other several times. We were very connected, actually. We had lots of fun figuring this out.”

Walter talked about how “fantastic” it was that he and his partner connected on a weekly basis to have a dialog about student activity and discuss the process:

And it's—you know, from a personal point of view, it's fantastic, but also, you know, it's like every week we get together, you know, how's it going. You know, what's happening in your class, you know. Team #4, they're not answering, you know. What's going on, you know. And he would say, you know, [that student] is investigating that.... So that goes on all through the project.

***Dialogue with students.*** A number of participants engaged students in a dialogue to gain insight and solicit feedback about the GLOBE program. When Mary's Mexican partner arrived on her U.S. campus, they scheduled a meeting with the students to understand their perspective on the GLOBE program and get feedback on the GLOBE coursework:

When [my partner] arrived [on the U.S. campus], we made sure she came so that she would be there for my class. And so she came, and we sat down, and I introduced her, and I said, “She and I have spoken—,” because we had spoken often throughout the semester, “so we kind of think there are some things that we need to address, but we really want to hear it from you,” and my students were super honest. And [my partner] also had this conversation with her students, so it was nice. It was really nice to just sit around and talk about it, and it was very helpful. So, tying content to content, you know, allowing experiences in the GLOBE to be more a part of the class, that was very helpful.

When Roxanne traveled to Mexico to visit her partner's campus, she had a dialogue with current and former students to discuss the program and get feedback:

And the students were good, and they asked good questions. They were attentive ... and that made me feel ... that the previous spring session we had done—spring semester—was successful because some of those students were there.

***Dialogue with GLOBE support.*** Participants also engaged in dialogue with the dedicated GLOBE support team and administrative coordinators at various U.S. and Mexican campuses. While Jane and her partner did a lot on research on their own, she commented on how the GLOBE support team and her campus IT department were helpful:

Pretty much on our own, but I had the GLOBE support, so that was huge. The institutional support is opening up. I spoke with an IT person and they were like, well maybe we can put them in Blackboard, so—which would make it easier because they wouldn't have to go, you know, to a different log-in....

Mary regularly engaged with her campus GLOBE resources and her IT department to get the support she needed for the cross-cultural program:

There are instructional designers that we have whose focus is really on global learning and intercultural communication, but they also do other things.... So, we are really deep in terms of access for knowledge. So, if I didn't know an answer, somebody else knew an answer, and they could help me do something if I wanted to do something really creative or whatever and I didn't know how to get it done, so that's, I think, really, we're very lucky. But we're a huge university, so kind of have to do all of that.

For Ben, although he doesn't need much help, his GLOBE administrator was encouraging and helpful in providing GLOBE resources:

[My GLOBE administrator's] been very encouraging, and ... helpful. I didn't really need a lot of extra help, but the institution has been favorable. That's another reason why I did it, too, I wanted to do something that the institution was interested in.

In sum, all of the participants indicated that dialogue with others was instrumental in how they learned to create cross-cultural content for their students.

**Experiential learning.** Ninety-five percent of the participants reported that experiential learning was an important element of learning how to promote cross-cultural understanding for their students. A majority of the participants stated that they learned by drawing upon their past experience and by reflecting on their current experience.

***Drawing on past experience.*** Some participants discussed how their cultural backgrounds or previous international teaching experience provided the foundation for a cross-cultural program in blended global education. Catalina shared how she brought her bicultural background to the international GLOBE experience:

In my case, it was more like—for me, it was very enriching being able to collaborate with another teacher of another country. More like—as I told you, I have a bicultural background—cross-cultural background—I don't have ... difficult[y] relating with other cultures, but professional work-wise, this was very—this one was very interesting and being able to go to another university and being able to present at a conference and speak in front of an audience and teaching something and see how other universities or colleges work. Professionally, it was very enriching for me.

Maggie expressed that her previous teaching experience and previous GLOBE collaborations provided a foundation for her latest GLOBE project:

I've been teaching for 14 years. I've been full time for five [years at my current school] but before that, I was part time at [other U.S. schools]. So I've been doing this, you know, for a few years, and I've had a number of GLOBE projects. My students have worked with students in [another country]. We've worked with students in the [other countries]. So I've had a lot of GLOBE partners and a lot of GLOBE experiences with my students.

Amy shared how her international background provided her a solid foundation to work with other cultures:

For me, I used to work in the international office of the university, so I had a lot of contact with some other cultures and some other universities. When I was invited to work on that project, I was very happy because I think also that is a very good opportunity for the students and also for their professors....

Jane has been teaching cross-cultural courses with international partners for over five years. Those experiences have helped her in the most recent international collaboration:



I've done other GLOBE things, so I knew... [in this GLOBE project] that we'd have to make something outside of our institutions [learning management systems].... I worked with a woman who teaches communications at [another international location], and then I've also worked with a person from [a different international university] who teaches a magazine journalism class.

***Reflection on current experience.*** A number of participants reflected on their current GLOBE experience and its impact on their professional and personal lives. Fabio shared how the cross-cultural exchange program was a “dream come true” that has enhanced his professional career:

And about me, it also changed the image I have in my university as the first experience of interchange with USA University, and we can see some empowerment of the activity, you know, you do? Because people don't see me the same anymore.... I think, for me, it is a dream come true to participate on this experience ... it's the best thing I can imagine, even I never imagined I could be in this experience....

For Ben, this current experience has given him an entrée into international teaching:

“Well, all I can say is that, for me, it's been kind of a time-effective and effort-effective way for me to get involved in an international collaboration.” Felix commented on how this current experience will help him with future courses:

I think it was a very good experience because I can know how they work, how [my U.S. partner's] group works, and how my students work. And so, I think I can make some strategies in order to make these courses easier. So, it was a good experience.

Josh stated that that his involvement in the GLOBE program makes a difference in his community and where he lives:

I relocated to the smallest town I've ever lived in in my entire life, to a place that is very conservative, religious, and right wing, and I'm none of that. I tried to educate the people around me to be a little more open minded. Whether I have a short-term effect, I'm pretty sure I'm having a long-term effect.

For Walter, the GLOBE program has enabled him to see his partner country “in a whole different way after this experience.” He talked about how the overall GLOBE experience has made a significant difference in his teaching career:

Well, [this project] it's led into all of these things, you know ... actually, I did a presentation in Spanish of what the GLOBE program is, and we're doing four classes between [a partner University] and [another Latin American country] in the spring, and I'm going to be in [another Latin American country] mentoring the collaborations from that side there.... So for me, you know, to have this kind of—at this point in my career to have this kind of new life or new experience or new focus—to be able to mentor ... other collaborations—to be able to develop this whole project has been tremendously fulfilling professionally.

Kara reflected on how she was not sure she had the time or the bandwidth to engage in this cross-cultural opportunity, but in the end, it was worth it:

I wasn't sure if I had the time to do this. I wasn't sure if I wanted to revamp a course that was already going in a good direction, but at the end, it felt worth it.... I think it was an important component to [my class].

Based on the foregoing, a fair number of participants drew upon their past and present experiences as a foundation for learning how to teach awareness, appreciation, and understanding across cultures in a blended classroom environment.

**Formal learning.** Eighty-five percent of the participants from both Mexico and the U.S. attended formal face-to-face GLOBE training in Mexico. Additionally, prior to traveling to abroad, most of these participants attended an online training program where they learned about the GLOBE program and found their international teaching partner. The Globe online training program recommends that adult educators attend an online GLOBE training program to prepare for the cross-cultural teaching experience. Some participants also supplemented their formal training by attending conferences and workshops.

**Formal face-to-face GLOBE training.** Seventeen out of 20 participants attended a face-to-face GLOBE training session in Mexico. During this several-day workshop, the participants met their international partners, jointly drafted their student learning objectives, attended lectures on cross-cultural norms, and learned about the technology options available to connect campuses across countries. Chad explained how the formal training provided a solid foundation for organizing the cross-cultural module:

We went to ... Mexico. In that course, they talked to us about how to create the program, how to choose activities, how to focus on certain aspects. Based on that, we chose the activities, we chose the learning outcomes, and we made the syllabus that we were planning to integrate in the course. Mainly, it was from the course that we took.

Mary discussed how training in Mexico allowed her to meet her partner in person, and together they created guidelines and parameters for their upcoming collaboration:

We had a face-to-face workshop ... in Mexico, where we all met at one place and we had an opportunity to plan out our courses. And that was in the fall of 2016, and that face-to-face meeting was in November. And then, we established, you know, kind of our guidelines and parameters, and kicked off in the spring, so our course ran in the spring of 2017.

For Katie, the formal training in Mexico was important because she and her partner used that time to identify their similarities: “Meeting in Mexico was very important. I, you know, realized that [my partner’s] very much like me.” Roxanne thought that the formal GLOBE training in Mexico created a sense of community for the participants and the GLOBE support team:

The nice thing about this GLOBE program—because it’s a strong relationship with all of the Latin American community ... was that they sent us to Mexico for training ... [and the GLOBE training instructor] ... Loved, loved, loved her! She—oh gosh, she was amazing.

At the formal training in Mexico, Catalina was able to meet her U.S. partner for the first time: “We met in Mexico. We met in the [online] course and then that was the first time we really saw each other, and there is where we really worked on our syllabus and all the structure.”

Many participants shared their positive comments about the value of the formal GLOBE training in Mexico. For Fabio, the face-to-face training was the secret of the GLOBE program’s success:

In [the face-to-face training in Mexico] we were working about this course and it was a great experience, because we defined every activity the student will be doing, and this—I think this is the secret of the success.

Roxanne credits the face-to-face training as the reason for her successful partnership: “That [formal] training was priceless. I don’t know that we would have—I don’t know that we could have done it as successfully or as smoothly if we had not worked together in Mexico.”

**Online GLOBE training.** The GLOBE program supports an online training portion of the cross-cultural program to allow adult educators from different countries to engage in a number of online collaborative assignments. This process enables adult educators to participate in a selection process that results in finding a suitable international teaching partner.

Prior to attending the in-person training in Mexico, most participants engaged in an online training program sponsored by the GLOBE personnel. Mary discussed the two phases within the online GLOBE program. In the first phase, Mary shared how adult educators provided detailed information about themselves in order to enter into an online “dating phase” to find an international partner. In the second phase, Mary and others worked with their partners to create the mutual student learning objectives for the GLOBE in their respective classrooms:

All of us in the process, both in Mexico and the U.S., went through an online kind of background of what is online learning, how does it work, what is GLOBE ... this is Part One, it was a two-partner—so, Part One was fill out the basic information about you, you know, what do you teach, why do you teach it, how do you teach it, what are your bigger questions, who are you, what do you like, plus, you know, pictures and those kinds of things. So, it was almost—we like to refer to it as the ‘dating phase’ ... finding somebody who would be academically and personally and professionally a good fit, and then we chose partners. U.S. people actually said, “Hey, I’d like to work with you,” and Mexico got to choose who they were working with. And so, I was partnered with a woman by the name of [Patricia] from ... Mexico, and that ended Part One.... And then, in Part Two, we went through the process online of learning how to style, address, connect, create, write objectives, et cetera ... of all the things that we wanted to do with our courses.

Annie shared how the initial online program provided useful information and gave her ideas on how to create a GLOBE course:

Yes, when we went to the [online] course in Mexico they gave us ideas and during the orientation course online ... they gave you a lot of ideas, themes, and they gave feedback about your ideas, and it was really nice.

Amy described the online activities enabled her to find a suitable and comparable partner from a U.S. university:

It was in the [online program] of GLOBE ... we were in training—in the first stage, there was training to be part of GLOBE ... you have to post your curriculum—your CV [online]. Also, the area that you teach in and also your discipline, your interests. [My partner has] a Ph.D. in communications, and I also have a Ph.D. in communications.

For Roxanne, she met her Mexican teaching partner in the online GLOBE training program that led to a face-to-face meeting in Mexico: “[GLOBE] put us together, and then we Skyped with each other to meet, and then we did our proposal, and went back and forth—and did the proposal together, and then we met face to face in Mexico.”

***Formal conferences and workshops.*** Some participants enhanced their formal training by attending related workshops and conferences. After teaching her first GLOBE course, Roxanne was invited back to a GLOBE workshop mentor to new GLOBE students: “We went twice because we went once as students, and the second time as mentors.” Josh regularly attends a variety of GLOBE conferences and workshops in order to stay current on the cross-cultural process:

I did learn a lot more through going through a couple conferences and the process. So, I’m trying to do it all the time now.... I did a day workshop in [a city] a couple times. I did class participation and training online, and I co-facilitated one. Then, I’ve gone to three workshops where I was in the country of the host, where I was partnering with. I went to Mexico twice, and Lebanon once.

A member of the focus group summed up the value of the formal training:

I think [an important] thing was [formal] training, being able to learn and go through training. I think that helps facilitate you to do it in a way that works and that is effective, and I think if you just try to do it, it would be hit or miss, but if you actually have training and you learn what to expect ... you’re going to have the unrespectable, but at least if you have some training and some background, you can eliminate some of those surprises.

Overall, the participants reported that the formal face-to-face GLOBE training, offered by the GLOBE support team, was an important and valuable component of the learning process. Many participants also discussed how the online training program provided a platform to engage in cross-cultural awareness and facilitated finding a compatible GLOBE partner. In addition, some found that conferences and workshops supplemented their cross-cultural learning.

**Research and reading.** Fifty percent of the participants stated that they conducted their own research and reading in order to prepare to teach the cross-cultural content in the GLOBE module. Some participants engaged in independent research to learn more about a particular academic area or to learn about certain technologies. Others engaged in self-directed research and reading to find substantive course content to use with their students during the GLOBE module.

Jane and her partner were self-motivated to learn about each other's topic and investigate various technologies, such as Boardlet and Tripline:

And I think we're both pretty self-motivated and used to kind of doing things on our own, so that just—we just kind of did that and then would share our findings and our results and the information ... we kind of both did our own research. He did [the research on] how to do Boardlet. I did [the research on] how to do the Tripline.

Maggie researched how to use certain technology and how to teach sustainability and climate change:

Yeah. Well, I had never used WhatsApp before, so I had to download that and figure it out, but that was a piece of cake. And then I just, you know—I looked—I do a lot of reading and I follow a lot of the business press, so I kind of had seen a lot of the reactions to the Paris Accord, but I didn't really know exactly what was in the Paris Accord, so I had to kind of like Google some of that myself, you know, so I really needed to—because, you know, on teaching business—we're not—you know, we talk about climate change but not to that level, so I really needed to kind of get my arms around that. I also had to look on a map to see where the hell Sonora is, you know, so I wouldn't embarrass myself.

Fabio conducted internet research to learn about his partner's area of specialty:

Because we are very clear what the students will do, and what we are waiting for them until final delivery. We're working in a very good mode, and we were looking always the coincidence of the activities, and tried to find—to be satisfied in both sides...., I was looking on the internet about how the vet activities are. What kind of services that the vets, the professionals, do, and I could identify the main activities they do, and we can share with partner some kind of activities of interest, like this project.

Olivia shared that her research was “self-directed, yes.” Olivia stated: “I did it on my own ... so I learned ... on my own, and I made research and I worked with my teachers [on] this technology.” For Catalina, her U.S. partner had to do additional research in order to be knowledgeable about Catalina’s area of expertise in business and commerce:

For my [U.S.] partner, I think she did have to do a little bit more research because ... we decided that they were going to sell the product in one country or another, and they had to take into account to make the decision—taxes and laws and all those things each country had. I think it was more, like, from my partner’s point of view that it was a little bit more difficult for her since I already work in the commerce area.

***Adult educators conduct research and reading to supplement GLOBE content.***

Katie searched the Internet to learn about different cultures in Mexico. She shared this information with her partner and with the students:

Yeah, so I told [my partner] her all of this background. In the—how can I say—the Mexican sort of a PBS—you know, PBS in Mexico. I don’t know what the channel is, but they had a bunch of series on Asian—what is it called—los asiaticos in Mexico or something. You know, like Asians in Mexico. There is a whole series of it. So there was Japanese Mexicans or, you know, Korean. So we watched some of those and I sent it to her and she understood it. So I usually determine what we put for the content. And then I told [my Mexican partner] to watch it. And then actually we even posted some of them on the Blackboard—no, on the Facebook so that they can watch it, too.

Debra conducted online research to learn more about science so she could provide her students with some preliminary chemistry lessons before her partner visited her U.S. campus:

And before [my Mexican partner] came [to the U.S.], I did a couple of chemistry explorations with my students. You know, for them to understand

chemistry through their bodies. So we were using the analogy of molecules of human bodies—or human bodies as molecules. So we were like connecting and disconnecting, and being attracted and being repelled. Well, since I always use, like, body, time, space and energy, like I apply it to many things, and I have applied it lightly to scientific things, but this time I had the chance to do it more deeply.

Adult educators conducted research and reading to learn more about their partner's subject matter, learn more about technology, and find meaningful GLOBE course content for their students.

**Trial and error.** Some participants discussed trial and error a brought about future change. Debra said: “We had lots of ideas and everything was too complicated until we got into a more simple thing ... [it was] trial and error.” Mary learned through trial and error that size of the student groups mattered: “I think, one of the learning experiences that I can share, I guess, now is that we learned that the students really would've liked smaller groups....” Olivia, essentially used trial and error to learn how to create better class assignments for future GLOBE courses:

In the first course, we had assignments. We had forums and they posted their interventions in the forums. In the second course, like Facebook, it's open ... they could post a photo or a video, but it was their decision.

Felix stated that the next time he teaches a cross-cultural module, he will do certain things differently: “And maybe for the next time, we have to work more like, okay, make a video showing your culture or showing ... your country.” Catalina discussed how she and her partner changed the team project after the first year because it was too complicated and caused confusion:

Some other things that we did change in the second edition because it was like too confusing and clouded. What we did is they had to divide themselves ... the team of eight divided into four teams of two.... Each team had a Mexican student and an American student. It was like a company, so there were four divisions.... That's why we noticed this at the end was because each division was going nuts and we were going nuts ... so it was complicated.



For Katie, she and her partner from Mexico realized that they had “boring” activities, so they changed it up the following semester:

It’s like—well, actually, first year—okay, [my Mexican partner] and I were very studious, and we were serious, so I said find these cities in Mexico and China. And oh, it’s so boring. So in a way, we felt that students didn’t have enough personal, like a contact—like a, you know, interest in others. So we changed that activity to find, like, music or movie about New York. Or, you know, a movie about Mexico.

Some participants discussed how they use trial and error to improve future cross-cultural collaborations. For Amy, at the end of every semester, she and her U.S. partner discuss the positive and negative aspects of the course and update the syllabus accordingly:

Every time when the semester ends, we talk about what activities didn’t work well, what we have to improve, and we change the syllabus. We start discussing about if we want to include some other new activities. We change the syllabus every semester. The next semester that we [do a GLOBE module in] our class, we want [the students] to present. Actually, we want to implement some other—more like—we tried to use more of the internet or the online activities, so we probably want them to present by video. They have to present—the [students], they have to present the Mexican aspects and the Mexicans, they have to present the American.

Fabio has engaged in at least three GLOBE collaborations with the same U.S. partner. He stated that after each semester, he and his partner work together to make subsequent GLOBE courses more efficient:

[We communicate] through [WhatsApp], we are interchanging information about efficiency of the course.... This time, [the third time] I think we did easily compared with the first time, because the first time, we were some kind of assessing how to do it, and—but in both semesters, we had 100% success in the team delivery.

Accordingly, the participants reported five major ways that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding within blended global education, that is, dialogue with others, experiential learning, formal education, research and reading, and finally, by trial and error.

#### **Finding #4**

*An overwhelming number of participants (95%) stated that the collegial relationship with their partner adult educators facilitated cross-cultural understanding, while 75% indicated that language was a barrier to those practices.*

Adult educators in both Mexico and the United States were asked to describe those factors that facilitated and those that inhibited the GLOBE program and the goal of achieving cross-cultural understanding. Participants indicated four major factors that positively impacted the program and facilitated cross-cultural understanding: the collegial relationship with their partner adult educator, the benefits of technology, the students' positive attitude, and the institutional support. Conversely, participants identified five factors that inhibited the program and the level of cross-cultural understanding: language differences, different time schedules, students' negative attitudes, the additional work for the adult educators, and the challenges of technology. See Appendix M for a complete list of how participants described the factors that facilitated and inhibited cross-cultural understanding. Table 8 below summarizes Finding #4.

Table 8. Outline of Finding #4

#### **FINDING #4 – FACILITATED AND/OR INHIBITED**

An overwhelming number of participants (95%) stated that the collegial relationship with their partner adult educator facilitated cross-cultural understanding; while 75% indicated that language was a barrier to those practices

#### **FACILITATING FACTORS**

##### **Collegial Relationship Between Partners: (95%, 19 out of 20)**

- Mutual respect & willingness to work together
- Professional Partnerships

##### **Technology Facilitators: (Benefits) (65%, 13 out of 20)**

- Synchronous connection
- Accessibility of multiple platforms

Table 8 (continued)

<p><b>Students' Positive Attitudes: (65%, 13 out of 20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student motivation</li> <li>• Student willingness to participate</li> </ul> <p><b>Institutional Support (55%, 11 out of 20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Executive support</li> <li>• GLOBE administrator support</li> </ul> <p><b>INHIBITING FACTORS</b></p> <p><b>Language Differences Among Students: (75%, 15 out of 20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear of language</li> <li>• English-centric curriculum</li> </ul> <p><b>Different Time Schedules (60%, 12 out of 20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional timing of courses</li> </ul> <p><b>Students' Negative Attitudes (60%, 12 out of 20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of student motivation</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional Adult Educator Workload: (45%, 9 out of 20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra workload</li> <li>• Little additional compensation</li> </ul> <p><b>Technology Inhibitors (Challenges) (35%, 7 out of 20)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Too many technologies and limited Internet bandwidth</li> </ul>
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**Facilitating factors.**

*Collegial relationship between partners.* Ninety-five percent of the participants (19 out of 20) credited their collegial relationship as the single most important factor in making the GLOBE program a success and facilitating cross-cultural understanding. Participants described how creating an atmosphere of mutual respect, a willingness to work together, and building a professional partnership were key factors that enhanced the program and achieving cross-cultural understanding.

*Mutual respect and willingness to work together.* Many participants discussed how respect for their partner adult educator facilitated a collegial working relationship that led to a deeper awareness, appreciation, and understanding across cultures. Kara said: "So I

think both of us wanted to do well, and both of us respected each other's opinion." Leo stated that his respect for his U.S. partner provided the foundation for creating meaningful GLOBE content:

Actually, I did accept most of [my U.S. partner's] ideas, because she is a very intelligent woman and I respect her very much. I'm so grateful to her because she was so kind with us and put her ideas and her knowledge in front of us.

Participants discussed how they respected their partner's work ethic. Amy talked about how she and her U.S. partner were hard workers with similar personalities:

I think it was very good to work with my partner because our personalities are similar. We're very hard workers and we like to do things in a very well way, so we're very strict. We like to push everybody to do the things they have to do. We had—what I think was very good for us was that we had international experiences that we had before.... So, she was very interested—she's very open. She was very interested in giving that opportunity to their students and make them think differently and have a global citizen in the future.

Katie described "willingness" to work together as a key success factor in the partnership relationship. Similarly, a focus group participant talked about "willingness" and finding a partner with "heart" as a "big facilitator" for promoting cross-cultural practices within the program: "When you [find] a partner, that partner's willingness to adapt and make a commitment, so they had to have heart to do it, so I think heart is a big facilitator, or what is your motivation." Margarita talked about how she and her U.S. partner shared a willingness to work together that led to both a professional and personal relationship:

I always say that my partner was great.... Well, always we tried to speak about the project. Right? But, for example, a little sometimes we speak like from our families and our traditions and that stuff, so it was very great ... it's not just work. I also can express other things and she's learning about my culture and I'm also learning about the culture, about the traditions, and about the other things to see the work.

For Omar, he and his U.S. partner came from different academic disciplines, and together they worked very hard and enthusiastically to create a collaborative team project that challenged both the students and themselves:

Yes, I think it was, compared with the other partners, [our GLOBE module] was different. And different, well, sometimes a little difficult, because we had to look for the best activity that could have the requirements we wanted to develop, or to teach the students. It was not easy, because the schematic, the [academic] topics are a little different, but we were very enthusiastic, I think. I really would like to have another opportunity to work with her.

*Professional partnership.* Mary stated that it was “divine intervention” that connected her with her Mexican partner, and “it was so much fun and such a joy to work with her ... we really hit off on a personal level,” and that they “genuinely liked each other and worked really well together.” Katie talked about how it was “a lot of hours and I’d rather focus on my ... research. But why do I do this? I mean, I enjoy talking to [my Mexican partner]. I enjoy actually getting to know her.” Fabio thought the relationship was “key.” He stated, “The partner relation[ship] is very important, and we have a ... very respectful and kind and—how to say—very friendly.” Roxanne stated that she “really melded” with her partner and they got to know each other’s families:

So, yeah, it was very cool.... [My partner] found the leadership conference for that summer, and we submitted—I wrote the proposal and we got accepted. And so, he and his wife and my husband and I, we all met at that conference. When he came here for the GLOBE conference ... we all got together. So, it just worked. It was really nice.

Walter described how the professional and collegial relationship facilitated the program and was one of the most fulfilling aspects of the GLOBE experience:

Our relationship.... You know, this is an important—we consider this an important part of our working together.... I would say one of the most fulfilling things for me has been the personal relationships that I developed with [my Latin American colleagues] ... the relationships that I have there ... with [those colleagues] are actually richer than with most of my colleagues at [my home university].... I’ve never stayed at anybody’s [home] for four days that’s a colleague of mine here, right?

Leo talked about how he became friends with his U.S. partner: “So, by the time we were in Mexico, we had already built a friendship.” Debra stated that she and her partner from Mexico “became very good friends.” Olivia described how the partnership with her U.S. adult educator created the solidarity to work through problems:

It is not only work, it becomes a friendship. It becomes a friendship, because you must feel free to say, excuse me, this is not working, and without worrying if the other one will offend, or you know? You must be very, very open to critics and to change things on the road ... to be in solidarity with the other is a concept that we must work ... If you need my help, I will be there, and when you need work, I will be there, because in this kind of course, both teachers will have problems.

Catalina stated that one of the key factors that made the collaboration partnership work was the “personal link” and the “positive connection” with her U.S. partner:

The factor that made it a success—one thing was communication—a personal link, so it was like we enjoyed working together. It was not like—it was more than just somebody that I was working with. So, there was like ... a positive connection, and that was, I think, very good.

Similarly, Omar said: “I think the most important thing that I could mention for the success of this interaction, this project was, first of all, the contact with [my U.S. partner].” For Walter, working with his GLOBE partners was a “life-changing experience”:

The [Latin American] people there were fantastic. They were generous, took me out to lunches and, you know.... It’s more a part of their culture, I think. They’re actually more friends with each other than we are outside of work. It was much more of a family kind of feeling at [the Latin American university]. It’s almost like a second home, you know. I feel like I have this group of people that I would be friends for life with.... So, for me personally, you know, it’s been kind of a life-changing experience.

***Technology benefits.*** Sixty-five percent of the participants (13 out of 20) stated that the technology was an important factor that facilitated the cross-cultural understanding across campuses.

***Synchronous connection.*** A fair number of participants agreed that the synchronous class sessions were advantageous in promoting the program and facilitating cross-cultural

understanding. For Debra, the synchronous connection and “the fact that [my partner] came [to visit], the Skype connection and synchronicity” facilitated the cross-cultural understanding.

Maggie emphasized the value and importance of synchronous class meetings, stating, “What facilitated it for sure was the synchronous overlap of 30 minutes for every class.” She and her Mexican partner re-organized their respective classes at different time slots so that their students could engage in face-to-face synchronous conversations:

At the same time, each team during that 30 minutes was connecting with their team. They were doing it on their laptops, they were doing it on their phones, and they were having face-to-face synchronous conversations during that 30 minutes, as best as they could ... [it was] the aha moment of this project.... That synchronous time every week was huge.

Walter emphasized the value of synchronous class time and how its impact on cross-cultural understanding was “fantastic”:

Let me tell you ... about synchronous. With Mexico—with the Mexico project, we arranged our classes. We had the ability to do this, so [my Latin American partner] actually did an 8 o’clock start—which she jokingly complained about all the time—in order to match up with my class that was—that finished from 11 to 11:30. So the last half an hour of my class and the first half-hour of her class were synchronous.... So, the teams would get together in the corners and they would actually get on Zoom or Skype or Facetime and talk to each other face to face.... And I think that was a tremendous addition to the class. When we’ve had, like, class to class asynchronous sessions, it’s really difficult. Those were difficult.... But the face to face in teams, that was fantastic. When they get together, and they can talk. They can talk back and forth about, you know, let’s do this slide, you know, let’s change that.

For Catalina, the synchronous class time enabled the students to focus on the cross-cultural collaboration instead of the technical difficulties: “We could see each other and talk to each other. And that was very interesting. We did have technology problems, but even though with the technology problems, the students were very collaborative.”

*Flexibility of multiple platforms.* Many participants reported that the variety of technology platforms offered convenience, flexibility, and options. Roxanne thought

Google was a good choice for her students: “Google Drive, Google products bring our students together.” For Josh, multiple platforms provided important communication options:

I think it’s important to have multiple platforms, or have multiple things going on at the same time. In general, I have email, recently, WhatsApp, Facebook messenger, multiple ways to communicate with my faculty, so that if something isn’t working, you try something else.

Mary talked about how the technology bandwidth and expertise at her university helped to promote cross-cultural understanding:

We have bandwidth. We have a lot of technology that we have access to. We have a lot of people that know about a lot of technology that we have access to. So, we are really deep in terms of access for knowledge. So, ... I think, really, we’re very lucky. But we’re a huge university, so kind of have to do all of that.

One focus group participant shared the importance of allowing students to select their own technology platforms:

Something that’s made GLOBE very successful is the autonomy that we give our students and the tools that we use for how they connect to each other.... We really push the tools that the students use to be social media tools so that part of the ... things that we assess.

A fair number of participants reported that Facebook, a social media platform familiar to most students, was a technology tool that helped to promote cross-cultural understanding. Fourteen out of 20 participants stated that Facebook was one of the technologies used within their GLOBE modules. Katie stated “that Facebook works really well.” Roxanne shared that although Facebook was not her first choice, she and her partner eventually selected it because of the student comfort level with the platform:

Initially my partner and I did not want to use Facebook, but that ended up being what the students were most comfortable with, and so we brought Facebook into—as an introduction, which gave them the opportunity to be more visual and verbal, if you will. And then we ... added the app ... [and] brought that into Facebook. And then everything else flowed from shared Google files.



Walter remarked how some students used Facebook to connect outside of class: “The teams would often set up their own Facebook groups to communicate outside of us, actually, which was fine.”

For Fabio, selecting Facebook was an important choice: “I think the platform is very important, how the students interchange information, and in this case, Facebook is friendly and accepted from both sides.” One focus group participant stated how Facebook “worked really well” because of the students’ familiarity with the platform:

Students chose Facebook as the platform, and it’s worked really well because they’re really used to it, they really like it, they use it every day, so it was something like an everyday thing for them, they just used it differently.

***Students’ positive attitudes.*** Sixty-five percent of the participants (13 out of 20) discussed how the positive attitudes of students helped to facilitate the cross-cultural understanding.

***Student motivation.*** For Jane, giving the students time and patience were key factors that facilitated the program and enabled the students to build inter-cultural competencies:

Patience. Giving time to have them learn the inter-cultural competency and showing that as important and something that would help them in life, but also that it’s a core value. I think that there’s a lot of motivation. It was—you know, the material motivated them. It was different than their ordinary things they were doing in other classes, so that was motivational. It put it at a different scale for my students. Many of them are more sheltered, so, you know, they got to meet somebody new from somewhere that they had never been and find out new things about themselves and about each other, so I think those were all positives. There was a lot of growth.

Kara stated that her students embraced the opportunity to learn something new about a different culture:

I think what facilitated it was [that] students were eager and interested in this part of the class. They were a little nervous because my students thought they had to learn about [my partner’s subject], but I said no, don’t worry about that. I think—I see this more as facilitation than inhibiting it.

For Felix, his students were motivated by the opportunity to interact with students from another culture:

Okay, some of the things that were good was they know that my students will work with other students abroad. So, I think that was the most motivated reason to work with this GLOBE course because they wanted to know other people, you know? To know other cultures, so they were excited about it. They were really excited. I think it was the most interesting thing for them. They told me, “Oh yeah, okay. It’s great. It’s a good idea. Yes, I want to do it,” they told me.

*Student willingness.* Catalina stated that the students’ willingness to participate was what made the GLOBE program a success:

And in the end, for them it was a ... really positive experience. The [students] were the ones—they were happier than what we were ... and I think most of the students were excited with the project ... having them with a positive sensation was—or attitude—I think made it a success.

One focus group participant stated: “I’d say that the students’ willingness certainly feeds into if they’re successful or not....”

***Institutional support.*** Finally, 55% of the participants (11 out of 20) identified institutional support as an important factor that facilitated the success of the program. The GLOBE support documentation details the importance of institutional support when implementing an international online collaborative course between two different countries.

*Executive support.* Roxanne stated the support of her institution was a critical success factor in facilitating the program:

I think first and foremost is all the support that we had. I had a lot of support from [my university and] —the dean of international education ... she’s the one that brought GLOBE to [my university] because we didn’t know anything about it ... and so that support was a lot. Then the support of the VP.... I think the fact that we were so enthusiastic about it and we were so committed to it, that’s what made it work.

Mary stated how top-level support from her institution was an important factor:

There was a ton of support from my institution because we’re an international university, and we have a global learning perspective that is

incorporated. We have courses that have global learning designation. So, there's a lot—you know, anything that I need to make things more global, I'm going to get, that I can get, I will get that support.

*GLOBE administrator support.* Walter discussed how the administration and a GLOBE coordinator are very important to the program's success:

Our administrations have been very supportive. And I think that's key. I think you have to have a good coordinator. [Our GLOBE coordinator] is just, you know, over the moon.... She's fabulous. You know, providing the backbone. I could not have done this without her.

A focus group participant agreed that “administrative support” was an important factor “because if the administration doesn't support you, it really is an upward battle. If they're not willing to put resources into it ... they're not willing to give you time to do the project.”

Accordingly, factors such as partner relationship, different types of technology, students' positive attitudes, and institutional support are key to facilitating a successful GLOBE program and creating cross-cultural understanding.

**Inhibiting factors.** Conversely, participants reported a number of factors that inhibited the program and cross-cultural understanding, among them, language differences, different time schedules, students' negative attitudes, the additional work for adult educators, and technology challenges.

**Language differences among students.** Fourteen out of 20 participants identified the language differences among students as an inhibitor to the program and developing cross-cultural understanding. The participants' comments support a GLOBE 2013 report indicating that the students' language proficiency can present communication challenges within a GLOBE module.

*Fear of language.* Mary stated simply: “There was a fear from both sides about language.” Chad agreed, stating: “It was difficult because, for my students, like I said, it was a new experience. They were like really, really—like frightened about the idea to

interact with other students and in another language.” Annie talked about how her students were concerned about conducting the course in English:

And when I talked to the students that they will be working, the main challenge is, it’s going to be in English. So, they are like, oh my gosh ... even if they took the sixth level, they are not that good on pronunciation, on speaking, writing. So, it’s a very big challenge for them.... That’s why my students complained ... so, I told them that they have English teachers, they have me, and they have Google Translator.

Fabio agreed that a main inhibitor was the language: “Maybe the main factor is the language because the students—for the students, it’s not easy to interchange information in another language.” Roxanne, too, stated that “there were struggles with the language.” For Felix, language “was the most difficult thing” for the students to do, and “it was kind of complicated how to communicate each other.... I think that inhibits all their assignments.”

*English-centric instruction.* Kara commented that conducting the program in English created an “unevenness” with regard to language:

What inhibited—I think ... was—it was still too English-centric. So, for instance, during our synchronous meetings, my partner wanted me to lead most of them, and so I did them in English when we had our synchronous meetings, and so there was still this sense of unevenness of languages, that I would have wanted there to be less of.

Felix’s students questioned why the GLOBE program had to be in English:

Everything was English and so my students asked me to make this assignment in Spanish. They said, “Oh no, professor. Why don’t [they] work in Spanish? They have to speak Spanish too. We don’t have very good level in English, so why don’t they make an effort to speak Spanish?”

Fabio had to organize his teams and create a team leader who spoke English in order to address the communication issues around English as the primary language:

Because not all the students can write in English, and not all the students can speak English, so we integrate the teams with one leader, who can deliver information the other couldn’t do. And this way, we can get and gap the difference in language.

***Different time schedules.*** Sixty percent of the participants (12 out of 20) reported that the different time schedules between the U.S. and Mexican universities inhibited the GLOBE program and impacted cross-cultural understanding. In many instances, the U.S. and Mexico campuses have different semester start and finish times and varying lengths of weeks per semester. For Chad, the different university timetables presented a challenge:

One of the challenges, I think, was the timetables that we have. For example, I teach in the mornings and [my partner] her classes were in the afternoons and nights. So, for me, that was the most difficult part in the way that we couldn't make, for example, a synchronic class, and that would be great if we could do it... [So] a specific class with a specific schedule and a specific timetable. For me, it would be great ... the same hours, for example, to work together. For me, that would be a perfect.

For Jane, coordinating the different timing of the institutions presented a challenge for the GLOBE program:

A lot of it depends on just the institutional timing of when—because we start and stop at different times, so it's trying to find that common time that works for both of our needs. And since we have to meet such different institutional SLOs, trying to do that and appease both universities are an interesting fit.

Katie also stated that “another inhibition would be scheduling ... because my students would say, I wish we can have a class at the same day, same time.”

For Ben, the timing of the classes was an inhibitor: “I would say time, on many different levels. Both the differences between the semesters, and the difference in day, time, hours and time, are all challenges.” For Walter, he discussed the time differences in light of cultural differences:

There are challenges of time differences. There are challenges of cultural differences. You know, we joke about Mexican time and Brazilian time, but that's a real thing, actually. You may know this. You know, if someone is—in the United States, five minutes is about what is considered late for a meeting. In Mexico, it's 15 minutes. So, you know, we had these deadlines set up. And the Mexicans and the Brazilians are much more

relaxed about deadlines, and so all of that was stuff that our students had to work through.

***Students' negative attitudes.*** Sixty percent of the participants (12 out of 20) stated that students' negative attitudes inhibited the ability to advance the program and promote cross-cultural understanding within the classroom.

*Lack of student motivation.* Roxanne stated that a mismatch between students can promote a negative attitude that can inhibit the process:

The [students in Mexico] ... were engineering students, and that ended up being a big, big problem because they didn't even want to participate in most of the activities. I think there was a lack of communication among the students, and I think my students got frustrated because they couldn't connect with the students in [Mexico], and I let my students off the hook to some degree because that was not their fault, so I let them do their project as best they could and made allowances when grading because it wasn't their fault. So, I think that it just was not a good connection with a very different interest in industries, and for some reason, it just did not come together.

Maggie talked about how students' negative attitudes regarding the balance of teamwork across countries can inhibit the process:

Factors that inhibit it is when the students get caught in the cycle of, well, the other students are not doing what they're supposed to do, you know... and that becomes kind of like a self-fulfilling kind of thing. Like, we're doing our job, but they're not doing theirs. And inevitably in those situations, the other students are saying the same thing. So, there's some kind of ... misfire in those instances and trying to figure that out is very difficult.... So, building the relationships between the students is an important factor for success, and when it doesn't happen, it's, you know, a factor for difficulty.

Leo stated that, in the future, he will select students who are committed to participate in the cross-cultural experience unlike his recent GLOBE class of graduating seniors:

When [the seniors] knew that English was necessary this time, for my course, many of them dropped out.... I will never do it with the ... students at the last semester, because most of them are already working, they have a job, and they are not willing to be in my class because my class is getting hard.... Therefore, I will never ... do it in the last semester because I need the commitment of the students to the hard work that this will imply.

Felix shared how his students were "disappointed because they wanted to work together":

I think they felt somehow disappointed because they wanted to work together. And some groups from [the U.S. campus] didn't answer their messages. So, [my students] feel like [the U.S. students] are not into this activity so I'm not going to work with them. And the rest of my students, they were like, "Oh okay, it's okay." It was a good experience. I have both experiences. Some of them think that it was a very good one, and some of them said that it was terrible because they cannot answer, or they cannot communicate each other.

One focus group participant stated that in an ideal world, the GLOBE module would be an optional class to avoid difficult students who are not interested in the cross-cultural component of the course:

I've noticed that some American students, there's not very many, but there are some students who are very rigid, and ... it's difficult to get them to buy-in, and so they act out. Every little problem that comes along, they kind of blow it up. In an ideal world [GLOBE] would be considered an optional class, so you'd have people who all want to buy into that.

***Additional adult educator workload.*** Forty-five percent of the participants (9 out of 20) stated that the additional workload for the adult educator was an inhibitor to the program and to achieving cross-cultural understanding. Maggie stated that given the limited time in the semesters, adult educators must decide which topics and content to eliminate in order to make space for an eight-week GLOBE module within a given semester:

And the other challenge is, what are you going to—what are you going to give up in your course to do this project, because you've got to give up something. Something's got to go. You can't—you know what I mean? You can't cover everything. You can't do everything if you're going to spend eight weeks on this, you know. That's kind of like, what are you going to—how are you going to do that?

Leo stated that [GLOBE] is a lot more work for professors and students. He detailed some of the additional work elements:

First of all, you have to be working very well in advance with the professor. Probably, it's not the same, or it is a different subject. You have to do it every time that you plan to do this, to prepare a syllabus as the syllabus must be agreed with somebody else, it takes time to go back and forth to reach an agreement. Then, the problem that you have to get, to reserve a room with all the facilities. To plan the [GLOBE] course is hard work. In

addition, I'm so nervous to teach, even in [Mexico], you know how we like to be teaching in [the U.S.], so that makes me frightened and fearful.

For Debra, the GLOBE module was a lot of extra work that she had to complete during her own time:

[GLOBE is] a lot of extra hours on top of the teaching—which it was really—like, it was evenings or weekends. And you know, like, us professors, we tend to overwork. And that sometimes is not a good thing ... [and the extra time was spent] collaborating, yes coordinating ... all that.

A focus group participant stated how the GLOBE program is a real commitment on the part of the faculty who take on this extra work with little or no compensation in return.

Also, for the faculty to not be supported. ... Like, that they aren't given any time for the professional development to develop the collaboration, like, you know, release time, or no, I mean, our faculty aren't given release time and they don't get any stipend, but GLOBE has given some travel opportunities to have some professional development, and that really helps our faculty get a little carrot for what they're doing, so without any kind of carrot, our faculty doesn't see what's in it for them, and so we don't—unless they have the heart, which is what someone said, which a lot of people do, but they still can't get it together.

**Technology challenges.** Thirty-five percent of the participants (7 out of 20) discussed how technology issues impacted the program and inhibited cross-cultural understanding.

*Too many technologies.* Mary stated that requiring the students to use several different technologies can be an impediment to learning:

Here would be an inhibitor. Our students use the learning management system. Other students use the learning—like, sending students to a variety of places just becomes very cumbersome. So, I think that that's—unless it's kind of a natural flow, that really—the more we can limit that, the better. [The student] feedback said, “It was just another place to go, and sign in and click, and do stuff,” so the fewer places they could do that, the better, I think, for them. ... And I get it, because it was another place for me to go, too, so that was difficult, and you forgot.

For Katie, technology was an inhibitor: “Yeah. Definitely technology. I must emphasize technology ... we need to really broaden access.”



*Limited Internet bandwidth.* For Leo, in Mexico, “the Internet is very slow, we don’t have the same bandwidth as [the U.S. campus], so that makes some problems.” Annie stated in Mexico, “the challenge is the technology.” Omar discussed how the technology in Mexico can inhibit the cross-cultural understanding:

Being online in the campus I work [in Mexico], it presents difficulties with the technology. We had difficulties with the connection systems ... as a teacher, as a professor, I have good infrastructure, good connections ... to the internet, but the students don’t have that kind of connection with that quality.... The videos, sometimes, are long, and they are heavy with respect to the data, they had to upload to the internet. Many of my students told me the connection is not possible, I have to leave my house.... It was one of the most important difficulties I had. In fact, the first online sessions, we suffered many disconnections through the sessions, the beginning and the final.

Katie stated that technology and the Internet were a challenge for her partner’s campus in Mexico:

On our ... [U.S.] campus, it’s better, but [my partner] told us that, you know, their Wi-Fi connection is not consistent throughout the campus, so that’s actually the most common complaints that I get from my students as well. Do you know what I mean—like students [at the Mexico campus], not all of them have a computer at home, so they can only work at school. So that’s a little bit more difficult.

Catalina agreed that there were “a lot of technology issues” but opined that the students should view the technology challenges as a life lesson in dealing with frustration:

[It] may [not] be perfect, but they have to achieve a goal, so they have to learn how to pass those barriers because sometimes the things are more difficult, and you have to learn how to face that, and that teaches you how to also work with frustration. If the computer or the thing or the activity you have done is not working as you thought it would because the internet is having problems, how do you achieve the goal of doing the activity, [fixing] that problem without saying, “Well, I’ll throw everything away.”

Accordingly, participants cited a number of factors that were inhibitors to the program and to achieving cross-cultural understanding, among them, language differences, different time schedules, students’ negative attitude, additional work for the adult educator, and technology challenges.

Based on the foregoing, participants highlighted five significant areas that facilitated cross-cultural understanding: collegial relationship with their partner; technology benefits; students' positive attitudes; and support from their institution. Conversely, participants identified five inhibitors that impacted cross-cultural understanding: language differences among students; different time schedules; students' negative attitudes; additional workload for the adult educator, and finally, technology challenges.

### **Summary of the Findings Chapters**

Chapters IV and V provided a discussion of the four major findings that emerged from the interviews that were conducted with participants from both Mexico and the United States. In addition, the researcher supplemented the data by conducting a focus group. The data were further supplemented by a review of documents relevant to this topic.

The researcher began this discussion by examining the preferences adult educators described with respect to teaching modalities. This was followed by an overview of the key activities that adult educators engage in to promote cross-cultural understanding of different cultures: icebreaker activities, project work in international teams, and international campus visits by adult educators and students. Next, the researcher described how the participants learned to promote cross-cultural understanding by engaging in, among other things, dialogue with others, experiential learning, formal learning, research and reading, and trial and error. Finally, the researcher examined those factors that facilitated and/or inhibited the GLOBE program and cross-cultural understanding as reported by the participants.

The first finding revealed that most participants believed that blended technology was the most flexible teaching modality. It provided the best of both worlds by providing

face-to-face engagement while supplementing the course with online activities beyond the regularly scheduled class time. Further, participants reported mixed perceptions of online teaching, where some participants found it more difficult, while others appreciated the flexibility of online teaching. Despite that difference of opinion, many participants agreed that online teaching is a necessary option and an important teaching modality on today's campuses. Finally, some participants found that face-to-face teaching was an ideal mode of learning that benefitted the entire class and offered some students a greater sense of security.

The second finding of this study established that all of the participants engaged students in icebreaker activities to promote cultural awareness. Almost all of the participants placed the students in international teams to conduct project work as a way to develop cross-cultural appreciation. A majority of adult educators visited a partner campus to deepen their understanding of their partner's university, the students, and the culture. The findings also showed that for those students who participated in an international campus visit, there was an increased awareness, appreciation, and understanding across cultures.

The third finding established that all participants engaged in dialogue with others as a primary way to learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding. This was followed by experiential learning, where participants drew on their past experience or reflected on their current experience. A majority of the participants engaged in formal learning by traveling to a GLOBE-sponsored workshop in Mexico and by participating in an online GLOBE training program. Further, 50% of the participants engaged in individual research and reading to supplement their course work and content for students. Finally, a number of participants explained how they used trial and error in order to improve their teaching around cross-cultural understanding and to improve future collaborations.

The fourth and final finding described those factors that facilitated and/or inhibited the GLOBE program and impacted cross-cultural understanding. A significant facilitating factor was the collegial relationship between the international partner teachers. This was followed by technology facilitators, students' positive attitudes, and the support of one's institution. Conversely, participants discussed those factors that inhibited the program and impacted cross-cultural understanding, among them, the language differences; the different time schedules; the students' negative attitudes; the additional adult educator workload, and, finally, technology challenges.

Next, the researcher organized these findings within the four-research questions in order address the key issue of this study: How do adult educators promote cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and understanding within a blended global education program? The responses to that question are organized in Table 9.

Table 9. Analytic Categories for How Adult Educators Promoted Cross-Cultural Understanding Among Students

Research Question	Findings Statement	Analytic Categories Adult educators promoted cross-cultural understanding by:
How do adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?	A majority of the participants (65%) indicated that a blended format was the most flexible teaching modality.	Using a blended teaching format to connect students across cultures.
What activities do adult educators engage in within a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?	All participants (100%) stated that they had their students engage in icebreakers to promote cultural awareness; 95% engaged the students in project work in teams to develop cross-cultural appreciation	Engaging students in activities to foster awareness, appreciation and advocacy of self and others across cultures.

Table 9 (continued)

Research Question	Findings Statement	Analytic Categories Adult educators promoted cross-cultural understanding by:
How do adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?	All participants (100%) indicated that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding through dialogue with others while 95% learned by drawing on their past experience.	Meeting the diverse needs of their students; conveying academic content; and understanding and applying technology.
What factors facilitate and/or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?	An overwhelming number of participants (95%) stated that the collegial relationship with their partner adult educator facilitated cross-cultural understanding; while 75% indicated that language was a barrier to those practices.	

## Chapter VI

### ANALYSIS, SYNTHESIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

#### **Introduction**

##### **Purpose**

This interpretative case study explored with 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico, the cross-cultural practices they used to create an environment within a blended global education program that fostered learning and collaboration among students from two different cultures.

To carry out the purpose of this research, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How do adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?
2. What activities do adult educators engage in within a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?
3. How do adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?
4. What factors facilitate and/or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?

The four research questions were addressed by the findings as detailed in Chapters IV and Chapter V.

## Findings

1. A majority of the participants (65%) indicated that a blended format was the most flexible teaching modality.
2. All participants (100%) stated that they had their students engage in icebreakers to promote cultural awareness, and 95% engaged the students in project work in international teams to promote cross-cultural understanding.
3. All participants (100%) indicated that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding through discussions with colleagues, while 95% learned by drawing on their past experience.
4. An overwhelming number of participants (95%) stated that the collegial relationship with their partner adult educator facilitated cross-cultural understanding, while 75% indicated that language was a barrier to those practices.

This chapter discusses the analytic and interpretative insights gleaned as a result of the findings in Chapters IV and V. The researcher is aware that these findings are just a microcosm of what the participants said about their experience in the GLOBE program and how they promoted understanding across cultures. As such, the researcher has supplemented the findings with the participants' summarized data in order to identify possible categories that may impact future theory and practice.

In Chapters IV and V, the findings are provided as a narrative glimpse of the participants' statements organized by each research questions. In this chapter, the researcher will present a more detailed and integrated view of the research data. The three analytic categories identified at the conclusion of findings chapter are as follows: Adult educators promoted cross-cultural understanding by:

1. Using a blended teaching format to connect students across cultures;

2. Engaging students in activities to foster awareness, appreciation, and advocacy of self and others across cultures; and
3. Meeting the diverse needs of their students, conveying academic content, and understanding and applying technology.

The three analytic categories provided the researcher with a framework to explore and uncover deeper meaning within the findings. This chapter is organized around the analytic categories, followed by a discussion of the findings as they relate to each category.

After a discussion of the interpretation of the findings, the researcher will return to the assumptions underlying this study as detailed in Chapter I and close by offering contributions to the literature and the field.

### **Categorical Groupings**

The researcher explored with 20 adult educators their perceptions of how to promote cross-cultural understanding in a blended global environment between students from different countries. Throughout the interviews, the participants spoke openly about their experiences in creating, collaborating, and co-teaching a GLOBE module with their international partner. In response to the research questions, the participants exhibited a variety of insights and characteristics. Based on the foregoing, the researcher created three specific categories: Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators, placing the participants in groups according to those similarities. Below is a table establishing the distribution of participants across the three categories.



Table 10. Categorical Groupings of Participants (N = 20)

<b>Connectors (5)</b>	<b>Communicators (11)</b>	<b>Collaborators (4)</b>
Felix	Josh	Walter
Chad	Katie	Maggie
Margarita	Mary	Kara
Olivia	Annie	Leo
Ben	Jane	
	Catalina	
	Debra	
	Omar	
	Roxanne	
	Amy	
	Fabio	

These three categories—Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators—emerged as a result of the qualitative data collected throughout the 20 interviews. These categories are limited to the data collected at the time, and as such, are only a snapshot of the participants’ learning journey at a particular juncture of their experience teaching the GLOBE module. Therefore, it is possible that a participant might show up in a different category had additional or alternative methods of data collection been conducted over an extended period of time. Each category is described below and was used to analyze how adult educators promoted cross-cultural understanding among students from two different cultures.

### **Connectors**

Connectors are those adult educators who focus primarily on the cultural connection between the students to generate awareness across cultures. They have limited icebreakers and limited team project work. They do not engage as fully with their colleagues for a variety of reasons. Factors that are barriers to the program are often left unchallenged.

**Communicators**

Communicators are those adult educators who focus on engaging in project work that develops an appreciation across cultures. Like Communicators, Collaborators engage the students in a cultural connection, but they also emphasize the academic content in order to challenge the students' perspectives and develop an appreciation across cultures. Communicators dialogue with their partners to brainstorm on creative and challenging projects that promote a deeper appreciation across cultures. Communicators find creative ways to facilitate the program and manage to effectively navigate barriers that challenge the program. In sum, the Communicators engage the students in substantive cross-cultural project work, encourage the students to communicate with one another, and monitor how the course is meeting the student learning objective, the needs of the students, and their professional goals as adult educators.

**Collaborators**

Collaborators embody the characteristics of the Connectors and Communicators but take the GLOBE program, their partner relationship, and the cross-cultural connection to a greater level of collaboration and understanding. Collaborators use technology in creative ways and work with their partners to develop collaborative activities that challenge assumptions and create new perspectives. Collaborators also find creative ways to learn new content either by working with colleagues or through their own research. Collaborators are cultural risk takers who use the GLOBE program to give their students a competitive global advantage. Collaborators use the available resources to facilitate the cultural agenda and overcome any barriers to success by brainstorming creative alternatives. Finally, Collaborators, unlike the other two, provide the students with an opportunity to personally experience a different culture. In brief, Collaborators ensure that they meet their course objectives, they engage the students in compelling work that directly addresses stereotypes and prejudice, they address discomfort, and they promote a level of student engagement that results in campus visits.

In connection with these three groups, the researcher reviewed the demographic inventory—age, gender, race, country of origin, primary language, highest level of education, years teaching, full-time status, and previous international online collaborations—in order to identify any patterns or similarities based upon these data. In some instances, the demographic data indicated certain patterns in the Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators that will be discussed in further detail.

The researcher notes that the individuals in each group are not permanently fixed in that category. In certain instances and based on additional experiences, a participant can move from one group to another. For example, if a Connector subsequently participated in multiple GLOBE modules, engaged the students in more challenging topics and used technology more creatively, he or she could move toward the Communicator or even the Collaborator category.

## **Analysis**

### **Analytic Category 1: Using a Blended Global Teaching Format to Connect Students Across Cultures**

The first research question was designed to understand the adult educators' perceptions of different teaching modalities within a cross-cultural program. A majority of the participants indicated that a blended format was the most flexible teaching modality.

Using a blended learning format to connect students across cultures is a way to promote cross-cultural understanding among college students. When students are globally competent, they acquire a level of expertise and confidence when dealing with diversity and cultural differences (OECD/PISA, 2018). In that respect, most Connectors used blended technology to communicate effectively across cultures. However, for many Connectors, the use of technology and initial student exchange was the majority of the

cross-cultural relationship. Technology connections were often asynchronous, with no effort to accommodate the teaching schedule of the partner adult educator as well as enable the students from both cultures to have a synchronous session.

Communicators, on the other hand, used technology to increase the frequency of class meetings and to promote face-to-face connection and dialogue among the students. Some Communicators recognized the value of synchronous time and changed their class schedule to accommodate the partner campus and enable the students to use technology to have a face-to-face connection. Communicators also applied technology in creative ways to more fully engage the students' connections and level of dialogue.

Collaborators strategically leveraged face-to-face, online, and blended technology in varied ways to enable their students to have many points of contact. Collaborators were firmly committed to the value of synchronous time and scheduled their courses accordingly with their partner adult educators. In fact, some Collaborators deemed the synchronous time as "huge," a "tremendous addition to the class," and a "fantastic" way to allow the students to connect in real time to discuss team work. Most of the Collaborators indicated that face-to-face teaching was their preferred modality, and all of them conducted synchronous class session as part of their GLOBE session. Most of the Collaborators also took the time to have important reflection sessions with their students before and after a synchronous session.

Below is an evidence table demonstrating the technology activities by Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators.

Table 11. Differentiations in Using a Blended Global Teaching Format—  
Evidence Table 1

<b>Analytic Category 1: Using a Blended Global Teaching Format to Connect Students Across Cultures</b>		
Category	Participant	Comments
<p><b>Connectors</b></p> <p>Provided the students with initial connections and introductions with students from another culture and most had an asynchronous connection.</p>	Ben	Ben had a preference for asynchronous teaching and while synchronous class time has benefits, he did not think it necessary for a GLOBE module.
	Chad	Chad indicated a preference for synchronous time but only had asynchronous time with his U.S. partner. Chad made no effort to change the course schedule in order to facilitate a synchronous class session.
	Felix	Felix stated that if he were to do another GLOBE module, he would recommend synchronous time.
	Margarita	Margarita used a variety of technologies and scheduled some synchronous time for the students to share coursework.
	Olivia	Olivia did not have a synchronous component and the only way that could happen was if the Mexico students accommodated the U.S. students schedule.
<p><b>Communicators</b></p> <p>Recognized the value of synchronous time and changed their class schedule to accommodate the partner campus.</p> <p>Most Communicators were open to a wide range of technology that promoted cross-cultural awareness, appreciation understanding.</p>	Josh	Josh has taught 8 GLOBE modules and is conversant in technology. Josh selects any technology that best meets the needs of the students, the adult educators and supports the class objectives.
	Katie	Katie believed that a blended class is advantageous over just online and face-to-face because she can virtually connect with her GLOBE partner, and her students still receive the benefit of her presence in the classroom.
	Mary	Mary described that blended technology was the best of both worlds because it allowed her to engage the students beyond the classroom by providing continuous conversation and extended learning.
	Annie	Annie used a mix of different technologies for both online and in-class sessions to maximize student time with the U.S. partner class
	Jane	Jane discussed how blended technology enabled the students from different countries to connect online while allowing her to be physically present in the classroom for any students who might be uncomfortable in a cross-cultural situation.
	Catalina	Catalina believed in the value of synchronous time with the U.S. students and therefore changed her class schedule for the Mexican students to accommodate the U.S. schedule.
	Debra	Debra needed the synchronous connection because her course content of movement and dance required the students from two different countries to have real-time connection during the classes.

Table 11 (continued)

Category	Participant	Comments
<b>Communicators</b> (cont.)	Omar	Omar's students had many challenges with the synchronous connection but often rearranged their class to accommodate any technology problems.
	Roxanne	Roxanne believed that blended learning is advantageous because it offers more flexibility and independence for the student.
	Amy	Amy's class was partially online and partially face to face, she used Skype to enable the two classes to have synchronous time to work together on projects.
	Fabio	Fabio was new to a blended teaching format and he used the face-to-face time to dialogue with his students and the online component to exchange information with the GLOBE partner class.
<b>Collaborators</b>  Although some Collaborators were not as technically versed as most Communicators, they used a blended learning format to increase the frequency of class meetings and to promote face-to-face connection and dialogue among the students	Walter	Walter stated that the synchronous part of the collaboration was one of the most successful elements of the partnership.
	Maggie	Maggie organized her class to allow the students to have 30 minute in-class synchronous time each week to connect with their partners
	Kara	Kara used a blended collaboration with her Mexican partner and arranged for the students to meet synchronously in order to converse, eat ethnic food, observe presentations and engage in dialogue.
	Leo	Leo's preference was for face-to-face teaching, so he took additional time to prepare in order to be successful in an online blended environment with his U.S partner.

### **Analytic Category 2: Engaging Students in Activities to Foster Awareness, Appreciation, and Advocacy of Self and Others Across Cultures**

The second research question was designed to understand those activities the adult educators used, in a blended global environment, to engage the students to foster awareness, appreciation, and advocacy of self and others across cultures. In this category, the adult educators were specifically asked about the cross-cultural activities, how they were implemented, and in what ways they promoted cross-cultural understanding among students from different cultures. The purpose of engaging students in activities in blended

education was to foster cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and understanding of self and others.

**Icebreaker.** Within each group, the Connectors, the Communicators, and the Collaborators all engaged in some form of activity or activities to promote cross-cultural learning. While all adult educators engaged in icebreaker activities to promote cultural awareness, the type of icebreaker and the level of student involvement varied greatly.

Most Connectors organized only one student icebreaker, and it typically involved a general video exchange with basic information. Some Connectors stated that fun and friendship were the primary goal of the icebreaker. The Communicators, unlike the Connectors, generally introduced more than one icebreaker with their students and partner class. Also, Communicators and Collaborators engaged in a variety of creative icebreakers in order to break down barriers and establish common ground. A number of the Communicators and Collaborators talked about using the icebreakers to promote a safe space for the students and address any fear of language or judgment. In contrast to Connectors, many Communicators and Collaborators purposely designed icebreakers to address cross-cultural fears and promote dialogue and foster a collaboration among the students.

**Project work in teams.** Almost all of the groups had the students engage in cross-cultural teams and complete an international project assignment. For those Connectors who had successful project work in teams, the assignments were limited in terms of the depth and breadth of building cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and understanding. The Communicators and Collaborators, on the other hand, generally provided more in-depth team activities that generated substantive work product and pushed the students to a greater appreciation and understanding of others.

Many of the Communicators described themselves as academics and stressed the importance of the cross-cultural research and analysis as the way to promote global awareness. The Collaborators, however, were the only group, among all of the adult

educators, who each had a terminal degree. The Collaborators predominantly organized their course around the GLOBE student learning objectives and followed the plan closely.

Both the Communicators and Collaborators actively used the international project work to have students engage in research and analysis across cultures to challenge perceptions and create new perspectives. They encouraged students to engage in team negotiation in order to achieve a greater appreciation of cultural differences.

**Campus visits.** A majority of the Connectors did not participate in a campus visit, and only two of the Connectors hosted a campus visit. Also, three of the Connectors did not attend the formal training program in Mexico. Only one Connector had a reciprocal campus visit, where he hosted and visited a partner campus.

In contrast, all of the Communicators and Collaborators engaged in some type of campus visit activity, either hosting a colleague or visiting a partner campus, with most participating in both activities. Further, a number of Communicators and Collaborators engaged in multiple visits to the same partner campus or multiple visits to different campuses. For example, Josh, a Communicator, visited three different campuses and hosted two partner visits to his campus over eight different GLOBE programs.

Many participants provided rich detail regarding their international campus visit. Unlike Connectors, who engaged in little cross-cultural campus activity, the Communicators and Collaborators visited with students and faculty, gave presentations, met with college administrators, and engaged in some form of socialization as part of the international campus visit. Most Communicators and Collaborators shared how they were able to directly engage with their partner's students to gain insight and feedback on the GLOBE module and share information about their own students back home. After each international visit, all of the Communicators and Collaborators returned to their home campus and shared the cross-cultural experience with their students with other stakeholders.



Based on the foregoing, all three groups used the activities to promote awareness, develop appreciation, and deepen understanding of self and others across cultures, but to varying degrees and varying results. Table 12 provides evidence of the differences in how each group engaged the students in activities to foster collaboration and understanding of self and others.

Table 12. Differences in Engagement of Student Activities—Evidence Table 2

<b>Engaging Students in Activities to Foster Awareness, Appreciation and Advocacy of Self and Others across Cultures.</b>		
<b>Icebreaker, Project Team Work and International Campus Visits</b>		
Category	Participant	Comments
<b>Connectors</b>  Used limited activities to connect the students across cultures to promote awareness across cultures.	Ben	Ben was one of the few adult educators who did not participate in a campus visit.
	Chad	Chad’s first GLOBE experience and the entire program was asynchronous because of class schedules and therefore almost all of his students conducted their international teamwork outside of regularly scheduled class time.
	Felix	Felix’s first GLOBE experience and his students failed to successfully complete any team activity
	Margarita	Margarita’s first GLOBE experience and she never met her partner face-to-face.
	Olivia	Olivia was the only participant who did not place her students in cross-cultural teams.
<b>Communicators</b>  Used creative icebreakers and project work engage students in meaningful and research rich activities to develop appreciation across cultures	Josh	Josh participated in 8 GLOBE modules and stated that campus visits and icebreakers were the most important activities to foster awareness and develop appreciation.
	Katie	Katie and her partner from Mexico are self-described academics who have partnered several times. Together they designed a creative module around the food industry and several different cultures.
	Mary	Mary and her partner created unique icebreakers and developed a compelling international problem to compel the students to negotiate around cultural differences.
	Annie	Annie and her U.S. partner instructor have worked together on multiple GLOBE projects each time adding new content and structure to the activities to deepen the level of awareness and appreciation across cultures.
	Jane	Jane and her Mexican partner consciously created a safe space for students to facilitate the icebreakers and the project work to build cultural competencies.

Table 12 (continued)

Category	Participant	Comments
<b>Communicators</b> (continued)	Catalina	Catalina’s students initially voiced that the Americans were “better” than the Mexicans but as a result of her project work and team engagement, the students had a better appreciation for the Americans and a better perspective of their own worldview.
	Debra	Debra and her partner combined dance with chemistry to engage students from different disciplines to generate awareness of new subject matter within a cross-cultural context.
	Fabio	Fabio has engaged in three GLOBE collaborations around business and medical technology and has observed how these activities have changed his students’ perspective of Americans.
	Roxanne	Roxanne and her partner had students research various leaders across different industries and co-deliver final presentations to develop an appreciation of business leaders across cultures.
	Amy	Amy and her U.S. partner have conducted multiple GLOBE sessions together and have students research global issues around drug abuse and sustainability and engage in negotiations to manage project deadlines to develop an appreciation across cultures.
	Omar	Omar and his U.S. partner worked hard to combine two very different academic disciplines across cultures to create a compelling team project around art and science. Omar spent time with his students before and after each activity to ensure that the students were comfortable in the engagement process.
<b>Collaborators</b>  Used creative, collaborative and compelling activities to enable the students to gain a deeper understanding across cultures and personally participate in a cultural exchange	Walter	Walter explained how the international student campus visits deepened the students’ understanding across cultures and experience insights about humankind.
	Maggie	Maggie shared how the international student campus visit was amazing and the level of student academic and social cross-cultural interaction was significant.
	Kara	Kara’s international student campus visit was significant because the Mexican student who came to her U.S. class had never left her village before and the GLOBE program made a dream come true.
	Leo	Leo had four students visit the U.S. and he said it was an important experience for the students and they were able their GLOBE trip with his students and the campus at large

### **Analytic Category 3: Meeting the Diverse Needs of Their Students; Conveying Academic Content and Understanding and Applying Technology**

This analytical category was created to analyze two research questions—how adult educators learn to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs

(research question 3) and what factors facilitate or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within a blended global format (research question 4).

**How adult educators learn.** In research question 3, adult educators were asked how they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs. In this analytic category, the three groups met the diverse needs of their students, conveyed academic content, and learned to understand and apply technology in a variety of ways by learning through both informal and formal education.

*Dialogue with others.* One of the primary ways in which all three groups learned how to promote cross-cultural understanding was through some form of dialogue. All of the GLOBE adult educators engaged in some form of dialogue with others, including peers, students, and support staff, in order to promote awareness, appreciation, and cross-cultural understanding between students in the U.S. and Mexico.

Prior to the semester, all of the Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators actively communicated with their partner adult educators to design and develop the content for the GLOBE module. Throughout the semester, all three groups continued to engage in informal dialogue. Most of the Communicators and some of the Collaborators had regularly scheduled meetings to discuss the status of the project, while many across the three groups used technology to have spontaneous and immediate interaction.

While all of the adult educators engaged in at least some dialogue with students, it occurred to varying degrees. Most of the Communicators and all of the Collaborators engaged the students in various ways to solicit feedback and gain insight on the GLOBE module. Further, a number of Communicators and Collaborators informally reached out to the GLOBE staff and administrators for advice and insight on ideas and implementation of cross-cultural activities. Some of the Collaborators had an on-site GLOBE administrator who was readily available for informal dialogue and guidance with the GLOBE module.

***Experiential learning.*** For a majority of Connectors, this was their first GLOBE teaching experience and therefore had little experience to draw upon. Connectors such as Ben and Olivia, however, had at least some previous experience teaching online international courses and drew on their previous experiences in creating the GLOBE module for Mexico. In contrast, a majority of the Communicators and half of the Collaborators had experience in teaching more than one GLOBE module in Latin America or in other geographies around the world, including China, Lebanon, the Netherlands, and England, among others. Specifically, eight Communicators and two Collaborators had previous GLOBE experience, and these participants shared how they often relied on this experience as a meaningful way to reframe future student lessons.

Unlike the Connectors, the Communicators and Collaborators appeared to embrace Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning. With the icebreakers and cross-cultural project teamwork, it was the Communicators and Collaborators who pushed the students to fully embrace each concrete experience of icebreakers and international project work (CE) "fully, openly, and without bias." Communicators and Collaborators also used reflective observations (RO) to encourage their students to create new perspectives about the different cultures. Next, the Communicators and Collaborators facilitated an environment to encourage their students to use observations as a way to abstractly conceptualize (AC) ideas, negotiate, and interact with their team partners. Finally, the Communicators and the Collaborators encouraged their students to use these abilities to actively experiment (AE) with their cross-cultural partners to create projects and substantive academic work across cultures (Kolb, 1984).

For the Collaborators, in particular, the international campus visits for the adult educators and students promoted a greater sense of cross-cultural understanding across Kolb's four abilities (Kolb 1984).

These research results are aligned with the experiential learning literature in that they describe how learning from experience is a cognitive process that occurs in formal,

informal, and incidental learning environments and is meaningful and sustainable when individuals critically reflect on the experience (Kolb, 1984; Marsick et al., 2010).

**Formal learning.** Data showed that a significant number of participants engaged in a formal GLOBE learning program. This type of formal learning program is consistent with adult learning that is organized, curriculum-driven, and provides students with tangible evidence of completion (Merriam & Caffarella, 2007). Only two of the Connectors participated in a formal GLOBE education program, while 100% of the Communicators and 75% of the Collaborators attended a formal GLOBE workshop in Mexico.

During the formal GLOBE learning program, those participants that engaged in a multi-day workshop with lectures and assignments each received a certificate of completion. Two Communicators attended the formal program twice, first as a student and then as a mentor. Many of the Communicators attributed the formal learning program as instrumental in helping them create and deliver a successful GLOBE module.

**Reading and research.** Most of the Communicators and a few the Collaborators engaged in some form of solitary research and reading in order to be knowledgeable about the academic content or to learn a new technology. While most Connectors did not mention engaging in independent research, the researcher observed that most Connectors were partnered on topics in which they were subject matter experts, and/or they used widespread technology that did not require additional research. On the other hand, the Communicators appeared to be the most studious and academically focused of the three groups. Seven Communicators reported that they engaged in independent research. Oftentimes, this scholarly group discussed how they worked with their partners to divide the academic and technology research and communicated the results with one another.

This finding is consistent with literature on self-directed learning where there are two components, an instructional component and a personality component (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). The Communicators were instrumental in research and reading that

often appeared to be driven by their personality and the desire to take ownership of their learning (Brockett & Hiemstra, 1991). As for the Collaborators, only two individuals in this group reported that they conducted independent research on both academic information and technology options.

***Trial and error.*** Finally, three of the Communicators and one of the Collaborators specifically mentioned how trial and error was an important element in learning how to adjust and meet student needs, convey the academic content, and deal with technology issues. This is consistent with the theory of single- and double-loop learning as described by Argyris and Schön (1974, 1978). In this context, the Communicators and Collaborators who discussed trial and error detected problems in their current approach and adjusted future implementations accordingly. Two Communicators and one Collaborator who had previously taught GLOBE modules used single- and double-loop learning to impact their GLOBE module teaching.

***Factors that facilitated/inhibited.*** In research question 4, adult educators were asked what factors facilitated and/or inhibited the program and the level of cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format. Analytic category 3 seeks to understand how the facilitating factors helped and the inhibiting factors impacted the three groups and their ability to meet the diverse needs of their students, convey academic content, and understand and apply technology.

***Facilitating factors.*** The participants identified the following facilitating factors: collegial relationship, technology, students' positive attitudes, and institutional support. Across all three groups—Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators—identified the collegial relationship with their partner as most the significant factor that facilitated the GLOBE experience and promoted cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and understanding. Only one Connector failed to identify the partnership as instrumental in the program success, and on a related note, it is the same Connector who stated that the students failed to successfully complete any project work. A significant number of

Communicators and Collaborators mentioned that the collegial partnership was one of the primary reasons for the success of the GLOBE program and key to promoting cross-cultural understanding.

Nine of the Communicators and one Collaborator identified technology as a facilitating factor. Three Collaborators did not mention technology as a facilitator, yet all of them relied on contemporary technology to connect the students synchronously. For many, in particular the Collaborators, students' positive attitudes facilitated the program and the cross-cultural learning process. Finally, six Communicators and three Collaborators highlighted institutional support as a key facilitator for the program. It is interesting to note that only one Connector commented on the institutional support as a facilitator.

***Inhibiting factors.*** Conversely, the participants had a wide range of factors that inhibited the program, among them, language differences, different time schedules, additional work for the adult educator, and technology challenges. Across all three groups, certain adult educators identified language as a barrier to the success of the program. It is interesting to note that the five adult educators who did not say language was a barrier—two Connectors, one Communicator, and two Collaborators—had all participated in previous GLOBE modules.

Less than half of the participants identified the extra workload as an inhibiting factor. Two Connectors, five Communicators, and only one Collaborator saw this effort as extra work beyond their regularly scheduled coursework. For technology, seven people, one Collaborator and six Communicators, all stated that technology was an inhibitor. The six Communicators who said technology was an inhibitor also expressed that technology was a benefit. These individuals generally expressed the benefits of technology to facilitate the program, but also shared specific instances where technology breakdowns impacted the process and the program.

### **Summary of Analysis**

The findings were categorized according to three analytic categories. Based on the interviews, the researcher created three broad groups—Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators—as a way to distinguish the participants against the three analytic categories.

The first analytic category was to understand how adult educators promoted cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and understanding by using a blended teaching format to connect students across cultures and is related to question 1. Communicators and Collaborators, as opposed to Connectors, routinely used technology, in particular, synchronous technology, to generate awareness and develop appreciation across cultures.

The second analytic category was to understand those activities the adult educators used, in a blended global environment, to engage the students to foster awareness, appreciation, and advocacy of self and others across cultures. Here, the Communicators routinely focused on connecting the students and building a collaborative academic environment to promote cross-cultural awareness and appreciation. It was the Collaborators, however, who used the icebreakers, project activities, and international campus visits to achieve a level of advocacy regarding the level of cross-cultural understanding.

Finally, the third analytic category was how adult educators promoted cross-cultural understanding by meeting the diverse needs of their students, conveying academic content, and understanding and applying technology. This analytic category applied to research questions 3 and 4. All three groups engaged in dialogue with others, in particular, their partner adult educators and their students. Also, across the three groups, a variety of individuals found creative ways to facilitate the program and managed to effectively navigate barriers that challenged the program.



## Interpretation

The researcher has collected rich data across 20 interviews that has been analyzed across three different groups within three analytic categories. The researcher now offers interpretations of the data based upon her opinion, including any influences of her own GLOBE experience along with references to the literature as rationale where appropriate. The interpretations are discussed below in light of the three analytic categories.

### **Analytic Category 1: Using a Blended Global Teaching Format to Connect Students Across Cultures**

**Blended learning—A benefit and a burden.** Blended global education is an exciting approach to teaching that is transforming the way students learn and adult educators teach, as evidenced by its growing presence on campuses. Not only is it proliferating, but it is “an instructional model shift” that is impacting schools and universities on a global basis (Powell et al., 2015).

This qualitative research, however, revealed that the blended technology aspect of the GLOBE program was a double-edged sword, as many participants found it to be both a benefit and a burden. Thirteen participants across the three groups of Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators stated that technology was a benefit to the program. Yet, seven individuals (six Communicators and one Collaborator) stated that technology was an inhibitor to the program. It is interesting to note that the same six Communicators stated that technology was both a benefit and a burden. One Communicator described the technology conflict by stating that while she had excellent technology support and great bandwidth on her campus, the requirement for students to learn an additional technology was burdensome. Here, it appears that these six Communicators recognized the strategic nature of blended learning and how it facilitated the program but were vocal about their high standards around technology and their expectation that their lectures ran smoothly and efficiently.

**Power distance across cultures—Connecting classes in synchronous time.**

Across all three groups, most individuals praised the impact of a synchronous class session between the two countries. Some of the Connectors, most of the Communicators, and all of the Collaborators engaged in some form of synchronous connection with their students. A total of six participants (two Communicators, three Collaborators, and one Crusader) discussed that class schedules had to be accommodated to enable students to meet simultaneously. It is important to note that all six participants, from both the U.S. and Mexico, indicated that it was the Mexican students and professors who changed their class schedule in order to accommodate the U.S. students' class time.

This scheduling imbalance speaks to Hofstede's (1986) "power distance" in cultures, simply defined as the "extent to which the less powerful persons in a society accept inequality in power and consider it normal" (p. 307). Hofstede et al. (2010) further define power distance as the "extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally" (p. 61). Institutions include society and schools, among other entities. The researcher sees two different power dimensions at play: power distance across cultures and power distance within cultures.

***Power distance across cultures.*** There appears to be a society power distance between the Mexico and the U.S. Hofstede (2011) states that "all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others" (p. 9). Here, it appears that the U.S. has greater authority to impose on the Mexican adult educators to change their class schedule and that Mexico accepts that uneven distribution of power. One Collaborator shared how his Mexican counterpart complained about the time change, but this Collaborator did not indicate that he ever tried to change his U.S. class schedule to accommodate his Mexican colleague. Another Collaborator stated that the synchronous connection was so important for their team work, but it was her Mexican partner who took the responsibility to change his students' class schedule in order to accommodate her U.S. students.

Throughout the interviews, there was no evidence that any U.S. class changed their class schedule to accommodate the Mexican students. Yet, a number of Mexican participants commented on how they had to change their entire class schedule to accommodate their U.S. partners.

***Power distance within cultures.*** Contrary to power distance across cultures, the research presents another type of power distance, that is, “within” cultures. Here, it appears that Mexico adult educators have greater power over their students within their culture than the U.S. adult educators have over U.S. students. Hofstede et al. (2010) discuss how culture impacts the power-distance within the classroom.

A large-power-distance indicates that in certain cultures, there is greater teacher-student inequality, teachers are treated with respect and even feared, the classroom is teacher-centric, students do not criticize or contradict teachers and generally follow the teacher’s orders without question (Hofstede et al., 2010).

In a small-power-distance environment, in certain cultures, classes are student-centered, and students are often treated as equals with the teachers. Students can argue with teachers, openly disagree, and even publicly criticize the teacher in front of the whole class (Hofstede et al., 2010).

Based on the foregoing, it appears that Mexican adult educators, from a cultural perspective, have a large-power-distance over their students and, as such, have the authority to compel their students to arrive early or stay late to attend a synchronous class with the U.S. students. Indeed, several Collaborators stated how they told their students to arrive on campus at 7:00 a.m. or stay on campus two hours after class in order to have a synchronous session with the U.S. students.

Conversely, from a cultural standpoint, there is a small-power-distance between the U.S. adult educators and students. Accordingly, the U.S. adult educators simply do not have the same level of authority as the Mexican adult educators to direct their students to attend a class outside of the regular course schedule. Indeed, the researcher, in her own

experience, had an evening class and asked the students to change their schedule to conduct a synchronous session with Mexico. In return, the students would have an abbreviated evening class to compensate for the alternate class time. Most students were not accommodating, and the researcher had no legitimate authority to compel the students otherwise.

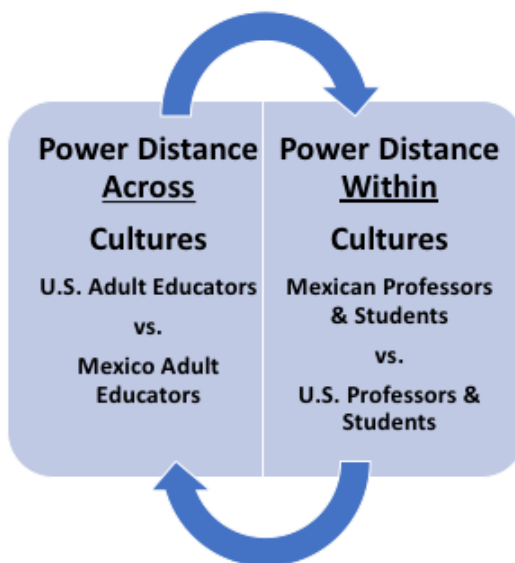


Figure 5. Power Distance Across Cultures and Within Cultures

Accordingly, from a societal standpoint, while it may appear that U.S. has greater power over Mexico because of schedule changes, the researcher believes the opposite appears to be true. Perhaps the real reason the Mexican classes are changed to a different time is because the Mexican adult educators have greater power over their students. From a cultural standpoint, Mexican adult educators can compel the students to change their schedule, the students will listen, and the teacher will not be criticized. In the U.S., however, it is the adult educators who have less power over their students. Due to cultural differences, it appears that most U.S. adult educators would be unsuccessful in arranging an alternate class time and perhaps even be publicly criticized by their students for imposing such a requirement. As for the Collaborators from the U.S., given their strong

partnership with their Mexican counterparts, there is not enough data to determine whether they discussed rearranging their student schedule to accommodate Mexico.

### **Analytic Category 2: Engaging Students in Activities to Foster Awareness, Appreciation, and Advocacy of Self and Others Across Cultures**

Despite the various ways that the Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators implemented their activities, all of the groups used a combination of icebreakers and project work in conjunction with campus visits to foster collaboration and promote and understanding of self and others. The core of the GLOBE program is to use technology to promote the social and academic interaction among students from different cultures to enable students to achieve a greater appreciation of cultural diversity.

**Global competence.** The OECD/PISA 2018 Global Competence Framework states that a globally competent student is one who “can examine local, global and intercultural issues, understand and appreciate different worldviews, interact successfully with others, and take responsible action toward sustainability and collective well-being” (p. 4). This global framework presumes that students will gain knowledge, skills, and attitudes about cultural issues that can result in a change in attitudes and values around global issues (OECD/PISA, 2018). Here, the GLOBE module provides a vehicle for adult educators to help students achieve global competence and to become more productive and knowledgeable citizens in a global economy.

In order to develop globally competent students, the adult educators need a level of global competence that includes, among other things, knowledge of the world, a level of sensitivity to cultural differences, and the ability to develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes in their students (NAFSA, 2015). The globally competent teacher integrates international dimensions in the classroom, engages the student to learn in creative ways, and promotes a positive environment for cross-cultural interaction (Soppelsa & Manise, 2015).

**Intercultural sensitivity.** In addition to gaining global competence, adult educators in cross-cultural programs can provide students with the opportunity to acquire knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can move a student's perceptions toward greater cultural understanding about themselves and others. This is similar to what Bennett (2014) describes as the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity, where individuals move along a continuum from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism and have a change in perspective that leads to greater intercultural sensitivity.

**Aspects of cross-cultural understanding.** In the context of cross-cultural analysis, the concepts of culture fall into many different categories and are not easily discernable between right or wrong and often times overlap in perspective (Minkov, 2013). Here, the research established that the adult educators used a variety of cross-cultural practices within a blended global education to achieve varying levels of cross-cultural understanding for their students. As such, the data revealed that the term "cross-cultural understanding" is too broad to adequately describe the degree to which these adult educators achieved various level of understanding across cultures. Many words and concepts are often used interchangeably to describe understanding across cultures, among them, cultural diversity, competence, capabilities, appreciation, awareness, knowledge, sensitivity, and values. Indeed, Minkov (2013) states that culture "can be whatever a scholar decides it should be. What we need not is single best definition of culture.... Researchers need to explain how they propose to measure culture in accordance with their conceptualization, diverse as they may be" (p. 9).

Here, based upon the data, the researcher examines the Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators along three specific aspects: cultural awareness, cultural appreciation, and cultural advocacy. Awareness is defined as the "state of being aware, knowledge or understanding that something is happening" (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). Thus, cultural awareness is generally defined as a change in one's attitudes and values about another culture (Adams, 1995). Appreciation is generally defined as a

“feeling or expression of admiration, approval or gratitude” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). Cultural appreciation can thus be interpreted as a feeling of admiration and approval of another culture. Finally, advocacy is defined as “the act or process of supporting a cause or proposal” (*Merriam-Webster Dictionary*). Cultural advocacy then, in this context, is the act or process of supporting cross-cultural interaction as a way to further cross-cultural understanding.

Below is a diagram that organizes the data within the researcher’s categories of cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and advocacy as they relate to the three groups of Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators. As noted, in certain instances, a participant can move from one category to another based upon additional GLOBE partnerships, more substantive academic content, and a more creative use of technology. The data for this diagram are explained in Appendix O.

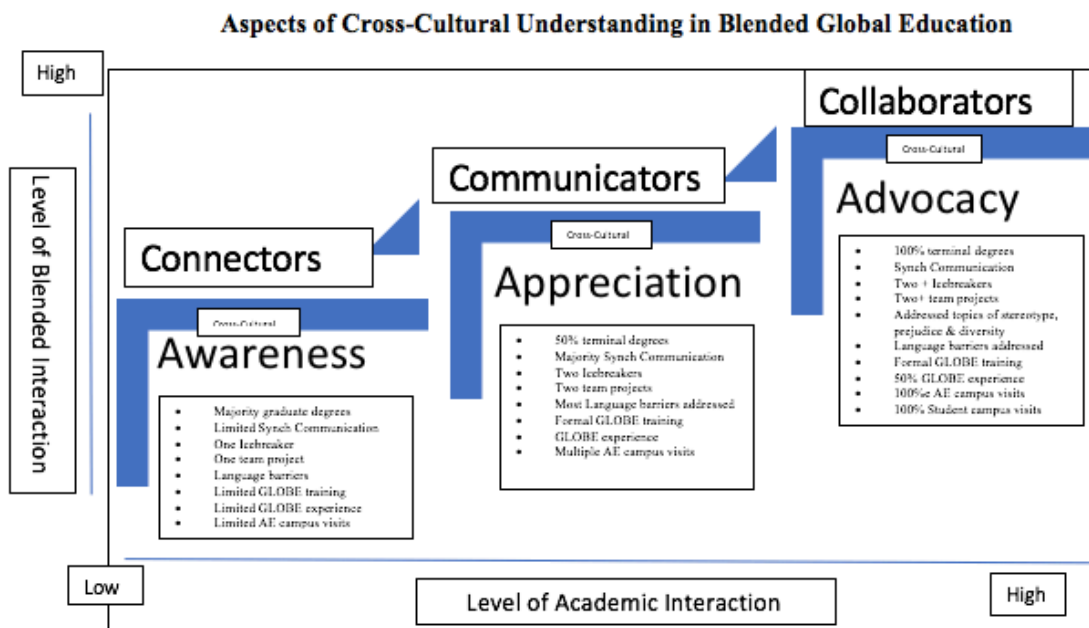


Figure 6. Aspects of Cross-Cultural Understanding in Blended Global Education

Based on the foregoing, the researcher examined certain GLOBE factors, among them, the icebreakers used, the international teamwork, instructor and student international campus visits, the technology connection, and language barriers in conjunction with the adult educators' education and experience in cross-cultural teaching to determine if there was a relationship between these factors and the level of global competence among adult educators and the students. These data are then viewed in light of the OECD/PISA Global Competence Framework (2018) and Bennett's Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (1986, 1993a, 1993b, 2014).

The following table details those factors across the three groups and organizes the data according to learning activities in conjunction with adult educators' backgrounds and in light of the OECD/Pisa Model, the Bennett Model, and the researcher's model of Aspects of Cross-Cultural Understanding in Blended Global Education.

Table 13. GLOBE Factors, Practices, Level of Cross-Cultural Understanding Across Three Models

Category	Connectors (5)	Communicators (11)	Collaborators (4)
<b>Adult Educator Factors</b>			
Attended Formal Learning in Mexico	(2) Yes (3) No	(11) Yes	(3) Yes
Highest Level of Education	(4) Masters (1) Doctorate	(5) Doctorates (6) Masters	(4) Doctorates
More than one experience teaching international online courses (GLOBE and Non-GLOBE)	(2) Yes (3) No	(8) Yes (3) No	(2) Yes (2) No
<b>Cross-Cultural Learning Activities</b>			
Icebreakers	On average (1) icebreaker	On average (2) icebreakers	On average (2) icebreakers that involved issues around stereotypes and ethnocentrism.
Project Work	(3) team projects (1) individual (1) did not complete	(11) Team projects	(4) Team projects
Campus Visit	(2) Adult educator campus visits	(11) Adult educator campus visits	(3) Adult educator campus visits (4) Student campus visits



Table 13 (continued)


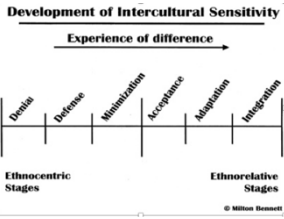
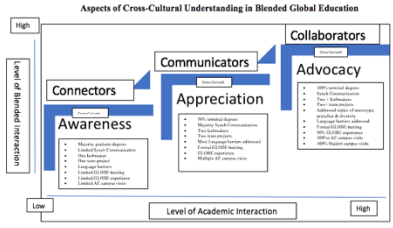
Category	Connectors (5)	Communicators (11)	Collaborators (4)
<b>Cross-Cultural Learning Activities (continued)</b>			
Use of Technology	(3) Async (2) Synch & Async	(4) Async (7) Synch & Async	(4) Synch & Async
Language Issues	(3) Language barrier (2) No language barrier	(10) Language barrier (1) No language barrier	(2) Language barrier (2) No language barrier
<b>Degrees of Cross-Cultural Understanding</b>			
<p>OECD/PISA Global Competence Framework</p>  <p>Reprinted from “PISA 2018 Global Competence” Reprinted with Permission from OECD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine local, global and intercultural issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine local, global and intercultural issues</li> <li>Appreciate the perspectives of others</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examine local, global and intercultural issues</li> <li>Understand and appreciate the perspective and world view of others</li> <li>Engage in open and appropriate and effective interactions across cultures</li> <li>Take action for collective well-being and sustainable development</li> </ul>
<p>Bennett DMIS Model Development of Intercultural Sensitivity</p>  <p>Bennett, M.J. (2014) Reprinted with permission</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defense</li> <li>Minimization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defense</li> <li>Minimization</li> <li>Acceptance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Defense</li> <li>Minimization</li> <li>Acceptance</li> <li>Adaptation</li> </ul>

Table 13 (continued)

Category	Connectors (5)	Communicators(11)	Collaborators (4)
<b>Researcher Aspects of Cross-Cultural Understanding in GLOBE</b>			
Researcher Model of Aspects of Cross-Cultural Understanding in Blended Global Education  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Awareness</li> <li>• Cultural Appreciation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural Awareness</li> <li>• Cultural Appreciation</li> <li>• Cultural Advocacy</li> </ul>
Gironda 2019			

**Connectors and cultural awareness.** While some Connectors perceived that their students may have achieved a level of cross-cultural understanding, the research indicates that the level of understanding appears to be less than the other two groups. First, most Connectors only engaged the students in one icebreaker. Second, Connectors were the only group that did not have all of the students engage in international teamwork. Indeed, the only participant who failed to create cross-cultural project teams was a Connector. Third, only two Connectors had previous experience teaching an online international class. Fourth and final, all of the Connectors expressed a level of difficulty in completing all of the assignments. The Connectors expressed a variety of reasons for the difficulty in completing the cross-cultural assignments, among them, language barriers, technology challenges, different class schedules, student anxiety and even lack of interest of some of the teams. In point of fact, the Connectors were the only group where an adult educator acknowledged that his students failed to successfully complete any team activity, citing a number of the above-mentioned reasons. When asked if the GLOBE students achieved a level of cross-cultural understanding, one Connector responded:

Not really, no not really. I think the language was a big barrier.... And for the [U.S.] group as well because they didn't speak Spanish. So, it was kind of complicated how to communicate with each other ... one of the bad things ... [my Mexican students] don't have a good level of English. For that reason, I think they cannot work together. I think that inhibits all their assignments.

Another Connector thought the GLOBE program was valuable but stated that the "immaturity of [her] students" impacted certain aspects of the cross-cultural exchange. A third Connector was enthusiastic about the GLOBE program but discussed his students' anxiety about conversing in another language. In his opinion, a synchronous class session would have been better, but his students were "really, really ... frightened about the idea to interact with students ... in another language." A fourth Connector noted that "Mexican students are more flexible ... and American students are more closed ... to open differences" when it came to changing schedules in order to have a synchronous session. One Connector shared how the partner GLOBE students simply stopped responding and how his students were disappointed:

I think [my students] felt somehow disappointed because they wanted to work together. And some groups from [the partner class] didn't answer their messages. So, [my students] feel like they are not into this activity so I'm not going to work with them.

Finally, another Connector was asked his perceptions of the students' cross-cultural understanding, and he responded:

Some of them put in more and got more, and some of them put in, not quite so much. I understand I'm working with an average population and didn't get as much out of it. So that doesn't surprise me but, generally, the students who invested more time and effort into it got more insight out of it.

Based upon the Connectors' responses, it appears that language issues, different time schedules, synchronous capability, and the level of student involvement were all factors that had an impact on the ability to foster collaboration and enhance the students' awareness, appreciation, and advocacy across cultures.

It is the researcher's opinion that for some of the Connectors, it was the lack of formal GLOBE education program and their inexperience as GLOBE adult educators that had the most impact on their ability to move their students beyond a cultural awareness and toward a level of cultural appreciation.

As such, it appears that Connectors might benefit from what Drago-Severson (2008) calls the "Four Pillars for Adult Learning," that is, four factors that can influence adult learners. Specifically, the "four pillars of practice" include teaming, leadership roles, collegial inquiry, and mentoring as the means to provide a support infrastructure to help adult learners manage the challenges of teaching (Drago-Severson, 2008). The GLOBE module, by its nature, adds a level of complexity to an adult educator's course. Providing first-time adult educators, or those who have not attended the formal program, with greater access to mentorship and collegial dialogue with other GLOBE adult educators may add a level of assistance that makes for a more globally competent teacher within the cross-cultural classroom.

Notwithstanding, it is noteworthy that all the Connectors stated that the GLOBE program was a worthwhile experience and that despite certain challenges, they believed their students achieved a measure of awareness across cultures. In terms of OECD/PISA Global Competence Framework (2018), it appears that the Connectors were able to examine local, global, and intercultural issues, if even at a minimal level.

Also, it appears, even with the minimal cross-cultural interaction, the GLOBE program had an impact on the students' ethnocentrism. As one Connector stated:

Okay, some of the things that were good was they know that my students will work with other students abroad. So, I think that was the most motivating reason to work with this GLOBE course because they wanted to know other people, you know? To know other cultures, so they were excited about it. They were really excited. I think it was the most interesting thing for them. They told me, "Oh yeah, okay. It's great. It's a good idea. Yes, I want to do it," they told me.

Bennett (2014) defines an ethnocentric viewpoint as avoiding the differences in culture with an orientation toward denial of the other cultures and defense of one's own culture. Exposure to different cultures can move individuals toward "Minimization," which is a recognition that one's own culture has universal similarities with another culture. Individuals, in effect, minimize the differences between cultures, and as such, there is a transition from ethnocentrism toward ethnorelativism (Bennett, 2014). Overall, the Connectors shared that the GLOBE program was a worthwhile experience because it exposed their students to a different culture and that it was a positive and worthwhile experience.

Turning to the researcher's model of Aspects of Cross-Cultural Understanding in Blended Global Education, the data show that the Connectors achieved a level of cross-cultural awareness—that is, a change in one's attitudes and values about another culture. As one Connector noted, by becoming aware of another culture, her students were able to change their negative perception into a positive reaction:

I don't like to say it like this—but sometimes like in Mexico you can think that they're going to say, well, the Americans are able to do everything better than we are. At the end, I think that they found out—my students found out that they could do the same, or they were able—that their learning was in the same level, speaking of an economic objective, not about the English, but even with this advantage of the language, they were able to be in the same level as the other students.

Another Connector stated that initially her students did not want to interact with students from Mexico, but after only six weeks her students became aware of Mexico and changed their perceptions: "And at the end, the [U.S. students] are really very happy. At the end, they say, 'I learned a lot of things, and Mexicans are great, and I want to come to Mexico. It's a great country, and there are great people.'" Further, one Connector stated that his students experienced a "bit of a cultural awakening experience" to learn that many Mexican students were "more cosmopolitan than the [U.S.] students." Finally, another

Connector stated that everyone has some kind of “prejudice,” but the GLOBE program was “enriching” and the teachers and the students learn something about themselves.

By engaging the students in the GLOBE program, even at a minimum, the adult educators were able to generate a level of cross-cultural awareness that influenced the students’ perceptions of another culture and changed their opinions in a positive way.

**Communicators and cultural appreciation.** Turning to the Communicators, these participants generally perceived that their students achieved a level of cross-cultural appreciation based on the activities and exercises provided by the adult educator. In looking at the data, it appears that most Communicators conducted two icebreakers, or one icebreaker activity divided into two exercises. Second, all Communicators had students engage in international teamwork and conduct research and analysis on cross-cultural issues. Third, all Communicators attended the formal learning program in Mexico. Fourth, every Communicator participated in a campus visit. Fifth, at least seven of the eleven Communicators had experience in teaching more than one online class across cultures. Sixth, a majority of Communicators had some synchronous class time where the U.S. and Mexico students engaged in real-time discussion and collaboration.

Lastly, every Communicator engaged their students in some kind of feedback or reflection sessions. Most of the Communicators had a formal reflection assignment, paper, journal, or survey. One Communicator had his students share their reflections on Facebook so that others could post a response. In addition to an electronic survey, one Communicator and her partner adult educator conducted an in-class reflection during the campus visit. Another Communicator’s students submitted reflection papers and completed a Google survey. A number of Communicators have presented at conferences or have written papers about the value and the impact of the GLOBE program on their students. Many Communicators gave specific examples or “aha moments” of how this GLOBE module, in their opinion, changed their students’ perspective of another culture.

Based upon the foregoing, it appears that the Communicators embrace some of the characteristics of globally competent teachers, that is, creating a positive environment for cross-cultural interaction and engaging the students in collaborative course work. The Communicators engaged students in meaningful activities that fostered collaboration and promoted an understanding of self and others. As a result, based upon the adult educators' perceptions, it appears that some students may have gained a level of global competence, in particular, appreciation of another culture, as noted in the OECD/PISA Global Competence Framework (2018).

It also appears that the Communicators achieved a level of "Acceptance" as identified in Bennett's DMIS model (2014), which generally includes a positive attitude toward another culture and the ability to acknowledge people from different cultures as equally human. As one Communicator noted, the GLOBE work is important because everyone discovers "some sort of universal component of human life." Another Communicator stated that "at the end, all students, they are the same ... Mexicans, Americans, Canadians. They are all the same at the end. They are humans."

In terms of cross-cultural appreciation, the data established that a number of adult educators enabled their students to achieve a feeling of admiration and approval of another culture. One Communicator stated that she and her GLOBE partner "changed their [students'] view—their points of view—not just about culture, but about the problems" across countries and that the students learned that "cannot judge any culture"; they must "contribute to humanity ... to open their minds" about the world and different cultures.

**Collaborators and cultural advocacy.** The Collaborators as a group perceived that their activities and exercises promoted cross-cultural understanding. Based upon the substance of their course work and their student campus visits, it appears that Collaborators as a group, may have had the greatest impact in fostering collaboration and promoting cross-cultural understanding among students from different cultures.

First, like the Communicators, the Collaborators conducted at least two icebreakers, or one icebreaker activity divided into two exercises prior to the main research project. The difference, however, is that all four Collaborators used icebreakers to address cultural stereotypes. Two Collaborators specifically discussed issues around ethnocentrism and cultural relativism and its impact on stereotypes and bias. All Collaborators used the synchronous class time to manage the sensitive topics around the icebreakers. Further, all Collaborators used technology to creatively facilitate the stereotype discussion, including cartoon software to poke fun at cultural stereotypes and Facebook to learn more about culture and language differences. Most Collaborators acknowledged the inherent risk in using stereotypes to break the ice across cultures, but they took the challenge and agreed that it was worth the effort to foster collaboration and for students to gain insight about themselves and others. One Collaborator stated how an icebreaker around stereotypes was risky:

Then the next thing that we did was—they had to do a presentation on stereotypes. Which was a little risky. They each had to put down what are the stereotypes that we have of the other culture. So they had to put down stereotypes that Americans have of Mexican people, which—and I kept—you know, I emphasized to them, you know, be mindful that we don't want to hurt any feelings and we don't want to be insulting, but at the same time, let's be as honest as we can because it will be interesting to see how these stereotypes get, you know—how you see that they're not true.

On an interesting note, the data showed that the Collaborators were the only group where all the adult educators had terminal degrees, and the researcher thinks this may be a factor in their confidence to tackle tough issues and subjects across cultures.

Turning to the project work, like the Communicators, Collaborators engaged their students in international teamwork and conducted research and analysis on cross-cultural issues. The Collaborators' projects, however, were often grounded in important global issues. One Collaborator's students studied climate change and sustainability and had the opportunity to meet with an important governmental contact on conscious capitalism.



Two Collaborators engaged the students in important and substantive topics around strengthening economic and political relations between the two countries. One Collaborator stated that “the students had [to find] the area of disagreement and then, using what they’ve learned in their respective classes, come up with ways to transform areas of disagreement into constructive engagement.” Another Collaborator has extensive GLOBE experience and recently mentored a number of GLOBE collaborations where students explored important topics from both a U.S. and Mexican perspective.

As for the campus visits, an important distinction is that the Collaborators had both adult educator and student campus visits. Seventy-five percent of the Collaborators visited a partner campus, and all of the Collaborators hosted a campus visit. Further, each Collaborator had the opportunity for his/her students to visit the partner campus or host students on their campus, with 50% of the Collaborators both hosting and visiting. All Collaborators stated in sum and substance, that the student visits were an important contribution in promoting student cross-cultural understanding. One Collaborator participated in two campus visits to Mexico. First, she traveled on her own to meet her partner. The second time, she accompanied her students on a visit to her partner’s university in Mexico. This same Collaborator also hosted her partner adult educator from Mexico and several of his students at her U.S. campus. Two Collaborators had a contingent of Mexican students visit their U.S. campus. Interestingly, both Collaborators described the student visits with the exact same word—”awesome.”

Collectively, the Collaborators had strong opinions about the value of the student campus visit. Unlike the Connectors and the Communicators, the Collaborators voluntarily shared how the student campus visit was a significant factor in promoting cross-cultural understanding among their students. When one Collaborator found out that there was only enough funding for U.S. students to visit Mexico and not vice-versa, she advocated for Mexico to receive funding and let the administration know that this imbalance was unfair. As a result of the Collaborator’s dissatisfaction and comments

regarding the imbalance, additional monies were obtained to secure a reciprocal student visit. Another Collaborator was successful in arranging for a number of students travel to the U.S. and visit the partner campus.

Moreover, like the Communicators, most of the Collaborators attended the formal learning program in Mexico, and two adult educators had previous international online teaching experience. Finally, all Collaborators engaged their students in some form of reflection sessions, and some had multiple reflection sessions, including before and after the partnership synchronous sessions. The Collaborators reported that their student reflections indicated that their students engaged in activities that fostered collaboration and a greater understanding of self and others.

Based on the foregoing, it appears that Collaborators, as a group, demonstrated the greatest level of capacity as globally competent adult educators. Collaborators appeared to demonstrate a number of characteristics of the globally competent teacher, in particular, knowledge of critical global issues, an awareness of intercultural sensitivity, and engaging the students in creative and real-life global opportunities (NAFSA, 2015; Soppelsa & Manise, 2015). This is supported by the Collaborators' substantive content in both the icebreakers and the activities, their synchronous class sessions with their partner class, along with their formal training, educational background, reflection sessions, and in particular, the student campus visits. As a result of these activities and exercises, it appears that the Collaborators promoted a greater level of student cross-cultural understanding as compared to the Connectors and Communicators.

Based on the Collaborators' perceptions, it appears that these students acquired the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve a greater level of global competence as defined in the OECD/PISA Global Competence Framework (2018), specifically, engaging in "open and appropriate and effective interactions across cultures" and "taking action for collective well-being."

A key difference for the Collaborators is that, based upon the international campus visit and the direct personal engagement with students from other cultures, the Collaborators' students may have gained a level of intercultural sensitivity as defined by Bennett's (2014) DMIS model. Indeed, based on the Collaborators' comments and perceptions, it is possible that some students may have had a shift in perspective about another culture that is similar to what Mezirow (1991) describes as a perspective transformation.

Lastly, the research showed the Collaborators as a group were essentially the biggest supporters and believers in the GLOBE, and hence earned the level of cultivating cross-cultural advocacy. The Collaborators advocated for the purpose of the program, challenged stereotypes, and addressed the sensitive topic of prejudice. They were committed to their partner in terms of developing a robust program with meaningful content. Finally, they were strong advocates that the students should participate in international campus visits because the adult educators personally observed how that event impacted their students' awareness and appreciation of another culture.

Based on the foregoing, it appears that the nature and substance of the activities in conjunction with the technology used, along with the adult educators' background, GLOBE training and experience can make a difference in an adult educator's level of global competence, that in turn promotes varying levels of cross-cultural understanding for students.

### **Analytic Category 3: Meeting the Diverse Needs of the Their Students; Conveying Academic Content and Understanding and Applying Technology**

Analytic category 3 examines both adult learning and factors that facilitated and inhibited the program. The research established that those adult educators who organized their GLOBE module to meet the diverse needs of their students, in particular, language barriers and creating a safe space for students, achieved a higher level of understanding across cultures. Further, the data overwhelmingly established that the collegial GLOBE

partnership between adult educators was the single most significant factor in facilitating a successful collaboration.

**Understanding language barriers.** The research showed that working in cross-cultural teams can promote diversity, break down barriers, challenge stereotypes, and promote cultural understanding; however, cultural differences can impact team performance. Within the GLOBE context, many adult educators discussed how cultural differences, in particular language difficulties, impacted the team's comfort level. Although the formal language of the program is English, many Mexican adult educators recognized that that language was "a barrier," "biggest challenge," it affected "confidence," it impacted the "safety," and was a source of "embarrassment" for the Mexican students, causing them to feel insecure. Several Mexican adult educators indicated that their students were uncomfortable with their level of conversational English. Indeed, one Connector indicated that his students were not confident enough in their English skills to participate in a synchronous session. Identifying team psychological safety issues within the U.S. and Mexico teams can provide many benefits, among them, the freedom to speak up and reduce embarrassment, the opportunity to promote innovation and creativity, and the means to reduce conflict and achieve outcomes (Edmonson, 2012).

Some adult educators, in particular, Communicators and Collaborators, organized their teams to distribute the bilingual students accordingly. One Collaborator organized a "cultural buddy" to help students ease any fear about working across cultures. Another Collaborator worked with her partner to use technology to have the U.S. students listen to what English sounds like to a non-native speaker, and conversely Mexican students listened to what Spanish sounds like to a non-native speaker. The students then had to write a reflection on that experience as a way to bring change to their behavior. Finally, another Collaborator strategically placed bilingual students in different groups in order directly address any language barrier issues:

And in this case, because it was Mexico, I had several students that were fluent in Spanish. So what I did was I scattered them across the teams so that as many teams as possible had someone who was fluent in Spanish. And I saw—like, in one team, I saw the student who was fluent in Spanish doing a lot of translating. I saw him doing that.

Some Mexican participants shared how some of their students complained that the U.S. students made no effort to speak Spanish. Some U.S. adult educators, however, of their own accord, required their students to respond in Spanish and to use technology to help with the translation if necessary. One Communicator stated that even though some Mexican students initially felt “inferior” due to the language differences, they met the challenge, and by the end of the GLOBE module, the students realized they were of the same caliber as the U.S. students.

Based on the foregoing, it is the researcher’s opinion that the U.S. adult educators and U.S. students should make the effort to speak at least some level of conversational Spanish in order to promote greater team psychological safety across cultures.

**Key to success—Collegial GLOBE partnerships.** Informal and formal learning, in connection with the Latin American culture, were key factors that facilitated the strong partnerships and the professional relationship between the teachers and in large part were the key to the success of the GLOBE program. A primary way that people engage in building relationships is by interacting, sharing information, and making emotional connections with one another. In an opinion piece in the *New York Times*, David Brooks (2019) discussed how putting relationship quality at the center of education can make a difference and motivate individuals to learn more and work harder. Brooks opined that students learn from people they love and that there is clearly a connection between emotional relationship and learning. Essentially, an emotional connection between people can spark learning:

Teachers really teach themselves—their contagious passion for their subjects and their students. It remind[s] us that children learn from people they love, and that love in that context means willing the good of another, and offering active care for the whole person. (p. 1)

Here, many participants pointed to the formal learning program as one the critical success factors to a successful program. The formal workshop became the springboard for the partners to get to know one another, which in turn deepened the dialogue and communication among the participants. In essence, the connection between the emotional relationship and the learning was ignited at the three-day formal training program (Brooks, 2019).

Dialogue, technology, and informal communication enabled the relationship to continue beyond the workshop, and for many it became a daily online conversation. For most individuals across the three groups, they used technology to communicate regularly. Given the nature of the GLOBE program, most participants found themselves in uncharted territory, using technology to teach students across countries within a single semester. The participants regularly engaged in a dialogue with their partner teachers in order to solve the challenges of the program. This is similar to what Drago-Severson (2008) calls “collegial dialogue” and a key way that adults learn to challenge ideas, make decisions, solve problems, and experience growth in an intellectual and emotional capacity.

The complexity of newly created course content, different schedules, different countries, and different languages all added to the challenge of meeting student needs, conveying academic content, and understanding technology. Across all three groups, the adult educators routinely discussed some type of technology mishap that required spontaneous and immediate attention. This approach is consistent with what Schön (1983) calls reflection-in-action, an event that requires an immediate fix while in the process of handling the matter.

This study shows strong support for fostering collegial GLOBE relationships for professional development around cross-cultural programs. As part of the formal trip to Mexico, many U.S. adult educators were given the option to visit their partner’s campus. The researcher believes that it was formal learning run by the GLOBE staff, the campus

visits, and continuous dialogue through technology that set the foundation for a sustainable collegial relationship.

In all three groups, the Connectors, the Communicators, and the Collaborators described how the collegial relationship was the most significant factor in promoting a successful collaboration. The stories were rich in detail about how the professional relationship blossomed into collegial partnerships. This phenomenon may be attributable to the cultural warmth of Mexico. That notion is supported by the cultural research, stated by Lewis (2006), that “Mexicans are extremely warm-hearted and hospitable people who are not slow to invite you into their homes where you will encounter strong family ties” (p. 533).

When the participants were asked what facilitated the GLOBE program, invariably the most immediate response was “the collegial relationship.” It was apparent that adult educators wanted the GLOBE program to be successful for their students, for themselves, and for their partners. For many participants, being selected for the GLOBE program, funded in part by the government, was a significant opportunity with prominent exposure on their campuses. For some participants, this was the first GLOBE partnership at their university, and the adult educators felt an obligation and responsibility to make the program a success.

The research established that the formal and informal GLOBE learning program was instrumental in fostering the collegial relationship. In some instances, the U.S. participants met the families of their partners. Three of the four Collaborators remarked on the value of the collegial relationship. One Collaborator stated that his collegial partnership with his Mexican counterpart was one of the most fulfilling aspects of the GLOBE collaboration. As part of the GLOBE program, this Collaborator spent an extended period of time in Latin America, where he deepened the academic bond with his Latin American colleagues. This Collaborator stated that he had a more meaningful professional and respectful relationship with his Latin American colleagues than with

many of his U.S. colleagues at his home campus. Another Collaborator stated that his friendship with his U.S. colleague made all the difference in their working relationship.

An overwhelming majority of the participants discussed that the collegial relationship with their partner was a highlight of the GLOBE experience. One Communicator shared how she met her partner on at least four occasions, and sometimes they brought their spouses to conferences or dinners. Another Communicator explained that her partnership initially had some challenges due to cultural differences around age and gender and became successful in large part due to her visit to his Mexican campus.

The researcher shares her own experience about working with her partner in Latin America. When visiting Mexico, she visited her partner adult educator's home, met his parents, and dined with his siblings. The researcher went to her partner's campus, met his students, and was escorted around the local community. When the researcher's partner came to U.S., he visited her class and presented to her students. Her GLOBE partner also stayed at her home, dined with her family, and went on a sightseeing tour of New York City. From the researcher's perspective, it was the initial warmth and hospitality of her Mexican GLOBE colleague that set the stage for a positive working relationship. For many of the participants, the success of the GLOBE program was grounded in the collegial relationship that was developed across cultures.

### **Summary of Interpretation**

The researcher made several broad interpretations about cross-cultural practices in blended global education. In analytic category 1, the researcher established that blended global learning is both a benefit and burden for the adult educators. While it enables the cross-cultural connection, it brings a level of complexity into the classroom that can make connection and content exchange challenging for both countries. Next, the researcher established that synchronous class time was a significant benefit in blended global learning because of the face-to-face engagement; however, in each instance, it was the



Mexican students who accommodated the U.S. class schedule. The researcher credits this to the cultural power difference between the countries. Mexico, unlike the U.S. adult educators, has a more teacher-centric classroom and therefore more authority over their students to mandate an alternate class schedule.

In analytic category 2, the researcher examined the nature of the student activities created by the adult educator and how those activities fostered awareness, appreciation, and advocacy of self and others across cultures. Looking at the quality and quantity of the activities in connection with an adult educator's background and experience, the researcher made certain interpretations. Specifically, the level of the globally competent teacher in turn influenced how the students acquired global competence and the degree to which they achieved a greater appreciation for intercultural sensitivity, leading to varying levels of cultural awareness, appreciation, and advocacy.

Finally, in analytic category 3, the researcher touched upon the notion of team psychological safety and how language barriers can impact team performance. The researcher also interpreted the data around the significance of the collegial relationship between the GLOBE partners. The data established that the collegial relationships provided a foundation for success and were nurtured by the formal GLOBE learning program and dialogue with each other.

### **Summary of Analysis and Interpretation**

In summary, the researcher organized the four research questions into three analytic categories for analysis and interpretation. The research established that three key groups—the Connectors, Communicators, and Collaborators—implemented cross-cultural practices in blended global education to varying degrees and varying results. The study showed that various implementations of blended technology can impact a student's learning. Further, the nature and substance of the activities, along with an adult

educator's global competence, can impact the level of cross-cultural understanding acquired by students. The research also showed that the GLOBE program and GLOBE adult educators should be mindful of the challenges associated with language proficiency and how that may impact the cross-cultural collaboration. Finally, the research established that enabling a positive professional work relationship across cultures is a powerful and meaningful way to create a cross-cultural program that is sustainable and successful.

### **Revisit Assumptions**

In Chapter I, the researcher made five assumptions regarding the research problem and the participants. Based upon findings and the analysis, the researcher will revisit the assumptions here.

The first assumption was that cross-cultural understanding can be achieved through blended global education. This assumption held true and supported the notion that blended global education is an important, viable, and economic way for students to connect across cultures and engage in cross-cultural understanding.

The second assumption was that technology and online international education can help students achieve the benefits of cross-cultural understanding by challenging ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice, and enabling students to appreciate diversity, global perspectives, and cultural learning differences. This assumption also held true in that the adult educators used technology to exchange academic content and build relationships through icebreakers and cross-cultural project work. As a result, the research showed that students were exposed to varying levels of ideas that challenged negative perceptions, such as ethnocentrism, stereotypes, and prejudice, and promoted greater understanding across cultures.

The third assumption was that adult educators would be interested in candidly sharing their teaching experiences in a cross-cultural blended program to improve future opportunities. This assumption was true in that all of the interviewees were candid about their GLOBE experience. They willingly and generously offered key insights, rich examples, and strong opinions about the program.

The fourth assumption was that the institutions, administrators, adult educators, and students would benefit from the participants' information, ideas, and advice for future GLOBE programs. This was also a valid assumption in that important insights about cross-cultural practices in blended global education were identified. The researcher believes that the institutions, administrators, adult educators, and students will benefit from the information gleaned in this study.

The fifth and final assumption was that language issues would not be a barrier to conducting candid interviews. This assumption also held true. There were no language issues or difficulties that occurred when the researcher was interviewing the Mexican participants.

### **Contributions to the Literature**

The researcher has made three contributions to the existing literature.

While blended learning is a force for connecting classrooms across cultures, the research showed that a synchronous connection in blended learning is a more advantageous option to promote cross-cultural understanding. By using synchronous technology to connect students from different cultures in a real-time, face-to-face capacity, students can engage in dialogue and have the opportunity to more effectively communicate, collaborate, and negotiate with their cross-cultural team members.

The research also established that an adult educator's experience as a globally competent instructor can impact the choice of student activities and make a difference in

the level of student awareness, appreciation, and understanding across cultures. The research showed that those activities that challenged stereotypes and prejudice in conjunction with student campus visits appeared to have the most influence on a student's ability to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of cultural diversity. The research also showed that adult educators' perceptions about language barriers, time differences, and student involvement are important considerations when creating a blended global program to promote cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and understanding.

The third and final contribution was that fostering partnerships between international partner adult educators from different countries can build authentic rapport and mutual respect, which in turn provides a stronger foundation for a meaningful cross-cultural program. Most of the adult educators identified the collegial GLOBE relationship grounded in regular dialogue and supplemented with the campus visit as a key reason for the success of the program. As such, the research shows that the collegial relationship within the blended learning program was an important and contributing factor to promoting cross-cultural understanding.

## Chapter VII

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

##### **Purpose**

This interpretive case study explored with 20 adult educators, 10 from the United States and 10 from Mexico, the cross-cultural practices they used to create an environment within a blended global education program that fosters learning and collaboration among students from two different cultures.

To carry out the purpose of this research, the following research questions were addressed:

1. How do adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format?
2. What activities do adult educators engage in within a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?
3. How do adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?
4. What factors facilitate and/or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?

## Conclusions

The researcher has drawn three conclusions as a result of this study.

### Conclusion 1

*The researcher concludes that blended global learning and teaching is a valuable and effective way to promote cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and advocacy and will become a more commonly used mode of how education is delivered.*

The researcher concluded that blended global learning provides an affordable and creative option to connect students from different cultures to promote cross-cultural understanding as it relates to a student's awareness, appreciation, advocacy, and understanding. When students from different cultures use technology in a real-time synchronous format, they have to opportunity to directly engage with peers from different cultures to discuss issues, exchange ideas, and collaborate on team projects. Synchronous blended learning, despite the technological challenges, enhances the students' learning by providing the opportunity to work directly with peers from another culture. In turn, the blended technology promotes social and academic interaction among students from different cultures to enable students to achieve a greater level of cultural diversity in a global economy.

### Conclusion 2

*Promoting cross-cultural understanding among students from different countries requires engaging students in a variety of activities, and the greater the interaction, the deeper the level of cross-cultural awareness, appreciation, and advocacy for the students and the adult educators.*

The researcher concludes that adult educators who engage students in cross-cultural activities that challenge stereotypes and expose prejudices achieve a greater level of cross-cultural understanding within the classroom. Further, providing international

teamwork that promotes collaborative efforts to research global issues across cultures enables students to gain global competence and achieve levels of cross-cultural awareness and appreciation, which leads to greater intercultural understanding. The researcher concludes that adult educators who provide compelling cross-cultural academic work, coupled with an international student campus visits, are compelling and significant factors in achieving global competence and moving students toward greater intercultural sensitivity.

### **Conclusion 3**

*The researcher concludes that success in blended global education programs is contingent upon establishing a collegial relationship with their GLOBE teaching partner.*

The researcher concludes that collegial GLOBE partnerships across cultures are a significant factor that can facilitate the success of a cross-cultural education program. Adult educators acknowledged that the new course content, the additional work, different schedules, different languages, technology challenges, and no direct compensation all added to the complexity of their course. Despite those challenges, the stories of all participants indicated that the collegial partnership sustained the desire to make the GLOBE collaboration a success.

### **Recommendations**

Blended global education is an effective and innovative way to connect students from different countries to foster collaboration and promote cross-cultural understanding. The researcher finds that there are recommendations for current GLOBE adult educators as well as GLOBE administrators.

**Recommendations for Current Adult Educators in Blended Global Programs**

1. All adult educators should work with their GLOBE program coordinators and the blended global teaching community at large to identify and evaluate technology options for synchronous class activity when working with students from other cultures.
2. All adult educators should look to use content in the icebreakers and project work that enables students to challenge stereotypes and biases in addition to learning about intercultural issues. As a means of processing the impact of the blended global experience, adult educators should engage students in reflective exercises to gain insights about self and others as they relate to cross-cultural understanding.
3. Adult educators should be mindful of certain barriers, such as language issues, different time schedules, and level of student involvement, when creating the international teams to promote collaboration and cross-cultural understanding.
4. Adding teaming, leadership options, collegial inquiry, and mentoring, as detailed by Drago-Severson's (2008) "Four Pillars of Support," can offer adult educators an infrastructure to improve their future international blended collaborations.

**Recommendations for Administrators in Blended Global Programs**

1. Administrators of blended global programs should consider expanding student visit options to the international partner campuses because they broaden the students' appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity.
2. Administrators should develop training programs to keep adult educators abreast of the latest technology options for blended global learning.
3. Administrators should create networking opportunities for online international adult educators to broaden their access to course content and technology options.



**Recommendations for Future Research**

1. First, due to the limited sample size of this interpretative case study, the researcher recommends a larger case study with GLOBE adult educators, instructional designers, staff, and program administrators to further expand and supplement the findings of this study.
2. A similar case study should be conducted encompassing other geographical locations where GLOBE partners participate in cross-cultural partnerships to assess the extent to which the research results are similar or different.
3. A larger scale research study should be conducted with similar international blended global programs across various geographies in order to ascertain if the research results are applicable.

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## Appendix A

## Demographic Inventory

To help understand how instructors use cross-cultural practices in blended global education, the following demographic data will be collected. All responses are confidential, information will not be shared, and each survey will be de-identified. Kindly answer each question with the answer that best describes you and fill in the blanks where indicated.

De-identifier Code: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is your age range: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Race or ethnic group: \_\_\_\_\_
4. What is your country of origin: \_\_\_\_\_
5. What is primary language: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Are you fluent in any other languages: \_\_\_\_\_ if so, what language(s)  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What is your highest level of education? \_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your area of academic concentration? \_\_\_\_\_
9. How many years have you been teaching at the college level? \_\_\_\_\_
10. What type of instructor are you: (full-time, part-time, adjunct) \_\_\_\_\_
11. Have you participated in a Global Learning Online Blended Education (GLOBE) program: \_\_\_\_ If so, what is the name of your GLOBE module/course:  
\_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix B

## Recruitment Script for Online and In-person Interviews

Dear NAME:

My name is Linda Gironda and I am a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University. I am conducting a research study examining *Cross-Cultural Practices in Blended Global Education* and you are invited to participate in the study.

As a participant in this qualitative study you will be asked to discuss your background and experience as an instructor in a blended global education program and the cross-cultural practices you have applied when teaching students in two different cultures.

If you agree, you are invited to participate in a demographic inventory and a semi-structured interview. The demographic inventory is anticipated to take no more than 5 minutes to complete and the semi-structured interview is anticipated to take no more than one hour and will be audio recorded.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. Your identity as a participant will be kept confidential and de-identified for both the demographic survey and the qualitative interview during and after the study.

If you have questions or would like to participate, please contact me at [lag2187@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:lag2187@tc.columbia.edu) or (914)-420-9709.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
Linda A. Gironda

Teachers College, Columbia University  
Status: Doctoral Candidate

## Appendix C

### Informed Consent

Teachers College, Columbia University  
525 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York NY 10027  
212 678 3000  
[www.tc.edu](http://www.tc.edu)

Protocol Title: **Cross-Cultural Practices in Blended Global Education**  
Principal Investigator: **Linda A. Gironda**  
(914)-420-9709, [lag2187@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:lag2187@tc.columbia.edu)

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

You are being invited to participate in this research study called “Cross-Cultural Practices in Blended Global Education”. You may qualify to take part in this research study because you have participated in a Global Learning Online Blended Education Program in the United States or Mexico. Approximately twenty people will participate in this study and it will take approximately one (1) hour of your time to complete.

#### **WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?**

This study is being done to understand the cross-cultural practices that instructors apply in blended global education.

#### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed by Ms. Linda Gironda, a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University. During the interview you will be asked to discuss your background and experience as an instructor in a blended global education program and the cross-cultural practices you applied when teaching students in two different cultures.

This interview will be audio recorded. After the audio recording is written down (transcribed) the audio recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will not be able to participate in this study. The semi-structured interview will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour. You will be given a pseudonym or false name and a de-identified code in order to keep your identity confidential.

You will also be asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire. This will take about 5 minutes. The interview will be conducted [in person] [online via Skype or Zoom or another mutually acceptable online technology]. This consent form will be signed [in person] [electronically]. The demographic data will be collected electronically in a system similar to Qualtrics.

**WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

This is a minimal risk study, which means that the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than what you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examination or tests. **However, you do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you don't want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.** I will take precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym or de-identified code instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

**WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no direct benefit to you for participation in this study. Participation may benefit the field of cross-cultural practices and blended global education programs.

**WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not be paid to participate and there are no costs to participate in this study.

**WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?**

The study is over when you have completed the interview. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven't finished.

**PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY**

The investigator will keep all written materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio recording will be written down and the audio recording will then be destroyed. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. De-identified codes will be used and the master list identifying the subject will be kept in a locked or password protected file and be kept separate from the list of codes

**HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?**

The results of this study will be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.

**CONSENT FOR AUDIO AND OR VIDEO RECORDING**

Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, (choose the correct sentence) you will still be able to participate in this study or you will not be able to participate in this research study.

**FIRST SIGNATURE:**

\_\_\_\_\_ I give my consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ I **do not** consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY****SECOND SIGNATURE:**

\_\_\_ I consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_ I **do not** consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

**OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT****THIRD SIGNATURE:**

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial Initial

I **do not** give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial Initial

**WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?**

**If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Linda Girona at (914)-420-9709 or [lag2187@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:lag2187@tc.columbia.edu)**

**If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email [IRB@tc.edu](mailto:IRB@tc.edu). Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.**

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Teachers College, Columbia University  
525 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York NY 10027  
212 678 3000  
[www.tc.edu](http://www.tc.edu)

**PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS**

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty to future medical care; employment; student status or grades; services that I would otherwise receive.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

**FOURTH SIGNATURE:**

**My signature means that I agree to participate in this study**

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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525 West 120<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York NY 10027  
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### **FOCUS GROUP INFORMED CONSENT**

Protocol Title: **Cross-Cultural Practices in Blended Global Education**

Principal Investigator: **Linda A. Gironda**

**(914)-420-9709, [lag2187@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:lag2187@tc.columbia.edu)**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

You are being invited to participate in this research study called “Cross-Cultural Practices in Blended Global Education”. You may qualify to take part in this research study because you have participated in a Global Learning Online Blended Education Program in the United States or Mexico. At least 3 people will participate in this focus group interview and it will take approximately one (1) hour of your time to complete.

#### **WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?**

This study is being done to understand the cross-cultural practices that instructors apply in blended global education.

#### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO IF I AGREE TO TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

If you decide to participate, you will participate in a focus group interview session hosted by Ms. Linda Gironda, a doctoral candidate at Teachers College, Columbia University. During the focus group you will be asked about your perceptions as an individual who has participated in some capacity in a blended global education program and the cross-cultural practices you applied or observed among students in two different cultures.

This focus group will be audio recorded. After the audio recording is written down (transcribed) the audio recording will be deleted. If you do not wish to be audio-recorded, you will not be able to participate in this study. The semi-structured focus group will take approximately 45 minutes to one hour. You will be given a pseudonym or false name and a de-identified code in order to keep your identity confidential.

You will also be asked to fill out a demographic questionnaire. This will take about 5 minutes. The focus group interview will be conducted [in person] [via conference call or online via Skype or Zoom or focus group technology or another mutually acceptable online technology]. This consent form will be signed [in person] [electronically]. The demographic data will be collected electronically in a system similar to Qualtrics.

**WHAT POSSIBLE RISKS OR DISCOMFORTS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

This is a minimal risk study, which means that the harms or discomforts that you may experience are not greater than what you would ordinarily encounter in daily life while taking routine physical or psychological examination or tests. **However you do not have to answer any questions or divulge anything you don't want to talk about. You can stop participating in the study at any time without penalty.** I will take precautions to keep your information confidential and prevent anyone from discovering or guessing your identity, such as using a pseudonym or de-identified code instead of your name and keeping all information on a password protected computer and locked in a file drawer.

**WHAT POSSIBLE BENEFITS CAN I EXPECT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There is no direct benefit to you for participation in this study. Participation may benefit the field of cross-cultural practices and blended global education programs.

**WILL I BE PAID FOR BEING IN THIS STUDY?**

You will not be paid to participate and there are no costs to participate in this study.

**WHEN IS THE STUDY OVER? CAN I LEAVE THE STUDY BEFORE IT ENDS?**

The study is over when you have completed the focus group. However, you can leave the study at any time even if you haven't finished.

**PROTECTION OF YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY**

**Confidentiality in a focus group setting:**

I will ask that each of you not share what is discussed in this focus group. I will keep all the information confidential. But given the nature of a focus group setting, I cannot guarantee complete confidentiality.

The investigator will keep all written materials locked in a desk drawer in a locked office. Any electronic or digital information (including audio recordings) will be stored on a computer that is password protected. What is on the audio recording will be written down and the audio recording will then be destroyed. There will be no record matching your real name with your pseudonym. De-identified codes will be used and the master list identifying the subject will be kept in a locked or password protected file and be kept separate from the list of codes

**HOW WILL THE RESULTS BE USED?**

The results of this study will be published in journals and presented at academic conferences. Your name or any identifying information about you will not be published. This study is being conducted as part of the dissertation of the principal investigator.

**CONSENT FOR AUDIO AND OR VIDEO RECORDING**

Audio recording is part of this research study. You can choose whether to give permission to be recorded. If you decide that you don't wish to be recorded, (choose the correct sentence) you will still be able to participate in this study or you will not be able to participate in this research study.

\_\_\_\_\_ I give my consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ I **do not** consent to be recorded \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature u

### **WHO MAY VIEW MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY**

\_\_\_\_\_ I consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed at an educational setting or at a conference outside of Teachers College.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

\_\_\_\_\_ I **do not** consent to allow written, video and/or audio taped materials viewed outside of Teachers College Columbia University.

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature

### **OPTIONAL CONSENT FOR FUTURE CONTACT**

The investigator may wish to contact you in the future. Please initial the appropriate statements to indicate whether or not you give permission for future contact.

I give permission to be contacted in the future for research purposes:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial Initial

I do not give permission to be contacted in the future for information relating to this study:

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
Initial Initial

### **WHO CAN ANSWER MY QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS STUDY?**

**If you have any questions about taking part in this research study, you should contact the principal investigator, Linda Girona at (914)-420-9709 or [lag2187@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:lag2187@tc.columbia.edu)**

**If you have questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you should contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (the human research ethics committee) at 212-678-4105 or email [IRB@tc.edu](mailto:IRB@tc.edu). Or you can write to the IRB at Teachers College, Columbia University, 525 W. 120<sup>th</sup> Street, New York, NY 1002. The IRB is the committee that oversees human research protection for Teachers College, Columbia University.**

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### **PARTICIPANT'S RIGHTS**

- I have read and discussed the informed consent with the researcher. I have had ample opportunity to ask questions about the purposes, procedures, risks and benefits regarding this research study.
- I understand that my participation is voluntary. I may refuse to participate or withdraw participation at any time without penalty to future medical care; employment; student status or grades; services that I would otherwise receive.
- The researcher may withdraw me from the research at his or her professional discretion.
- If, during the course of the study, significant new information that has been developed becomes available which may relate to my willingness to continue my participation, the investigator will provide this information to me.
- Any information derived from the research study that personally identifies me will not be voluntarily released or disclosed without my separate consent, except as specifically required by law.
- I should receive a copy of the Informed Consent document.

**My signature means that I agree to participate in this study**

**Print name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix D

## Sample Thank You Letter after Interview

Dear NAME:

Thank you very much for your time for today's interview. You provided me with rich and insightful information about your experience. I am grateful for your time and your candid information that I will use in my research on *Cross-Cultural Practices in Blended Global Education*.

If you have any questions regarding the interview or you would like to contact me, please feel free to reach me on (914)-420-9709 or [lag2187@tc.columbia.edu](mailto:lag2187@tc.columbia.edu) for your time and insight.

Sincerely,  
Linda A. Gironda

Teachers College, Columbia University  
Status: Doctoral Candidate

## Appendix E

## Document Review/Analysis Sources

**Names have been altered to maintain the online international education program's anonymity**

## GLOBE

1. Vision
2. Mission
3. Examples of supported courses
4. Example of student evaluations
5. Training materials
6. Worldwide network
7. Professional Development Program
8. Course Development materials
9. Report of team collaborations

## Conference Material

- Global Learning Conference

## Appendix F

## Interview Protocol

**1. How do instructors perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online and blended format?**

1. What is your experience in teaching and learning in face-to-face, online and blended classes?
2. How would you describe the different teaching strategies that you use in face-to-face, online and blending classes?
3. What are the similar teaching methods you use across face-to-face, online and blended classrooms?

**2. What activities do instructors engage in a blended environment that they perceive promotes understanding among students from different cultures?**

1. What instructional activities do you use in the classroom and online to promote cultural understanding among students in different countries?
2. In what ways do the in-class activities and online activities complement or impact a student's understanding of cross-cultural differences?
3. How did you select the different activities to promote cross-cultural learning in a face-to-face and online environment and why do you think those activities promoted cross-cultural learning?

**3. How do instructors learn how to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?**

1. How did you learn about /select those activities for cross-cultural learning?
2. How did you and in what ways did collaborate with your partner instructor to learn about these activities?
3. What research, if any, did you conduct to learn about how to promote understanding in blended international programs?

**4. What factors facilitate and/or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within the blended format?**

1. What factors helped you facilitate cross-cultural learning in the GLOBE program
2. What factors inhibited your ability to foster cross-cultural learning in the GLOBE program
3. How did you deal with factors that facilitated or inhibited cross-cultural understanding in the blended program?

## Appendix G

### Focus Group Protocol

The researcher will conduct a focus group with individuals who are not part the study, but who meet the same criteria as the participants. The researcher will act as moderator only in terms of introducing the topics for discussion.

In the first half hour, the researcher will direct the participants to discuss:

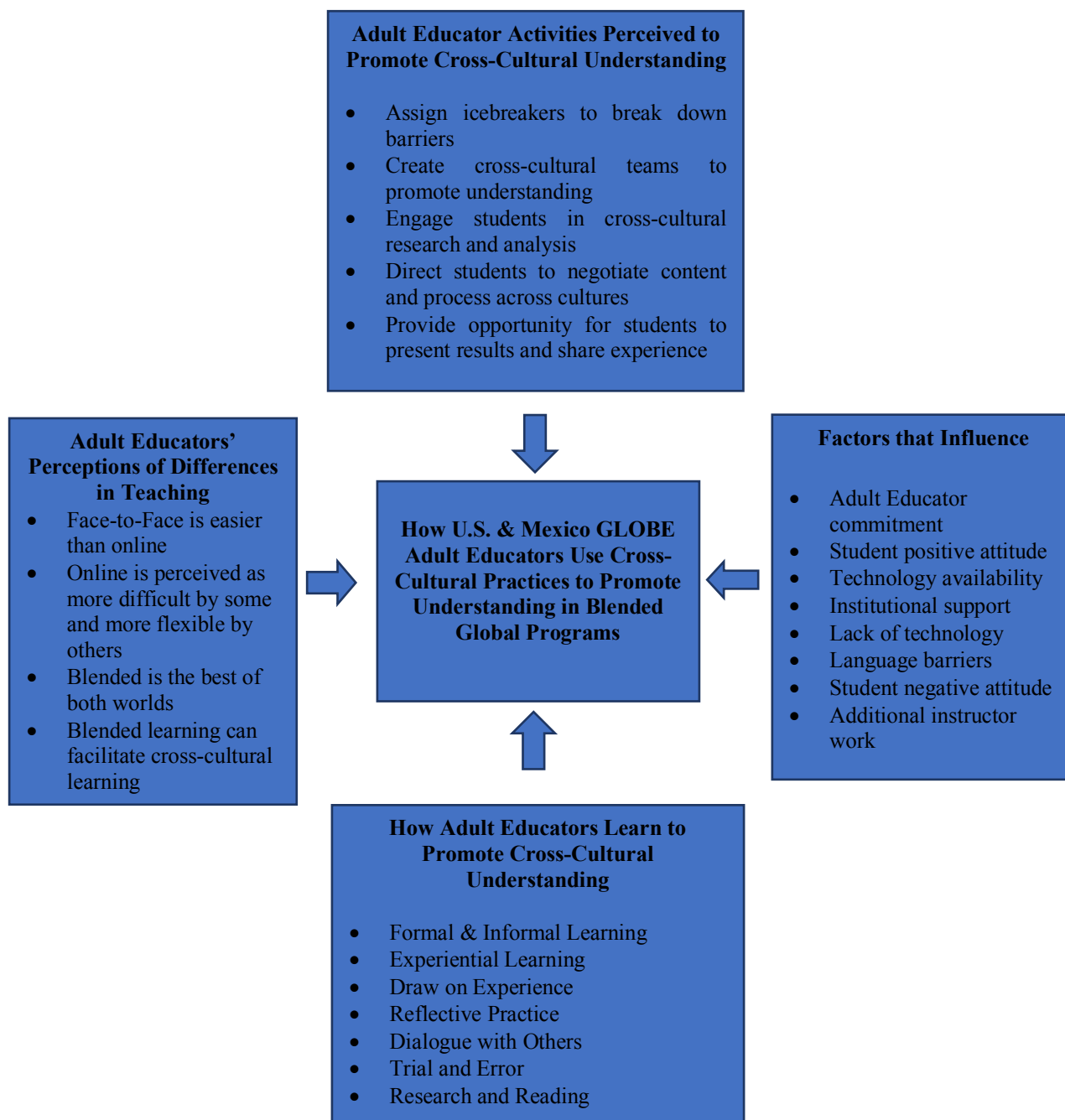
- 1. As faculty involved in blended cross-cultural global programs, what helps you in the process? First 30 minutes**

In the second half hour, the researcher will direct the participants to discuss:

- 2. What stands in your way to promote a successful program?**

## Appendix H

## Conceptual Framework



## Appendix I

## Final Coding Scheme

**RQ1. How do adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online, and blended global format? (BGF)****RQ1 BL Blended: Blended Education is the most flexible modality**

- RQ1 – BL1 – Adult educators broadly define blended education
- RQ1 – BL2 - Blended combines the best of both worlds – F2F and online teaching
- RQ1 – BL3 - Blended fills in the gaps between classes
- RQ1 – BL4 - Blended enhances student learning and enables a cross-cultural experience

**RQ1 OL Online: Online teaching is more difficult for some yet more flexible for others****OD = Online Difficult / Online Flexible**

- RQ1 – OD -1 - Online education is a learning curve for students
- RQ1 – OD- 2 - Online teaching is more challenging for adult educators
- RQ1 – OD- 3 - Online learning presents safety concerns for some students
- RQ1 – OF - 1 - Online allows for more flexibility
- RQ1 – OF - 2 - Online teaching effective pedagogy and a necessary teaching option

**RQ1 F2F Face-to-Face: Face-to-Face teaching is easier to facilitate**

- RQ1 – F2F 1- Ideal mode of learning
- RQ1 – F2F 2- Students feel more secure in a classroom environment
- RQ1 – F2F 3 - Face-to-Face classroom discussions benefit the whole class

**RQ2. What activities do adult educators engage in a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?****RQ2 IB Icebreakers:**

- RQ2 – IB – 1 Break down barriers
- RQ2 – IB - 2 Establish common ground
- RQ2 – IB – 3 Challenge stereotypes
- RQ2 – IB – 4 Foster cross-cultural communication and connection
- RQ2 – IB – 5 Provide a safe space for students
- RQ2 – IB – 6 Promote fun, friendship and build relationship

**RQ2 PWT - Project Work in Teams:**

- RQ2 – PWT - 1 Conduct cross-cultural research and analysis to create global awareness
- RQ2 – PWT – 2 Negotiate and collaborate across cultures
- RQ2 – PWT – 3 Manage mutual Student Learning Objectives (SLO)
- RQ2 – PWT – 4 Challenge perceptions and create new perspectives
- RQ2 – PWT – 5 Experience insights about humankind

**RQ2 CV International Campus Visits: CVI –CV instructor/ CVS – CV student**

- RQ2 – CVI – 1 Enhance the Teaching Collaboration
- RQ2 – CVI – 2 Provide perspective and appreciation of partner's university

- RQ2 – CVI – 3 Heighten cultural awareness C-C presentations and student meetings
- RQ2 – CVS – 1 Provide impactful cross-cultural experience for students

**RQ3. How do adult educators learn how to promote cross-cultural (CC) understanding in blended global programs?**

**RQ3 DWO Dialogue with Others:**

- RQ3 – DWC -1 Dialogue with colleagues
- RQ3 – DWC – 2 Dialogue with students
- RQ3 – DWC – 3 Dialogue with GLOBE support and administrative coordinators

**RQ3 DOE & REF Experiential Learning:**

- RQ3 – DOE – 1 Drawing on experience
- RQ3 – REF – 1 Reflective observation on current experience

**RQ3 – FT Formal Learning: (originally listed as Formal Training)**

- RQ3 – FT – 1 Face-to-face training in Mexico
- RQ3 – FT – 2 Online GLOBE training
- RQ3 – FT – 3 Attend workshops and conferences

**RQ3 R&R Reading & Research:**

- RQ3 – R&R - 1 Research and reading around subject matter and technology
- RQ3 – R& R – 2 Research and reading for course content

**RQ3 T&E Trial & Error**

- RQ3 – T&E 1 Lessons from experimentation

**RQ4 : What factors facilitate and/or inhibit CC understanding within the BGF**

**RQ4F - FACILITATING FACTORS**

**RQ4F – PER Collegial Partnership**

- RQ4F – PR – 1 Collegial Relationship
- RQ4F – PR – 2 Mutual respect
- RQ4F – PR – 3 Willingness to work together
- RQ4F – PR – 4 Appreciation of Partnership

**RQ4F – TECH Technology Facilitators: (Benefits)**

- RQ4F – TECH - 1 Synchronous connection
- RQ4F – TECH - 2 Ease of Facebook
- RQ4F – TECH - 3 Accessibility of multiple platforms

**RQ4F – SPA Students’ Positive Attitudes:**

- RQ4F – SPA – 1 Student motivation
- RQ4F – SPA – 2 Student willingness to participate

**RQ4F – IS Institutional Support**

- RQ4F – IS – 1 Executive support
- RQ4F – IS – 2 GLOBE administrator support

**RQ4I - INHIBITING FACTORS**

**RQ4I -LD Language Differences Among Students:**

- RQ4I – LD – 1 Fear of language
- RQ4I – LD – 2 English-centric instruction

**RQ4I -DTS Different Time Schedules**

- RQ4I – DTS – 1 Institutional timing of courses
- RQ4I – DTS - 2 Cultural differences in time

**RQ4I -SNA Students’ Negative Attitudes**



- RQ4I – SNA – 1 Lack of student motivation
- RQ4I – SNA- 2 Optional class for interested students

**RQ4I -AWI Additional Instructor Workload:**

10. RQ4I – AWI – 1 Extra workload
11. RQ4I – AWI – 2 Little additional compensation

**RQ4I -TC Technology Inhibitors (Challenges)**

- RQ4I – TC – 1 Too many technologies
- RQ4I – TC – 2 Limited Internet bandwidth

## Appendix J

## Frequency Table for Finding #1: Teaching Modalities

How do adult educators perceive differences in teaching in a face-to-face, online and blended global format?

		<b>Blended</b>	<b>Online</b>	<b>Online</b>	<b>Face-to-Face</b>
	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Highly Flexible</b>	<b>More Difficult</b>	<b>More Flexible</b>	<b>Easier Facilitation</b>
1	Jane	X	X		X
2	Mary	X	X	X	X
3	Chad	X		X	
4	Katie	X	X		X
5	Annie	X	X	X	X
6	Maggie	X	X	X	
7	Fabio				
8	Roxanne	X	X		X
9	Leo		X		
10	Debra	X		X	
11	Ben	X		X	
12	Omar				
13	Felix	X	X		
14	Olivia	X			X
15	Josh				
16	Walter	X	X		X
17	Kara		X	X	X
18	Amy				
19	Catalina	X			
20	Margarita				
	<b>TOTALS</b>	13	10	7	8
	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	65%	50%	35%	40%

**MAJOR FINDING:** A majority of the participants (65%) indicated that a blended format was the most flexible teaching modality.

## Appendix K

## Frequency Table for Finding #2: Activities

What activities do adult educators engage in a blended global environment that they perceive promote understanding among students from different cultures?

		<b>ICEBREAKERS</b>	<b>PROJECT WORK</b>		<b>CAMPUS VISITS</b>	
	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Icebreaker Activities</b>	<b>In Teams</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Instructor Campus Visit</b>	<b>Student Campus Visit</b>
1	Jane	X	X	X	X	
2	Mary	X	X	X	X	
3	Chad	X	X	X	X	
4	Katie	X	X	X	X	
5	Annie	X	X	X	X	
6	Maggie	X	X	X	X	X
7	Fabio	X	X	X	X	
8	Roxanne	X	X	X	X	X
9	Leo	X	X	X	X	
10	Debra	X	X	X	X	
11	Ben	X	X	X		
12	Omar	X	X	X	X	
13	Felix	X	X	X	X	
14	Olivia	X		X		
15	Josh	X	X	X	X	
16	Walter	X	X	X	X	X
17	Kara	X	X	X	X	X
18	Amy	X	X	X	X	
19	Catalina	X	X		X	
20	Margarita	X	X			
	<b>TOTAL</b>	20	19	18	17	4
	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	100%	95%	90%	85%	20%

**MAJOR FINDING:** All participants (100%) stated that they had their students engage in icebreakers to promote cultural awareness and 95% engaged the students in project work in teams to develop cross-cultural appreciation.

## Appendix L

## Frequency Table for Finding #3: How Adult Educators Learn

How do adult educators learn to promote cross-cultural understanding in blended global programs?

	Participant	Dialogue with Colleagues	Draw on Their Experiences	Formal Training	Instructor Reflection	Research	Trial & Error
1	Jane	X	X	X	X	X	X
2	Mary	X	X	X			
3	Chad	X	X	X			
4	Katie	X	X	X		X	X
5	Annie	X	X	X		X	
6	Maggie	X	X			X	
7	Fabio	X	X	X	X	X	
8	Roxanne	X	X	X	X	X	
9	Leo	X	X	X	X		
10	Debra	X	X	X	X	X	X
11	Ben	X			X		
12	Omar	X	X	X	X		
13	Felix	X	X		X		
14	Olivia	X	X	X			
15	Josh	X	X	X	X	X	
16	Walter	X	X	X	X	X	X
17	Kara	X	X	X		X	
18	Amy	X	X	X	X		
19	Catalina	X	X	X	X		
20	Margarita	X	X		X		
	<b>TOTALS</b>	20	19	16	13	10	4
	<b>PERCENT AGE</b>	100%	95%	85%	68%	50%	20%

**MAJOR FINDING:** All participants (100%) indicated that they learned to promote cross-cultural understanding through discussions with colleagues while 95% learned by drawing on their experiences.

### Appendix M

#### Frequency Table for Finding #4: Factors to Facilitate/Inhibit Cross-Cultural Understanding

What factors facilitate and/or inhibit cross-cultural understanding within the blended global format?

	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Collegial Partnership</b>	<b>Technology</b>	<b>Students' Positive Attitudes</b>	<b>Institutional Support</b>	<b>Language Differences</b>	<b>Students' Negative Attitudes</b>	<b>Different Time Schedules</b>	<b>Additional Work for Adult Educators</b>	<b>Use of Technology</b>
1	Jane	X		X	X	X	X	X		
2	Mary	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
3	Chad	X			X	X	X			
4	Katie	X	X	X	X		X		X	X
5	Annie	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
6	Maggie	X	X		X		X	X	X	
7	Fabio	X	X	X	X	X				
8	Roxanne	X	X		X	X	X		X	X
9	Leo	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
10	Debra	X	X	X		X			X	X
11	Ben	X		X	X		X			
12	Omar	X	X			X	X			
13	Felix		X			X	X	X	X	
14	Olivia	X						X	X	
15	Josh	X	X	X		X		X		
16	Walter	X		X	X		X			
17	Kara	X		X		X				
18	Amy	X	X	X		X	X	X		
19	Catalina	X	X			X	X	X	X	X
20	Margarita	X	X	X		X		X		
	<b>TOTAL</b>	19	13	13	11	15	12	11	9	7
	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>	95%	65%	65%	55%	75%	60%	55%	45%	35%
<b>MAJOR FINDING:</b> An overwhelming number of participants (95%) stated that collegial relationships with their partner instructor facilitated cross-cultural understanding; while 70% indicated that language was a barrier.										

## Appendix N

### Participant Demographic Data (N = 20)

	Name	Age	Sex	Race	Country of Origin	Primary language	Fluent. If so, language	Highest Degree	Academic Concentration	Years Exp	F/T or P/T	GLOBE class
1	Jane	50s	F	Mix	USA	English	Spanish	Masters	Arts	15	F/T	Y
2	Mary	50	F	WNH	USA	English	NO	Ed.D.	Education	11	F/T	Y
3	Chad	30	M	Hispanic	Mexico	Spanish	English	BS	Science	3	F/T	Y
4	Katie	45	F	Asian	South Korea	English	Korean	Ph.D.	Art	20	F/T	Y
5	Annie	35-45	F	Hispanic	Mexico	Spanish	English	Masters	Business	7	F/T	Y
6	Maggie	55-65	F	Caucasian	USA	English	No	Ph.D.	Management	14	F/T	Y
7	Fabio	60-65	M	Hispanic	Mexico	Spanish	English	Master	Finance	30	F/T	Y
8	Renee	60-70	F	African - American	USA	English	No	Masters	Business	18	F/T	Y
9	Leo	65	M	Hispanic	Mexico	Spanish	English	Ph.D.	Economics	35	F/T	Y
10	Debra	43	F	Latina	Mexico	Spanish	English	Masters	Art	12	P/T	Y
11	Ben	67	M	Caucasian	USA	English	No	Ph.D.	Science	12	F/T	Y
12	Oscar	42	M	Hispanic	Mexico	Spanish	English	Ph.D.	Science	7	F/T	Y
13	Felix	28	M	Latin	Mexico	Spanish	English	Masters	Business	2	F/T	Y
14	Olga	55	F	Hispanic	Mexico	Spanish	English / Italian	Master	Education	23	F/T	Y
15	Josh	50-60	M	Caucasian	USA	English	No	Masters	Art	24	F/T	Y
16	Walter	70	M	Caucasian	USA	English	Spanish Converse	Ph.D.	Management	35	F/T	Y
17	Kara	37	F	Other	USA	English	English	Ph.D.	Science	12	F/T	Y
18	Amy	42	F	Hispanic	Mexico	Spanish	English	Ph.D.	Education	18	F/T	Y
19	Catalina	50-51	F	Latin American	Mexico	Spanish & English		Ph.D.	Economics	10-12	F/T	Y
20	Margarita		F	Hispanic	Mexico	Spanish		Masters	Art,	8	F/T	Y

## Appendix O

Data Collection for Researcher Model of Aspects  
of Cross-Cultural Understanding in Blended Global Education

Category	Connectors (5)	Communicators (11)	Collaborators (4)
<b>Researcher Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Understanding in GLOBE</b>			
Researcher Model of Aspects of Cross-Cultural Understanding in Blended Global Education  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Awareness</li> <li>Cultural Appreciation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cultural Awareness</li> <li>Cultural Appreciation</li> <li>Cultural Advocacy</li> </ul>
<b>Cross-Cultural Learning Activities</b>			
Icebreakers	On average (1) icebreaker	On average (2) icebreakers	On average (2) icebreakers that involved issues around stereotypes and ethnocentrism.
Project Work	60% team projects 20% individual 20% did not complete	100% Team projects	100% Team projects
Campus Visit	40% Adult educator campus visits 0% Student campus visit	100% Adult educator campus visits 0% Student campus visit	75% Adult educator campus visits 100% Student campus visits
Use of Technology	60% Async 40% Synch & Async	36% Async 64% Synch & Async	100% Synch & Async
Language Issues	60% language barrier 40% no language barrier	90% language barrier 10% no language barrier	50% language barrier 50% no language barrier
<b>Adult Educator Factors</b>			
Attended Formal Learning in Mexico	40% Yes 60% No	100% Yes	75% Yes
Highest Level of Education	80% Masters 20% Doctorate	55% 45% Terminal Degrees	100% Terminal Degrees
More than one experience teaching international online courses (GLOBE and Non-GLOBE)	40% Yes 60% No	73% Yes 27% No	50% Yes 50% No