

**NEW PEDAGOGIES,  
NEW SPACES:  
OCCUPYING VIRTUAL  
REALITY**



**PRACTICE & PEDAGOGY  
*in* EDUCATION ABROAD**

**CAPA'S ONLINE JOURNAL  
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*CAPA Online Journal*

## Practice & Pedagogy in Education Abroad

*Issue 1. New Pedagogies, New Spaces: Occupying Virtual Reality*

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CAPA is pleased to launch a new online journal that is intended to create a space for reflection, discussion, and the exchange of perspectives in a relatively informal format. We hope to replicate, however imperfectly, the kinds of face-to-face exchanges we have missed in recent months. This first issue focuses inevitably upon the impact of the pandemic upon our community, and the implications of working in virtual reality: the new space we have occupied over the last months.

We felt the need for something between CAPA's other publications: The Occasional Papers series and Careers Journals are formal, refereed, academic explorations of issues relevant to our work: <https://www.capa.org/for-institutions/academic-publications>. The pieces in CAPA World are closer to short "blogs": <https://capaworld.capa.org>

In this journal we hope to create evolving space in which reflections and comments can be added periodically to create a body of interesting and useful material from all of those engaged in our work—from students, faculty, advisers, administrators, and scholars and practitioners at every stage of their careers.

We invite comments and reviews of this issue and further contributions on a rolling basis.

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### **A publication of CAPA: The Global Education Network**

CAPA: The Global Education Network is an international education organization (IEO) committed to empowering student learning through personal choice, academic integrity, and engagement in urban environments abroad. For more than 45 years, CAPA has worked with institutions of higher education to build programs that meet their goals for learning abroad. We operate education centers in global cities and have developed distinct academic offerings, support frameworks, and oversight structures for our students and visiting faculty. The CAPA learning experience is characterized by the integration of curriculum, formal and informal experiential education, and study environments conducive to the analysis and exploration of the global cities in which we are located: learning laboratories in which students are empowered to develop their academic, personal, and professional skills.



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The contributions here do not represent any particular view and are not in any sense CAPA's thesis. Instead, they are offered as expressions of debate, analysis, agreement, and disagreement. They are intended to be a contribution to the field and a stimulus for further discussion and research.

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## *Introduction*

### *New Pedagogies, New Spaces: Occupying Virtual Reality*

#### *Practice and Pedagogy in Education*

This collection of essays was put together in response to the crisis that has heavily impacted international education globally leading to what Martha Johnson and Christine Anderson call, in this collection, “the Great Pause.” The degree to which our world changed in such a short time was certainly unparalleled in our lifetimes.

This volume is intended to create a little space to talk to each other in whatever accent or style seemed most appropriate to the authors. One of the things we have missed about not being able to meet at conferences are late-night conversations (usually in the bar) when we swap views, anecdotes, and stories (some of them true). In a sense, we wanted to try and recreate that space so that colleagues might speak openly about what has been important to them.

The first essay in this collection looks back at one of the things we have missed most through Michael Punter’s perspective. His essay reminds us of the power of urban encounters to stimulate thought and analysis. It is not surprising that those reflections should lead in the direction of the apocalyptic visions of Jehovah Witnesses as they envision the “End Times.” The essay demonstrates the degree to which our sites of learning have shrunk. The street is a source of both information and inspiration that leads back to the classroom and then to the library and, in a circle of enquiry that is both mental and physical, back into the street. This is an example of the potential of field research to enrich our understanding of complex realities.

Punter's use of unstructured encounters as a pedagogical stimulus signifies that whatever learning potential is available in a virtual space, education abroad cannot be entirely replicated upon a screen. Accidents rarely happen and it is impossible to get lost. Virtual reality is constructed, controlled, and more predictable than the messy world beyond.

Some of the authors here have chosen to stress the power of online learning, while others discuss the limitations. Cathryn Bailey, from her own experience, draws attention to the "incipient, productively disruptive subjective conditions that may be experienced while traveling and studying abroad." She tells us that the experience of going to study in another location "being uprooted and tenuously replanted, together with dislocated peers and professors ... rocked my intellectual and emotional world." However, the popularity of online learning predates the pandemic, especially as the cost of on-campus higher education has grown prohibitively. She raises the question of whether or not, despite its value, online learning may be inadvertently reinforcing social inequalities.

In his essay "International Education, Prejudice, and Social Justice," Kelechi Kalu focuses on the global context and argues that "the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the inequality amongst institutions and students." He focuses on the responsibility of higher education institutions "to enable understanding of how racial dominance ideas are tied to power structures and authority symbols that preserve White or elite privileges at the expense of non-Whites and non-elites." In bringing the question of inherited privilege into these discussions, Kalu broadens the context with a perspective that resonates with a justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion agenda.

Many essays in this collection discuss the degree to which online learning creates greater equality or inequality. Jennifer Malerich explores the history of distance education and, while recognizing the arguments of skeptics, argues that intentional and strategic approaches, as evidenced at Arizona State University, can bring online learners into mainstream academic experiences. Furthermore, “online education is one way the university feels it is accountable to the communities it serves.” It offers a tool for engagement with students who would otherwise be deprived of opportunities. Martha Johnson and Christine Anderson use the virtual international internship program at the University of Minnesota as another example of how students may benefit from study in virtual environments. As in Malerich’s contribution, they emphasize the need “to avoid an assumption of deficit.”

These disrupted times invite reflection. The cessation of mobility leads almost inevitably to introspection. The sense that there is “new conceptual space” (Johnson and Anderson) generates the impulse to reconsider what we do and why we do it. That is at the heart of two essays in particular in this collection. In “Hitting the Pause Button: Reflecting on Where We Are as a Field,” Nick J. Gozik raises questions about the commodification of mobility, environmental issues, and how students experience unfamiliar spaces. In short, “the pandemic is a point at which we can go back to core value and desired outcomes and evaluate whether we are still on the right path.” Chrissie Faupel’s essay “A Return to Idealism” draws upon a similar need to re-examine the education abroad endeavor: “We must ask ourselves: what should education abroad look like? What is our main goal and how do we get there?” She argues for a recognition of the values of original motivations which were rooted in notions of “a common good.” Michael Woolf’s essay also approaches related issues from mostly personal perspectives.

Another recurrent theme is the question of to what extent the pandemic is likely to have a permanent impact upon international education. Colin Speakman envisages a situation in which “physical participation overseas will return ... but we are likely to be living in a parallel universe of actual and virtual experiences.” Drawing on long experience in China, the US, and Europe, Speakman points to enhanced potential for diversifying international education in a post-pandemic world.

That view is reflected Amelia J. Dietrich’s essay. She also brings another dimension to this collection in so far as working for The Forum on Education Abroad meant that staff found themselves at the center of many anxieties. “Serving education abroad through work at a professional association gives a person a unique perspective on our field. When something big happens... We hear from big universities and small colleges, education abroad organizations who serve five students or five thousand.” She also notes, as do others writing here, the unexpected capacity of education abroad to adjust to new circumstances. “After all, for years, initiatives related to online experiences and virtual exchange have been met with hesitation or disinterest by many in our field.” We proved, it seems, more resilient than we had expected and were able to shed innate conservatism more swiftly than we might have imagined.

Some of that resilience is demonstrated in the contribution of three faculty members from Hult International Business School in London: Katherine Angell, Alan Hertz, and John Woolf. In different ways, the courses they teach are heavily reliant on engagement with the environment. From a variety of perspectives, they describe personal and professional challenges, things that worked and some that didn’t, and offer readers information on useful sources.

The editors are also determined to include student voices in the future lest we forget that in some ways they lost more than most through the impact of the pandemic. Studies were interrupted, long-planned participation became impossible, the learning environment shrunk to the size of a computer screen. For many students this represented the only chance to study abroad during their undergraduate programs. We should both acknowledge this loss and respect the resilience shown in adjusting to new realities. If nothing else, a consequence of the COVID-19 experience should be that we cease to denigrate whole groups of students as somehow less informed or determined than we were at their age. This is the Eden delusion that times were better then (whenever then was) than now (whenever now is). Certainly, we may know more than our students (one would hope so) but, in all humility, we ought to recognize that they may know things we do not. In these fluid and shifting times, it would be arrogant to assume that one kind of knowledge is inevitably more important than another.

We offer these essays then as a collection of opinions, some aligned and some in contrast with each other. There is no thesis here but the beginning of conversations that we hope will generate more thought. For that reason, we have conceived this as a journal in a unique format. Further articles will be added as they come in and after review. We will solicit contributions and make announcements to the field periodically as a reminder of this resource and as a signal of shifting issues that might trigger further articles. We envisage *Practice and Pedagogy in Education Abroad* as a cumulative tool that, over time, will evolve into a useful resource as well as a space for personal and professional reflection. This first collection focuses, almost inevitably, upon “New Pedagogies, New Spaces: Occupying Virtual Reality” and we invite colleagues to respond to these essays in ways that they feel appropriate. We will add those thoughts, invite authors to respond, and begin, therefore, a conversation that we hope will enrich and enliven our discourse.

We should not conclude without recognizing that running through these essays is a sense of loss and a recognition of the trauma that all of humankind has experienced through the pandemic. We have been unable to do many of those things that we most value: meeting each other, engaging with students, travelling to conferences, and so on. Our horizons radically narrowed. Talented colleagues lost jobs to which they were deeply committed, and many have now left international education for other fields. International education may shift and change due to the pandemic, but it will continue. What will not return are the lives lost. Our colleagues, friends, family, and students have suffered from COVID-19, and together we mourn each of these losses.

## *What We Have Been Missing: The Endless End Times and Urban Encounters (With Jehovah's Witnesses)*

Michael Punter, CAPA: The Global Education Network

### *Introduction*

In the autumn of 2019, that blissful, pre-COVID time, I set up a project for my London students. I asked them to accompany me into the city with the intention of interviewing Londoners about their religious beliefs and the part faith played in their lives. The role of the students was simply to listen and—if permitted by the subject—to record. One set of students turned their field research into a remarkable project: they decided to interview members of The Watchtower Society—better known as Jehovah's Witnesses—at their public stands around the city.

The purpose of this project was to get the students thinking about how religious narratives are constructed. They were asked not to involve themselves in dispute about the “truth” of anyone's faith. The Witnesses turned out to be a rewarding choice, since most students had encountered them on the doorstep back home, or via their campaign of public interaction known as “metro witnessing” where members offer Bibles and other literature in town centers. I knew of the work of the Witnesses. As a child growing up in the suburbs of South London, I had neighbors who were Jehovah's Witnesses. Occasionally, they would offer us literature or a Bible study. My mother would often ask them in, proffer tea and biscuits, and politely duel with them from her distinctly Anglican perspective. As a university student in the English Midlands, my house was regularly visited by Witnesses who always left a copy of the magazine *Awake!* which was dutifully collected, usually unread, a week later. Despite encountering them fairly often, I realized through this project how little I really knew about

the group. Jehovah's Witnesses represented—both for me and the class—a kind of “familiar unfamiliar,” an unknown ideology whose advocates I bypassed on street corners on a daily basis.

In this paper, I'd like to share what I have learned about Jehovah's Witnesses from the students' project and my subsequent research. I'm going to locate the movement historically, outline some of the doctrinal differences between The Watchtower Society and mainstream Christian movements, then discuss the Society's continuing focus on the “End Times” and its preoccupation with the imminent return of Jesus Christ to Earth. I'll be viewing Jehovah's Witnesses through the lens of social anthropology, using the theories of Peter L. Berger to elucidate the reasons for the Society's success and apparent growth in recent decades, in stark contrast to much mainstream Christianity. The Watchtower Society's success, I will argue, derives from the exposition of a powerful “nomos” or world view that sets it at odds with contemporary society and gives its followers a powerful sense of uniqueness and purpose. However, the tension within the organization's paradoxical position, engaging publicly with a society whose ideology it rejects privately, also threatens its success in the long term.

### *A Brief History of The Watchtower and Bible Tract Society*

*The students' first encounter with a UK Jehovah's Witness took place outside a branch of McDonald's at the junction of Strand and Embankment in September 2019. The group approached a well-dressed, smiling woman of around 40 who was not born a Witness but had discovered the faith after becoming dissatisfied with the Catholic tradition in which she was raised. What appealed to her was the clear sense of what the afterlife would be like—“not wafy or unspecific,” but material and touchable. The students recorded that the*

woman used the term “restored” several times to refer to the future Earth and gave them all copies of “Awake!” magazine to take away.

## *Millerism*

This first encounter revealed one of the most attractive elements of the Watchtower’s ideology to the neophyte: a clear topography for the next world. The Watchtower’s literature is vividly illustrated with images of what the committed follower can expect in the “New System.” In this iteration of the future, children play with tigers and well-nourished, well-dressed families congregate in a distinctly pastoral landscape. This reflects the organization’s identity as a Millenarian and Restorationist Christian sect with roots in the revivalist movements of the mid-19th century: The Second Great Awakening. From this tradition, a range of new versions of Christianity emerged that challenged the dominant, Calvinist-informed ideology held by many of the first European settlers in the American colonies. Denominations that went on to thrive were diverse in their belief systems, ranging from variations of Methodism to Spiritualism. As Molly McGarry has written:

The Second Great Awakening swept away Calvinist Predestination and presented believers with the possibility of acting to save one’s own soul and a deep-seated belief in the individual’s ability to do so. This combination gave rise to a peculiarly American form of industrial capitalism, as well as a sense among a segment of white Protestants that reform of self and society was a duty and a right (McGarry, 2008: 41)

This new individualism led to the rise of reformist preachers who viewed the American experience as analogous to that of the Christian apostles in the 1st century CE. Among these was a Baptist minister from Massachusetts called William Miller. Miller’s career reflected the transformative nature of recent historical experience. His father was a veteran of the

American Revolution and William was home-educated by his mother, Paulina. He became a voracious reader of Enlightenment texts and renounced his Baptist heritage to become a Deist. At age 20, Miller fought in the War of 1812, undergoing a near-death experience that eventually led to his return to the Baptist faith. He became a farmer, studied the Bible obsessively, and became convinced that the End Times were rapidly approaching. Perhaps most influentially, Miller developed a method for calculating the exact point of Christ's return based on numerical sequences in the Bible. This approach would prove to be hugely influential.

Miller's study focused on the Old Testament *Book of Daniel*, specifically Daniel 8:14: "And he said unto me, unto two thousand and three hundred days; then shall the sanctuary be cleansed." Miller's technique was to take each Biblical day as representing a year in subsequent time, with the starting point being the reconstruction of Jerusalem in 457 BCE. He therefore calculated that the time of Christ's return would fall in a window between 1843 and 1844 and that believers would be "raptured" or elevated into the sky to meet with the returning Christ. Miller was careful to avoid a specific date. With his calculations shared via several New England newspapers, Miller acquired a significant number of followers who became known as "Millerites." Some of these followers took his numerological techniques and developed them further. One Millerite, Samuel Snow, advanced an exact date: October 22, 1844. After this date passed without incident, the experience became known as "The Great Disappointment." The Millerites dispersed, but their founder's methodology was considered by many to be essentially correct. From the ashes of Millerism arose a number of Adventist groups convinced that they could calculate correctly the date that William Miller had missed.

## *Nelson H. Barbour and Charles Taze Russell*

Among those in attendance at the Millerite gathering in 1843 was Nelson H. Barbour, a 19-year-old from Throopsville, New York. Barbour suffered a profound loss of faith in the aftermath of The Great Disappointment, and left the US for Australia, becoming a prospector. He regained his faith in the late 1850s and—during a period in London—he began to make his own calculations for the return of Christ, which he predicted would happen in 1873. Just as Miller’s followers had gathered in numbers across the eastern states 40 years previously, Barbour and the new wave of Adventists mustered at Terry Island in the Connecticut River. They were similarly disappointed. However, despite these repeated failures, preachers continued to use variations on Biblical numerology, taking the base date from a range of events from Jewish history.

Barbour published an Adventist newspaper entitled *Herald of the Morning*. In 1875, he was contacted by a wealthy businessman called Charles Taze Russell. Russell sold his family’s clothing business to join Barbour, investing heavily in the publication of the newspaper. However, doctrinal differences between Barbour and Russell led to Russell breaking away and establishing a new periodical: *Zion’s Watch Tower*. Russell is credited by the present Watchtower Society as being its founder, although large amounts of Russellite theory have been overlooked or simply ignored by the present leadership. Russell believed that Miller’s numerical approach was correct, but overly simple. His predecessor’s role, as he argued in volume three of his work *Millennial Dawn* (1891) had been to raise consciousness as to the fact of Christ’s impending return:

All know something of the failure of Brother Miller’s expectations. The Lord did not come in 1844, and the world was not burned up with fire, as he had expected and taught others to expect; and this was great disappointment to those “holy people” who had so confidently looked for Christ (“Michael”) then to appear and to exalt them

with him in power and glory. But, notwithstanding the disappointment, the movement had its designed effects—of awakening an interest in the subject of the Lord's coming (Russell, 1891: 85).

For Russell, Miller was inspired, but wrong. Russell applied a new chronology for the End Times that involved a complex and often arbitrary selection of dates and numbers. Again, he worked from the Old Testament *Book of Daniel*, extracting a reference to “seven times.” He interpreted each time as a period of 360 days. He then took the total of 2,520 years and applied them to his base event—not the restoration of Jerusalem but its fall to the Babylonians and the subsequent Israelite Captivity. He believed this date to be 607 BCE. This gave Russell the year 1914 as the date for the return of Christ. As with Miller's 1844 prediction, the month was given as October. When the autumn of 1914 passed without the return of Christ, Russell's followers recalibrated to 1918. Russell didn't live to see this final failure, dying in 1916.

What prevented the collapse of Russell's movement was the outbreak of World War I in Europe. Russell's selection of 1914 was deemed to be of great significance and, although the year had passed without the Rapture taking place, Russell was considered to have predicted if not the final event of the End Times, then a significant station on the road to it. An erroneous prediction was transformed into a miraculous, heralding event that would be exploited by the leadership for many years to come.

### *Joseph Rutherford*

Russell's movement was relatively democratic and loosely-organized compared to the theocratic structure that would be established by his successor, Joseph Rutherford. Under

Rutherford, the organization began to take on many of the characteristics associated with the modern Watchtower Society, as well as a raft of doctrinal changes designed to separate it from the Christian mainstream. The modern organization is, undeniably, the creation of Joseph Rutherford.

*At Waterloo station, during their second encounter with Jehovah's Witnesses on the streets of London in October 2019, one of the students asked if the Witnesses were able to question and discuss the organization's doctrine. The Witnesses—two women in their thirties—assured them that they were “in the Truth” and the beliefs of the Governing Body were shared by the membership. Bible Study was led by a senior Witness who guided the reading of the others. When the student pressed them, the atmosphere became a little strained and one of the students was asked if they had ever been a Jehovah's Witness.*

Joseph Rutherford was born in 1869, the son of a Missouri farmer. He studied law, funding his studies through work as a door-to-door salesman. He became a court stenographer, a lawyer, and then a Missouri circuit judge. In 1894, Rutherford acquired a copy of Russell's work *Millennial Dawn* and began a correspondence with him. In 1906, Rutherford became a baptized member of the movement and, within a year, was serving as Russell's legal adviser. On Russell's death in 1916, Rutherford was elected president of The Watchtower Society at a convention in Pittsburgh.

Rutherford implemented a period of radical reform that alienated the Society's board members. When four of them objected to his increasingly autocratic approach, Rutherford removed them using executive powers. Having fortified his position, Rutherford began reshaping the organization into what he termed a “theocratic” movement. The organization lost around one seventh of the membership within two years of Russell's accession to the

presidency. Doctrinally, Rutherford initiated many of the changes for which the modern movement is now known. Members were required to preach door to door and were sometimes equipped with gramophones so that Rutherford's latest sermons could be relayed. They were also required to shun "pagan" holidays such as Christmas and Easter. Rutherford also emphasized resistance to patriotism and the need for pacifism. In 1931, he retitled the society by the name they are best-known: Jehovah's Witnesses. The emphasis on God's "true" name had been present in Russell's writing, but under Rutherford it became a unique point of difference that separated the movement not just from the Christian mainstream but also from other Adventist groups. Rutherford authored an entire work about the exclusivity of the name "Jehovah"—an interpretation of the Hebrew tetragrammaton that was first used during the period of the Reformation:

In his (*sic*) due time Jehovah will cause all of his creatures to know his name and its meaning and to have in memory the time when he first revealed his name to man as Jehovah (Rutherford, 1934: 29).

In Rutherford's writing, Jehovah is depicted as something like the owner of a corporation who had selected Russell's successor as his Chief Executive Officer. His description of Israel's victory over Egypt in the *Book of Exodus* demonstrates this approach:

Among the great things performed by Jehovah by His servant Moses were these: The revelation of His name, the making of the law covenant, the destruction of Pharaoh's organization, and the deliverance of the Israelites from that oppressive organization (Rutherford, 1934: 29).

Rutherford's achievement was to turn an eccentricity-led band of post-Millerite Adventists into a corporate entity that disseminated its message using the latest technology and an extensive range of printed materials. Other faith groups were doctrinally alienated and

grouped together as evil contender organizations in the style of Pharaonic Egypt. They were depicted using an expression that is to this day a recurring motif in Watchtower publications “this wicked system of things.” By the time of Rutherford’s death, interfaith dialogue between the re-titled Jehovah’s Witnesses and other faith organizations had ceased entirely and has never been reinstated. The present organization styles itself as Jehovah’s unique, divinely directed movement on Earth. Members are encouraged to refer to themselves as being exclusively “in the Truth.”

Rutherford increased the membership of the organization. Russell’s outstanding failed prediction—that the End Times would *conclude* in 1914—was explained away via its relocation from an eschatological end point to the initial step of a revised “final phase.” In Rutherford’s recalibration, those born in 1914 would see the conclusion of the End Times. This matter has been largely ignored by the present leadership. A person born in 1914 would be 107 years old in 2021.

### *The Governing Body*

The third president of The Watchtower Society was Nathan Knorr. Knorr’s accession saw an end to the charismatic, individualist style of Rutherford and a new emphasis upon the Governing Body. In a handbook published in 1955, the group is described as being “closely identified with the board of directors of the corporation” (Franz, 1983: 74) and it has since comprised between 7 and 18 members, all males. As of 2020, the Governing Body has 8 members. New members are selected by the existing group.

During Knorr’s presidency, one of the organization’s most infamous policies was introduced: the ban on blood transfusions based on a literal reading from the Old Testament *Book of*

*Leviticus* 17: 12-14. In general, the movement's non-Trinitarian ideology was emphasized, as was the uniqueness of the Witnesses and their "direct descent" from the Apostles of the New Testament. In 1950, a new translation of the Bible was commissioned and published in six volumes over the subsequent decade. This version—known as the *New World Bible*—was a new translation of the Hebrew and Koine Greek scriptures, but with no translator or team of scholars listed. Their credentials were, therefore, unverifiable. The *New World Bible*, which was revised in 1981, 1984 and 2013, is only used by Jehovah's Witnesses.

In the late-1960s, the organization renewed its emphasis on the forthcoming End Times. This may have been an attempt to resolve the matter of Russell's 1914 prediction. In an edition of *The Watchtower* of 1968, the following appears:

The immediate future is certain to be filled with climactic events for this old system is nearing its complete end. Within a few years at most the final parts of Bible prophecy relative to these "last days" will undergo fulfilment (*The Watchtower*, May 1968: 19).

In 1969, *Awake!* targeted the young in a series of articles, urging them not to continue with any academic plans they might have made:

...as a young person, you will never fulfil any career that this system offers. If you are in high school and thinking about a college education, it means at least four, perhaps even six or eight more years to graduate...But where will this system of things be in that time? It will be well on the way toward its finish, if not actually gone! (*Awake!*, May 1969: 69)

In at least one publication, the organization appeared to name the final year as 1975 (James, 2013: 114), but this is disputed by the present leadership. When the end did not come, differences emerged in the Governing Body regarding the 1914 prediction,

culminating in several changes of personnel (Franz, 2007: 80-107). Since that time, the Governing Body has been careful to avoid naming a date but continued to publish via its printed matter and (recently) its website (jw.org) warnings of impending doom. With the Millennium passing without incident, and the generation of 1914 almost gone, the present Governing Body faces several pressing existential questions if it is to avoid wholesale reform or disintegration.

### *The Sacred Canopy and The Watchtower*

As stated in the introduction, I'd like to attempt to understand the organization using a theory derived from social anthropology, specifically from Peter L. Berger's 1967 work: *The Sacred Canopy Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. He describes the role of religion in creating the total world view of any given community, the determining laws that give it context and coherence:

...the socially constructed world is, above all, an ordering of experience. A meaningful order, or nomos, is imposed upon the discrete experiences and meanings of individuals. To say that society is a world-building enterprise is to say that it is ordering, or nomizing, activity (Berger, 1967: 19).

Berger identified the dominant nomos of the West as Christianity, from the point of the Roman Emperor Constantine's adoption of the faith in the 4th century up to the 18th century and the critical approach of the thinkers of the Enlightenment. The nomos is supported by "plausibility structures"—the key elements that preserve and support the world view and those who interpret and apply its ideology. For Berger, religion is a social construct that seeks to explain reality but is vulnerable to events that undermine and threaten its core structures. Berger was influenced by Max Weber's work of 1905, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, which described the influence of Reformation iterations of Christianity upon Early Modern economic production.

If we apply Berger's theory to the European colonies in North America, then the nomos would be a form of Protestant Christianity dominated by the theology of John Calvin and the theory of Predestination—the concept that God had already selected those he would save, reducing the significance of good works and requiring the demonstration of consistent, “Godly” behavior by the community. By the middle of the 19th century, a range of new iterations of Christianity challenged the Calvinist position, giving a new significance to individual works and the value of labor. As we have seen, these new iterations were diverse and included Spiritualism and the Second Adventist movement.

What appears to link these movements is reformist zeal, an emphasis on the significance of the individual and a powerful sense that the End Times were in motion. Russell's initial chronology claimed the year 1799 was one of the most significant in human history since Pope Pius VI had been removed by Napoleon Bonaparte and died in captivity. Similarly, the adherents of Spiritualism—a movement begun in 1848 by two teenage Methodists called Kate and Maggie Fox—frequently compared their times to the age of the Apostles, suggesting their use of supposedly-miraculous powers was a sign of Christ's imminent return to Earth. Political upheavals in Europe were viewed as supporting this position. These revisions to the nomos represented a desire for influence and a need to perform roles within an accelerating eschatological narrative. Changes to Christian ideology both reflected and influenced the social and economic ambitions of many Americans in the mid-19th century.

The failures of Millerism did not dampen the enthusiasm for the upcoming Rapture. However, the failed predictions of Adventists from 1843 to 1874 hardly helped the cause. The approach to calculation was influenced by growing awareness of archaeological discoveries in Egypt. These were particularly inspiring to Charles Taze Russell, whose

fanciful application of numerology at one point included “the internal angles of the Great Pyramid of Cheops” or, as he termed it, “God’s great stone witness” (James, 2013: 103). In the period leading up to the American Civil War, individualist ideas offered by preachers outside of the Christian mainstream were generating new narratives that would lead, in time, to separation.

### *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth!*

*At a stand near Westminster tube stop on a cold late-October afternoon, the class met a female, Black, British Jehovah’s Witness of around 50. She was more than happy to engage with the group and to discuss her faith. She had been raised in the Anglican tradition but had converted after a doorstep visit and subsequent Bible study. The Watchtower seemed more “dynamic” than the Church of England and proud, rather than “embarrassed” to announce its message. It was welcoming to all, international in its outlook, and didn’t tolerate racism. When pressed as to the most important reason for her conversion she stated: “I’ve always known that I could live forever.” The group left with a copy of the revised New World Bible.*

The statement that begins this section is the title of a Watchtower publication that served as the initial Bible study for new recruits in the 1980s. It’s illustrated with images of a restored Earth, a paradise in which well-dressed families happily and peacefully interact with wild animals against a backdrop of mountains and waterfalls. However, reaching this world will not be easy, as the reader is informed:

Really, there are but two choices. Christ compared it to the choice of either one of two roads. One road, he said, is “broad and spacious.” On it travelers are permitted to please themselves. The other road, however, is “cramped.” Yes, those on that road are required to obey the instructions and laws of God...Which will you choose? The

broad road will suddenly come to a dead end—destruction! On the other hand, the narrow road will lead you right through to God’s righteous new system. There you can share in making the earth a glorious paradise, where you can live in happiness (“You Can Live Forever,” 1982: 255).

Over time, Watchtower doctrine has generated a unique view of the world. Following Rutherford’s reforms from 1916 onwards, which probably ensured the movement’s survival and growth, it has separated itself entirely from the Christian mainstream. The modern movement discourages friendships with non-Witnesses and warns members against undertaking research beyond the Watchtower’s approved publications, TV channel, and website. Witnesses can have jobs in the secular world, but are actively discouraged from having careers, since the present “system” will shortly end. The organization’s separatism has led to the creation of an isolationist, adversarial mentality that is somewhat analogous to the Protestantism of the early European settlers in America. As James Penton has written in *Apocalypse Delayed*:

Most witnesses tend to think of society outside their own community as decadent and corrupt...This in turn means to Jehovah’s Witnesses that they must keep themselves apart from Satan’s “doomed system of things” (Penton, 2015: 134).

If you become a Jehovah’s Witness, you have no guarantee that you will be included in the elite group that will reign in heaven with Jesus but may have the opportunity to survive Armageddon and work to restore Earth to its prelapsarian splendor. It’s a bleak message, delivered on street corners and doorsteps with a welcoming smile by friendly, confident, and well-dressed people. It’s possible that many are unaware of some of the more controversial aspects of the organization’s doctrine.

## *Theodicy*

Berger took a term from Christian theology and re-purposed it. “Theodicy” is a vindication of divine purpose in the face of evil, but in Berger’s usage, it is any threat to the integrity of a nomos. For Jehovah’s Witnesses, the preservation of their worldview depends on a number of plausibility structures that vindicate their vision. The present system must be portrayed as being wracked by discord and disaster and ripe for imminent destruction. The organization’s publications often use images of flood or famine as proof that the End Times are, at long last, here. Global media and the internet, which offer a considerable challenge to the ethos of the Watchtower, also offer a proliferation of gloomy evidence for humanity’s impending end.

However, the matter of the 1914 prediction is yet to be addressed by the Governing Body, and although membership appears to be stable at around eight million—located largely in North America, Europe, and West Africa—there is evidence to suggest that growth has stalled in recent years. Former Witness Lloyd Evans, in his work *The Reluctant Apostate*, suggests that new converts are often not retained, and the organization is struggling to keep those born into the faith. The Governing Body appears to be elderly, mostly White, and is reluctant to revise the alienating doctrinal points that Rutherford put in place in the early 20th century. Most damaging to the organization are allegations of sexual abuse within Witness communities. Evidence of concealment and cover up has been repeatedly documented and has led to legal challenges to the organization around the world.

Rutherford was quick to embrace technology and made use of a range of media—including his own radio station—to spread the message. However, the present leadership has been slow to embrace the internet and social media, only bringing together its cluster of websites to form [jw.org](http://jw.org) in 2012. Its concerns are understandable: YouTube hosts multiple channels

run by former Witnesses who regularly question the organization's theocratic hierarchy and lack of accountability to the global membership. Lloyd Evan's "The John Cedars Channel" is particularly rigorous in its challenging of failed predictions and questionable policies. Evans—a British ex-Witness living in Croatia—has, at time of writing, over 75,000 subscribers and has created over 700 videos. His persona is genial, thoughtful, and compassionate, and many of his films tell the stories of those who have challenged the leadership and found themselves shunned or forced to leave the communities in which they were raised. "Telltale," a channel set up by American former Witness Owen Morgan, has 228,000 followers. The creators of both channels now identify the faith they were raised in as a cult.

### *The End of the End Times?*

The acceptance of nomos is a profound experience for the individual:

It is... appropriated by the individual to become his own subjective ordering of experience. It is by virtue of this appropriation that the individual can come to "make sense" of his world (Berger, 1967: 21).

To follow the teachings of the Watchtower is to accept a new nomos that functions within a broader structure: contemporary society itself. The new nomos condemns the larger one, not just as existing in a state of flaw or error, but as being actively demonic. Usually, one might expect such movements to retreat from the world into a remote space and to await the anticipated final phase. But Jehovah's Witnesses live very much in the "wicked system," working in it and allowing their children to be educated by it. For those raised in the faith, to live within two contending nomoi must be extremely stressful. Berger uses the term "anomy," the condition of feeling lost, alienated, and afraid.

The Watchtower now finds itself in a curious position. It is extremely wealthy, selling its Brooklyn, New York base in 2013 for over one billion dollars ([www.nytimes.com/2016/01/31/](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/31/)). It purchased a new plot in Warwick, upstate New York and has built a substantial new version of its headquarters, “Bethel.” It holds the title deeds to the many local bases or “Kingdom Halls” across the world.

Its membership numbers are not growing dramatically, despite a pandemic and global challenges that ought to support their End Times narrative. The elderly leadership shows little desire to tackle the movement’s principal existential question: What if the end isn’t nigh?

In conclusion, the student project opened up a fascinating world that I’m still attempting to make sense of. I met a number of Witnesses and I enjoyed speaking with them. They were personable, sincere, and certain they were living in “the Truth.” They have faith in a narrative that consistently emphasizes catastrophe and chaos as the default setting of a profane world and look to an apostolic and distant leadership that continually emphasizes its own uniqueness. Presiding over this is a version of God they claim to know intimately, who is constantly depicted as a loving patriarch, yet is also prepared to allow the death of all but 8million of his human children at Armageddon. Although there are admirable aspects to the organization’s outlook, including its denunciation of racism, its consistent pacifism, and opposition to patriotism, it’s hard to see a future for it as the 21<sup>st</sup> century unfolds. Indeed, given its terminal ideology, the idea of the future seems absurd. The Watchtower Society, if the end isn’t nigh, must surely embrace urgent Reformation.

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## ***Biography***

**Dr Michael Punter** is Director of Theatre Education at CAPA: The Global Education Network. He is a distinguished playwright with over 20 plays to his credit. His work has been performed at theatres in the UK and the US (including the National Theatre, London and the Guthrie Theatre, Minneapolis), as well as on BBC Radio. He is currently writing a pilot for television. Dr Punter is also employed by the University of Minnesota as Director of the BFA Acting Program. Dr Punter combines this extensive professional experience with academic publications and a PhD in theatre history.

## *Going Nowhere: A More Geographically Sensitive Approach to Online Pedagogy*

Cathryn Bailey, Western Michigan University

Romantic, high-flown accounts of a liberal education assure us that it is meant to be an almost sacred adventure, with nothing less than the transformation of individuals and societies as its end goal. And when teachers and learners physically engage with one another, generating sparks and watching fires take hold, especially in the catalyzing environments that often define residential college and study abroad, it is easy enough to believe in education's awesome power. In such close and sustained proximity—including the in-between extracurricular moments residential experiences provide—students and professors may naturally fall into conversation about health challenges or the queer pride buttons on a backpack, or casually share food culture histories in a crowded Tokyo cafe. This is to say nothing of the many potential engagements with local people, places, and lore. Will most online classes, then, be inherently less transformative than face-to-face ones simply because of their geographical conservatism? How might domestic education shift—both online and face-to-face—if more instructors, and not just study abroad junkies, tried to build geographical and temporal disruption into their pedagogical frameworks in whatever limited ways possible? While such searching questions may feel more urgent since the COVID-19 pandemic crisis hit, the longer trend toward an increased reliance on online education in the US reveals that they are actually long overdue.

As a kid from a working-class family in the US Midwest, college unseated me intellectually, psychologically, and to be sure, geographically. When my eighteenth summer ended, I packed up my clothes, tennis racket, and paperback thesaurus, and headed off to what was,

from my point of view, a radically new life, albeit a mere 120 miles away. The ostensible purpose was, of course, a university education, but it was being uprooted and tenuously replanted, together with dislocated peers and professors, that rocked my intellectual and emotional world. If, instead, I had taken classes at my hometown community college, would I have become friends with a wealthy Indian MBA student? Would I ever have learned to love enchiladas or say “y’all” as I did from my Texan college roommate? And what if I’d taken my classes online, instead, from the sheltered privacy of my suburban Midwestern home? Having had international learning experiences of my own in the decades since college, I recognize that, for me, moving to a residential university in a relatively cosmopolitan Midwestern college town created some of the same incipient, productively disruptive subjective conditions that may be experienced while traveling and studying abroad. In short, geography was a key factor in my academic learning and personal development, despite the fact that I didn’t go very far at all.

And this may also be true for many contemporary working class US students, especially as the red/blue, rural/urban, conservative/progressive divide has deepened in the US, as home schooling has gained popularity, and as some public school districts have effectively become resegregated. Though we are often inclined to talk about the self-regulation difficulties faced by youngsters “on their own” for the first time at residential colleges and universities—having to get themselves out of bed, for example—for some, the greatest challenges may be cultural ones as they move from, say, White Protestant towns into university villages bubbling over with multicultural and international influences. A properly geographical account of pedagogy surely must take into account how such locational shifts, even apparently non-dramatic, domestic ones, can help facilitate the subjective conditions for epistemological and ethical expansion. And let’s face it, for many US young people, leaving home for a domestic, residential university may be just about the only time they will ever be physically geographically disrupted in such a potentially potent fashion. This is

perhaps even more likely now, in the midst and wake of pandemic travel fears that further decouple the expectation or reality of international travel or study from the college experience.

Of course, even before the pandemic, online classes had become so popular in the US partly because of growing economic disparity and an abandonment of affordable public higher education that had pushed residential college increasingly out of reach. Against this backdrop of growing social and educational inequality, online education had come to serve an important function by increasing access for disadvantaged populations, students who are, for example: fully employed, parents, charged with elder care, in prisons, or on military bases. However, such a seamless fit into students' existing lives can be expected to limit education's potential to crack open world views and shuffle the deck of deeply felt identities. Not only do online students need not leave home to travel to those regional college towns, they might not even need to change out of their pajamas. To the extent that online classes fail to acknowledge and challenge geographical provincialism, then, they can be expected to skew conservative, in precise contradiction to the expansive promises of study abroad or even of a liberal education as such. In its most conservative rendering, an online student may simply squeeze their education into the leftover nooks and crannies of a demanding and already structured personal space/time.

It is surely no accident that so many graduates of residential colleges and universities recall the in-between, liminal, sometimes incidental and accidental spaces created in our learning contexts as being more important to our intellectual and psychological transformation than our actual classroom time. And it is important to be clear here that, although such internal transformations are often tied to objective relocations—one leaves home and goes away to college or spends a semester studying in Ecuador—the subjective side of the geographical

equation is probably just as important. We might consider, for example, the simple fact that some students experience “exotic, far away travel” but remain relatively untouched, perhaps because they have the inclination and privilege to replicate their same social, cultural, and temporal realities in the new location. This tendency is poignantly illustrated in Anne Tyler’s novel, *The Accidental Tourist*, in which the main character earns his living writing travel guides that promise to minimize the very challenge, discomfort, and disruption that often makes travel so life changing.

Certainly, those of us with experience in study abroad or other forms of international learning know well the danger of students too eager to recreate “home,” say, by relying on McDonald’s or clinging to social groups that do nothing to challenge their language competence. One might even say here that, though these students have traveled abroad, their subjective geography has scarcely changed. In short, while physical relocation may help create the conditions for productively disruptive pedagogical geography, it need not necessarily do so. By the same token, I would suggest, that, though static online classes may produce no objective, geographically disruptive possibilities, they may be adjusted to create productive, if subtle, subjective geographic impact. Of necessity, if for no other reason, then, now may be the right time to analyze the subjective geography of what students experience apart from the brute facts of objective location. Such a move might reveal both the greater possibilities of static online learning situations and function as a healthy caution to avoid exaggerating or romanticizing the intrinsic pedagogical power of study abroad.

Once we have acknowledged that it may be possible and desirable to create subtle subjective geographical effects without moving around much objectively, we might begin to experiment with our online classes. The general aim, as I’m imagining it, would be to

enhance and push against the boundaries of students' geographic consciousness, that is, that and how place/time—normally a pervasively invisible backdrop—conditions their lives. Though many such class tweaks might overlap with strategies aimed at “globalizing” or “internationalizing” the curriculum, here the goal is more foundational and philosophical: to foreground how location shapes students' beliefs, values, and identities and, further, to imagine how locational change might alter these fundamental factors. With some of these activities, for example, the idea might be to throw one's consciousness into a locational experience much as elite athletes “practice” imaginatively before a game or reexperience it afterwards.

Here are a few examples of activities that might prove useful:

- Anticipatory learning experience involving travel, for example, planning a trip related to the class, including an itinerary, budget, and packing list.
- Future plan for an actual study abroad in which students research and collect materials related to a study abroad opportunity actually available to them and relevant to the class. They might discuss the specific barriers they perceive to exist and strategize about how to overcome them in conversation with students who have successfully completed study abroad.
- Locational role-playing in which students complete a class assignment fully from the point of view of someone who is locationally very different from them, i.e., from a notably different region of their own country or from another country.
- Locational autobiography, including a recounting and reflection on their own personal geographies. They might explore, for instance, how their various moves, migrations, or trips, or those of their families, have shaped them.
- Mindfulness about the time/space in which their class participation will occur, including reflections and planning about the physical area(s) in which they plan to do their work and the schedule for completing it. Further, they might be asked to move

from time to time, if possible, to other safe locations, for example outdoors or to another room in the house.

- Travel through immersive virtual experiences, for example, “open world” video games such as “The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild.”
- Assignments to meet virtually in pairs or small groups for the explicit understanding purpose of creating a liminal, “in-between,” “non-academic” experience—e.g., a friendly cup of coffee—rather than a focus on academic content.

In addition, we might also explore more familiar sorts of “internationalizing” activities, such as discussion pairings between domestic and international students, a decentering of the class material in favor of an international point of view, or technologically facilitated virtual tours of far away points of interest. Critically, we might also face head-on, and with students’ input, the meta-question of how their particular learning experience is both enhanced and limited by locational conservatism, including, of course, the very online class they may now be taking with us. This may be anathema for instructors and institutions that are defensive about the basic legitimacy of online education, especially when staying home may have become compulsory and associated more intimately than ever with personal safety. But educators confident in online education’s potential value, and in students’ ongoing capacity and desire for self-transformation, can afford to be forthright about its undeniable limitations. After all, it isn’t only instructors who have ambivalent feelings about the value of a housebound online education.

Though this pandemic may be on its way out, we can be confident that the pandemic consciousness it has engendered will continue to mark higher education, especially notions of how geography and pedagogy intersect. For many earlier generations of US college students, embarking on an adult learning journey meant, quite literally, packing up and moving away to find ourselves and our vocations in environments that promised some level

of otherness and adaptation. For many contemporary students, though, higher education may be less of a hero's journey than a static endurance test. But lest we become too nostalgic for pre-COVID-19 times, we might keep in mind that, for whole swaths of US students, the involuntary shift to online education was already well underway because residential college, to say nothing of international learning opportunities, had already been pushed so far out of reach. It seems then, that the pandemic crisis has left us not with utterly new pedagogical quandaries, but with dilemmas about the relation between place and learning that are merely a logical extension of where US higher education had already been heading for decades.

### ***Biography***

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## *Teaching with Tech: Implications for Study Abroad*

Katherine Angell, Alan Hertz, and John Woolf

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During “the Great Pause” we took a minor one. We got together, via Zoom, and mused. COVID-19 forced us to radically rethink how we delivered location-based education virtually and whether the enforced changes would be confined to the Great Pause or endure. We all teach liberal arts courses, which use London as a subject of study and an educational resource, and we all work at the same private university delivering undergraduate programs to international students who come to the capital to experience an American-style business/liberal arts curriculum. During our minor pause we reflected: Does the virtual classroom work for location-based education? Is this oxymoronic? Do virtual educational tools and resources enrich or dilute our teaching? Will the adaptations last beyond the pandemic? And perhaps more fundamentally: how will these technological changes impact our kind of teaching in the years to come? Here are some first thoughts.

### *Tech Support, Katherine Angell*

My students had been expecting to take an academic writing course in London, using the capital as subject matter for their writing assignments, so few relished the prospect of taking a mandatory writing class online. To help me create and sustain new relationships in a virtual world, I decided to use technological tools for pedagogical support. I used them in two ways: first, I re-designed parts of the course to take advantage of those technological tools; second, I used them to replicate the in-person experience online. I used two tools to help me

achieve my aims: Mentimeter <sup>1</sup> (for interactive presentations) and Zoom breakout rooms (for small group discussions).

In preparing students for the challenge of writing a research paper, my initial lectures on information literacy, referencing, citation systems, and integrating sources were moved from PowerPoint to Mentimeter. When I use PowerPoint, students view my slides on their screen, but here each student enters a “Menti” code to access a personalized presentation. Mentimeter specializes in interactive activities such as quizzes, team competitions, and polling. I took advantage of these activities and “flipped” my classroom using the data gathered from the completion of activities to identify knowledge gaps which I could then fill in through lectures.

Students managed the demanding cognitive load by dictating both the speed and detail of content delivery. The activities also ensured collaboration. The topic of research skills suited this method of delivery because basic research questions provided the foundation for more advanced discussions about academic honesty and synthesizing information with ideas. Mentimeter stopped students feeling overwhelmed when processing large amounts of technical information onscreen and provided opportunities for discussions to flourish.

Classes were re-designed with online learning in mind, and I made significant changes to the delivery and presentation of information. I felt this was successful and the quizzes and competitions were widely used. That said, many students enjoyed discussing the intricacies of referencing systems with me as much as participating in the activities—the lectures were an insight into a rather pedantic world which they found enjoyably obscure and bafflingly

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<sup>1</sup> A list of websites with which readers may be less familiar is offered at the end of this essay.

specific. Injecting humor into examples and explanations of referencing systems seemed to engage them just as much as the quizzes and competitions and took far less time to curate. I was left wondering if I had overused the activities because I was compensating for teaching a dry topic online. Had I used technological tools as a crutch rather than as necessary pedagogical support?

In a bid to re-create our in-person conceptual conversations (where students discuss their research journey with each other), I used Zoom breakout rooms. I placed two students in each room, and they took turns asking each other a set of questions to test both the intellectual reasoning and fundamentals of practical research, such as what information they would need and where they would get it. I had no pre-existing concerns about using breakout rooms, so I was surprised when participation was tentative, and attendance dropped. It became clear when I joined the rooms that students felt nervous discussing their ideas with peers. I had never come across this reticence before, and it took me a while to realize that students were experiencing anxiety because they did not know with whom they would be placed. This in turn made them feel intellectually unsafe. The bonds of trust between peers had not formed on Zoom and as a result the collaborative research process failed.

As the spring term ended, I felt strongly that whatever the future of education, it must have trusting relationships at its core. This year I developed a deeper understanding of how important direct communication is in building and maintaining intellectual relationships. The move toward technical tools can distract from free-flowing discussions; being separated by time and space damaged the relationships between students. My foray into the world of technical tools for pedagogical support has taught me that re-designing courses for online teaching is more successful than attempting to replicate in-person experience online. The

knowledge that these tools both enrich and encroach on our teaching will lead to lasting adaptations in my delivery, but ultimately the past year has taught me that when teaching academic writing skills, the in-person experience is so important that any attempt to re-create it outside the classroom will fall short, even with the most advanced technological tools.

### *Tech Research, John Woolf*

As COVID-19 hit, I was teaching a course titled *Museums, Galleries and Graffiti: The Visual Arts in London*. Each week we would take a trip to a museum, gallery, or site of street art, followed by a class-based discussion and a deeper exploration into various themes—everything from the commercialization of art to a new interpretive tool. So, as the museums and galleries shut down and we moved into lockdown, I frantically searched the web for virtual research tours. I tested these tools in the virtual classroom and asked my lockdown-weary students for honest feedback. The following reflection outlines the utility of such tools.

Smartify, an app which offers audio commentary on artwork from around the world, is great if you are actually staring at an artwork in a museum, but in a virtual classroom, Smartify (and indeed other podcasts) didn't really translate. It needed to be used sparingly: having someone talk at you while you look at an onscreen image cannot work for long. My students quickly got bored and distracted. There were some great online videos, and I found Tate Modern's particularly good: short, informative, and insightful but once again, brevity was part of the appeal.

Then there were specific websites used for individual and collective research tasks. In another class, I effectively used a number of websites, such the London Sound Survey,

which has collated historic and contemporary sounds around the city, enabling me to virtually recreate “soundwalks.” Similarly, in the world of visual arts, there were helpful websites that clearly outlined and explored specific themes: The Museum of Modern Art’s Learning Page (MoMA) was particularly informative, offering detailed yet pithy analyses of different art movements and artists. Helpfully, MoMA also had educational resources such as lesson plans and topics for discussions, which were neatly translatable to the virtual classroom. Furthermore, assisted with worksheets filled with questions, I could unleash the students onto MoMA and other websites for some active research into, for example, the nature of DADA as anti-art.

In my pedagogical online arsenal, there were virtual tours to museums and galleries but, like everything else online, they could not be used indiscriminately: some virtual tours were clunky and simply not worth the class time. My students responded particularly well to the virtual tours offered by the National Gallery, the British Museum, and the Goodman Gallery in London: they were easy to navigate, and you could get relatively intimate with the artwork in a gallery.

Nonetheless, a change in delivery was still required. During in-person visits to museums, I largely gave students free rein as long as they wrote up their observations in fortnightly Observational Journals. But online I found needed much more direction, a clearer task otherwise, after a few clicks, the virtual tour lost its appeal. So, I created specific worksheets for each virtual tour. These had to be completed and uploaded at the end of the class, forming part of the (often dreaded) participation points. Here I would award students full marks for completed worksheets, 50 percent for poorly executed worksheets, and 0 percent if they failed to upload. Previously I had resisted worksheets, which felt better suited for high school students, and I always required participation from my students, so I never included

participation points. But I found that a virtual tour plus a worksheet that was graded led to success in the virtual classroom.

Through a combination of audio commentaries, online videos, web-based research, virtual tours and worksheets, each class felt positively packed and varied. Still, yet again, across a whole semester there was additional time to fill: virtual teaching, while much more taxing on the professor, was ultimately less time consuming than in-person visits and trips around London. So, I had to introduce new themes into the course: If the Turner Prize can be awarded to a soundscape artist, why not explore the art of sound? If MoMA can collect video games, why not explore (and play!) video games? Cue, then, broader discussions into what defines “art,” with a helpful detour into the work of Duchamp.

As the semester progressed, I started to feel strangely liberated: I was no longer constrained by geography and my Covid-informed virtual classrooms became more fast-paced, more diverse, and more directed than my in-person classes. I felt able to adapt the course in ways which responded to students’ interests; specifically, debates concerning the removal of public statues, the repatriation of artifacts, and pressures to be “beautiful.” COVID-19 precipitated pedagogical discombobulation preceded by experimentation and liberation. While I will certainly be taking students on field trips in the near future, these excursions will be one weapon within an expanded arsenal of online tools.

### *Tech Transformations, Alan Hertz*

My experience of COVID teaching was similar to that of my colleagues. I used technology in two ways: to enrich the virtual classroom environment, and to provide a substitute for the field trips which have been essential parts of my history and arts courses for decades. I used

many of the same tools (Mentimeter, museum websites, etc.) for similar purposes. As the year proceeded, however, I became more and more intrigued by the long-term question: how might these tools permanently shape my teaching? My answer to that question increasingly focused on my occasional work with American visiting students. In particular, it revived my interest in a hybrid model for a study abroad course.

Here is an outline of the concept. A humanities course for students coming to London would begin at the students' home campus with a research module providing a virtual introduction to the city. At the heart of this module would be a project exploring the geography, history, and sociology of the neighborhood where students will be living or studying. To do this, they would rely on a set of online tools we learned to use during the pandemic: Layers of London, the Metropolitan London Archive picture collection, the interactive version of the Charles Booth maps created by LSE, the Survey of London, as well as more familiar ones like Google Earth.

Once the students arrived, the course would continue with a combination of classroom work and field trips. But those experiences would be less superficially touristic than they often are. If the model worked, students would respond with informed and empathetic recognition rather than culture shock or stereotype. They would have the tools and background to benefit more fully, to analyze more deeply, to respond more warmly to their new experiences.

Let me use a thought experiment to illustrate how this might work. In the past, my American students have sometimes been housed in Canonbury, a gentrifying working-class district near the Emirates, Arsenal's football ground. The groups have often included soccer fans, but they have rarely had any sense of the history or sociology of sport in London, so they

have often found attendance at a game baffling, even intimidating, and the behavior of fans around the stadium simply barbaric. If they arrived at their new home with some sense of the neighborhood's past, of the roots of football in working-class culture, of the role of alcohol in Londoners' social life, they would be better able to appreciate and even participate in the experience. I feel I now have the technological tools to give them that background, and to give them a fairly rigorous introduction to important ideas in urban studies while doing so.

### *Conclusion*

The virtual classroom is no substitute for proximity and relationship building within the physical classroom. Our commitment to using physical geography to aid our teaching remains unabated. But COVID-19 brought about a disruption which, pedagogically speaking, provided new opportunities. Tools such as Mentimeter can support students processing large amounts of information. Technological research tools can inject variety and diversity into the course, offering another mode of engagement with subject matter. The use of technology needs to be directive: fancy tech for the sake of it can be a distraction; it is not a pedagogical panacea. Nonetheless, more technologically infused classrooms (and more tech literate professors) will likely remain a constant feature of higher education. In the field of study abroad, and indeed in location-specific education, this can present a unique opportunity to synthesize the virtual and in-person to create new experiences, insights, and learning.

### *Biographies:*

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## *The Upshot to Embracing Online Experiences*

Amelia J. Dietrich, The Forum on Education Abroad

### *The Upshot to Embracing Online Experiences*

Serving education abroad through work at a professional association gives a person a unique perspective on our field. When something big happens and our colleagues are fielding calls from students, families, and colleagues, we are fielding calls from them. We hear from big universities and small colleges, education abroad organizations who serve 5 students or 5,000. Colleagues from across the globe ask for advice, resources, and assistance locating colleagues with similar challenges or promising solutions. Sometimes we have solutions at hand. Sometimes we have to get to work to find or develop them.

In the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, a topic we received a lot of emails about was of online (or virtual) global learning experiences. I must admit, this came as a surprise. After all, for years, initiatives related to online experiences and virtual exchange have been met with hesitation or disinterest by many in our field. Many education abroad professionals seemed to believe that virtual exchange with classmates in another country was far too different from actually making the journey and so, by and large, they chose not to invest much time in virtual experiences. Until they had no choice.

When colleagues reached out for guidance on how to quickly “move” their current education abroad programs online and how to design virtual alternatives to the summer programming they already had planned on a short lead-time, I began familiarizing myself with existing literature on COIL (Collaborative Online International Learning), virtual exchange, and other

such models. I discovered new-to-me organizations and uncovered virtual programming in the portfolios of colleagues I have worked with for years. We convened a webinar on the topic and hosted a session at our annual conference, each attended by several hundred colleagues in the field.

It quickly became apparent that much of the literature and resources on online global learning experiences existed in different spheres than education abroad colleagues frequented. It also became apparent that many education abroad professionals did not have much experience in designing and facilitating online programs and felt overwhelmed at the prospect of launching them in the midst of everything else our field was facing. But there is common ground between the experience necessary to develop programs and manage partnerships for education abroad programs and the work one must do to manage online global learning experiences: overcoming language barriers, respecting cultural differences, building strong partnerships, aligning goals, and integrating courses into a larger curriculum. There is also common ground in the desired outcomes such programs have for students: intercultural competencies, working across difference, teamwork, problem-solving, communication skills. What education abroad specialists needed was a guide to help them map the facets of the programming they are already accustomed to organizing onto the contours of the online programming that the coronavirus has forced them to embrace.

I conducted in-depth informational interviews with colleagues from across the spectrum of knowledge and experience on online global learning experiences—virtual exchange experts with little to no experience in the student mobility sphere, education abroad professionals with little to no experience with virtual programming, and people with experience in both—in order to co-create *An Education Abroad Professional's Guide to Online Global Learning Experiences*, accompanied by a list of questions to help guide decision-making. It is written

and structured to function as a companion to *The Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad* ([doi.org/10.36366/S.978-1-952376-04-7](https://doi.org/10.36366/S.978-1-952376-04-7)) so that colleagues used to implementing the Standards in their work can readily connect their existing knowledge and expertise with the content of the new guide. The accompanying webpage points to additional resources and further reading ([doi.org/10.36366/G.978-1-952376-06-1](https://doi.org/10.36366/G.978-1-952376-06-1)).

Though the recent uptick in efforts in our field to develop virtual and hybrid options has been largely motivated by the need for a short-term stand-in for education abroad and international student mobility, what happens when things go “back to normal”? Some formerly (and sometimes still) reluctant education abroad professionals report that they are considering giving online global learning experiences a permanent place in their international program portfolio. Indeed, keeping virtual and hybrid options in your portfolio may make the difference in how your organization is able to weather the current crisis and the next. Here’s why:

### *Online Global Learning Expands Your Inclusion Strategy*

During recruitment, students can identify any number of reasons why they feel education abroad is not the right fit for them. These barriers can be real or perceived, temporary, or permanent (more on this later) and can include finances, health concerns, disabilities, graduation requirements, family responsibilities, immigration status, competing opportunities (sports, internships, musical ensembles, jobs, etc.), and even simply fear or lack of interest. Online options clear many of these barriers from students’ paths. When students feel welcome and comfortable with virtual international programming, it opens the door to more opportunities for an international programs office to help them understand why

the barriers they perceive as standing in their way may not actually be reasons not to study abroad.

### *Online and In-Person Are Not an Either/Or Proposition*

Some of the barriers to education abroad participation mentioned above are temporary—or they could be made temporary through participation in online global learning experiences. Majors change. Financial situations change. Contact with faculty, staff, or classmates could lead to a conversation that helps a student learn about scholarships that are available to them, or about ways that their disability can be accommodated overseas to make education abroad accessible to them. Most of all, participating fruitfully in a virtual exchange with people from a different country and culture than your own makes immersion in an unfamiliar community a lot less intimidating.

Everyone I spoke to agreed: education abroad and virtual exchange are not in competition with one another. Virtual experiences can serve as a scaffolding for students' confidence in their intercultural and language skills, which they then realize they can build on by pursuing education abroad opportunities. In this way, online global learning experiences can be a pathway to education abroad for many students. The reverse is also true. Returned students can use online global learning options to continue to engage with other cultures and build on their skills after they return home from education abroad. When seen as complementary, virtual and in-person options offer a richer collection of international and intercultural experiences for your students and opportunities to increase participation in international/intercultural experiences overall.

## *Keep the Career Preparation Coming*

Just as online global learning experiences are more than just a stop-gap measure until education abroad scales back up, they are also more than just filler until students can get back to preparing themselves for their futures. This is preparation for their future. This pandemic and the resulting work-from-home transition has given us an opportunity to reflect on our conceptions of work and how it gets done. My own career is a case study: I have worked remotely full-time for several years. Before that, as a graduate student and post-doctoral researcher, I conducted research projects and produced publications with teams that were spread out across multiple states and countries. Earlier still, I was a paralegal, coordinating the intellectual property for a corporate legal department of a multinational firm with locations in 40+ countries. Many of the people I have worked with on major projects I have never met in person. I share this to illustrate how, across multiple fields, while doing different kinds of work with differing levels of responsibility, my own career trajectory has drawn significantly on my intercultural skills, my multilingualism, and my ability to work across difference, all of which I attribute to my experience as an education abroad participant. I also had to learn how to use those skills over the phone and email, using formal and professional cultural codes, and navigating power dynamics that studying abroad did not prepare me for directly. Online global learning experiences certainly could (and do) help bridge some of those gaps I had to learn on the job.

## *The Benefit Goes Beyond Your Students*

As a field, we hail the virtues of mutually beneficial partnerships. We seek reciprocity, some way to “return the favor” that partner institutions, community organizations, and individuals in the places we operate education abroad programs do us by sharing their cultures, their knowledge, their lives, and their environment with our students. That can be easier said than done. Have you ever tried to “give back” to the community where a program operates, only

to have your intended beneficiary say “thanks, but no thanks”? Have you ever invited local students to take part in programming alongside your education abroad students, but in the end only a couple participate because the local schools’ and students’ calendars or finances (or both) don’t make it feasible? Or because local students don’t see the value proposition in participating in a program aimed at foreign students?

Well-designed online global learning experiences can create neutral spaces for students from different locations to interact with and learn from one another, making it possible for participants to derive similar value from the experience, so long as time zones and calendars, power and privilege are taken into account when making plans to create a truly neutral space. (*The Guide* covers this in more detail.)

### *Coda: No International Educator Is an Island*

As we seek to translate this quick pivot into a long-term solution, it is essential to seek continuous improvement, to formalize policies, practices, and structures to support these experiences, and to build networks flexible enough to work through the ongoing pandemic and beyond. The quality and attention to detail we pride ourselves on in education abroad must be expected of the new virtual experiences we are developing, and we must value and be ready to learn from the work of those among us who were already developing their expertise and know-how about successful virtual programs before the pandemic began. Building partnerships between entities engaged in international mobility and those engaged in virtual programming can help us find ways to keep program administration efficient and effective for our teams, while keeping quality and accessibility high for students who choose to go abroad or not (yet).

## ***Biography***

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# *International Education, Prejudice, and Social Justice*

Kelechi Kalu, University of California, Riverside.

## *Introduction*

For decades, universities, their faculty members, students, and researchers have used international education as a platform to explore and acquire knowledge across national and institutional boundaries to enable solutions for common global problems. However, the confluence of the COVID-19 pandemic and the increased profile of the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement have exposed embedded prejudices that created fragile collaborations in international educational processes. Those prejudices have led to one-dimensional institutional collaborations between Western and non-Western universities and societies. Consequently, embedded prejudices and fragilities are evident in how global knowledges are produced, disseminated, and acted upon by end-users. This essay examines some historical and current contexts of social justice, their international educational dimensions, and suggests some strategies for international educators (IEs) to reduce prejudice in the US and globally.

## *Historical Context: Social Justice in the US and Globally*

Using agreed-upon curricula, universities, their faculty members, and students are significant bridges between formal and street knowledge. Using access to research, teaching, and service, higher education institutions (HEIs) provide space and freedom for scholars to articulate ideas and values that become mainstream in their societies. For the US, the 1862 Land Grant Act, which was expanded in the 1890s, empowered US public HEIs to extend access to education beyond the privileged few. While many private HEIs like

Oxford, Cambridge, Harvard, and Yale, were globally sought after for collaborations at the end of the Cold War, many public HEIs, especially in the US, attracted global appeal by promoting themselves as “land grant universities to the world.”

Between 1862 and 1890, the core of US public education policies propagated the notion that HEIs can and should foster freedom, liberty, prosperity, and positive change in the United States, even as public and private institutions maintained, in practice and theory if not in law, the idea of racial inequality between Whites and Blacks across the nation. The use of skin color to exclude Blacks from formal education, the benefits of freedom, liberty, prosperity, and the positive changes that accrue from these became intrinsic to how universities and their faculty trained successive generations of young White people to see and judge Black people.

Over time, and as non-White student populations increased in US schools, the practice of excluding Blacks from quality formal education took the form of underfunded K-12 schools that serve mainly Black and Brown people. Those exclusionary practices were, in turn, buttressed by continuing declines in federal and state funding for public education. Not integrating Blacks into the mainstream of US life, educational curriculums, and culture normalized such exclusion for future generations. The result is that those exclusionary practices further cemented the prejudicial perception that Blacks must not rise above their (lowly) station in the educational, religious, and public policymaking institutions in the US and Western European countries. Significantly, exclusionary practices that are based on skin color frequently keep Lady Justice awake in situations involving White police officers and Black people. Understanding the foregoing illuminates the brutality on display in the nine minutes and twenty-nine seconds during which a White police officer pressed his knee into George Floyd’s neck, suffocating him to death.

Ideally, social justice means that everyone is treated equally in society and before the law. Under the rule of law, no one is expected to be more privileged because of their position in society, educational level, or skin color. Conversely, the presumption of innocence has been consistently abrogated for Blacks, and extrajudicial maiming and killing of Blacks by White officers has instead become a norm. In 1991, Rodney King was beaten senseless in full view of cameras by several Los Angeles Police officers who were later acquitted. In 1999, Amadou Diallo, an unarmed immigrant from Guinea in West Africa, was killed by four New York Police officers. The list of other victims is long and has been discussed extensively in several media. Significantly, the recent murder of George Floyd, which catapulted the BLM movement into a global call for social justice, was made possible by cellphones and social media platform; the same information technology that broadcast the death of Mohammed Bouazizi in Tunisia during a protest against police injustice sparked the Arab Spring in 2010. While Bouazizi died of self-immolation, Mr Oury Jalloh, a Sierra Leonian in Germany was “accused” of burning himself to death in 2005 while in police custody in Dessau, Germany. Before that, Achidi John, a Cameroonian immigrant in Germany, died of “cardiac arrest” in police custody in 2001. In 2015, Mitch Henriquez was choked to death while in police custody in the Netherlands, and even with video footage, the five police perpetrators paid almost no penalty. David Dungay, an Aboriginal man of Sydney, Australia and Eric Garner of New York, both of whom uttered and sadly popularized the phrase “I can’t breathe,” died while in police custody in 2015 and 2014, respectively. And Adama Traore, a Malian man, died in police custody in 2016 in France. The deceased referenced above have three things in common—all were Black persons, unarmed, and died at the hands of White police officers.

Thus, the global outrage to the George Floyd’s death at the hands of the police was all too familiar for Blacks and their allies in other Western countries. While assaults on Blacks have

endured within the structure, institutions, and consciousness of people and social relations in the US and in other countries, the global history of prejudice against Black people is complex. Assaults on Blacks by Whites date back to the Trans-Atlantic Slave trade of African bodies when various European nations saw and used people of African descent as products. Examples of recorded human rights violations against African peoples based on skin color include, but are not limited to, acts by Belgians in the Congo, the British in Kenya, the Germans in Namibia, Spaniards in Equatorial Guinea, the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique, the French in Algeria, and the British and the Dutch in South Africa. Students of social sciences and humanities are virtual witnesses to these facts of brutality against humans whose experiences and memories endure in the lives of Blacks and others who have joined the global call for social justice led by the BLM movement in the United States.

### *Current Context: Social Justice and International Education Today*

Although civil and human rights violations against Blacks by government agents are not new, movements for social justice have taken different forms, and have not always been about systemic racism. For example, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBTQ+) movements internationally are about human rights. Similar efforts have been undertaken by the Indigenous People's movements in Australia, the Dalits in India, and the Uighur Muslims in China. The current social justice movements also have economic dimensions. For instance, the Occupy Movement supports anti-economic inequality agitation against transnational financial institutions in the US, UK, and other industrialized countries. The #ENDSARS movement in Nigeria opposes police brutality by the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS) against citizens that it was supposed to protect; SARS had instead stolen from, raped, molested and, sometimes murdered citizens. Thus, the Minneapolis police officers' indifferent public killing of George Floyd simply reminded people of what they have endured, sometimes in silence, in their communities across the world. Although current social justice movements take different forms, the BLM protests around the world are mostly in response

to prejudice against Blacks. And, while it is common knowledge that Blacks are also police officers, members of LGBTQ+ community, and other groups pushing for social justice, Black people cannot take off their Black skins like a cloth or cover their Black skins with their sexual orientation or economic statuses. Blacks—irrespective of socioeconomic status—live with the realities of prejudices embedded in institutions like HEIs, which purport to advance enlightened knowledge and human progress.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put these realities on display for the world to see. With lockdowns across many countries, millions of people working and learning from home have been forced to grapple with the images and videos looped constantly on social media and traditional media alike. They have been unable to ignore the absence of less well-off classmates who lack access to stable internet connections and computers from online classrooms. They have seen their international classmates struggle with boundaries presented by uncertain visa statuses and financial aid concerns.

HEI international educational platforms are anchored in the tradition, experiences, and histories of Western Civilization. The HEIs, given the enduring impacts of European colonization of non-European territories, have the responsibility to enable understanding of how racial dominance ideas are tied to power structures and authority symbols that preserve White or elite privileges at the expense of non-Whites and non-elites. That includes how systemic racism is embedded within educational systems, religious organizations, and international educational organizations, which through their (in)action lend support to political and economic structures of prejudice globally. Thus, international education organizations and relevant support structures must accept responsibility and work to end exclusionary strategies that are based mostly on skin color.

Given that less than 35 percent of people globally have college degrees, access to higher education is limited and privileged. As contemporary HEIs curriculums still largely reflect Western ideas and cultures, the representation of non-Western humans, objects, and cultures in contemporary texts and the authority structures of academic institutions will continue to determine how non-Western peoples are perceived globally. In effect, how people are trained and the ideas and colleagues they are exposed to while in HEI environments determine their productive output with the potential to intensify or reduce prejudice in society.

As members of the international education communities, it is our responsibility to ask how, for example, Black people see themselves in the texts, classrooms, and spaces of knowledge that are supposed to enable human progress. According to Henry Louis Gates (1997: 178), the late Barbara Johnson (Harvard University) already answered that question. For Johnson, Black people see themselves in the educational, political, economic, and social structures reproduced and sustained by Western education as “already read texts.” An already-read text does not need further engagement by mainstream individuals, communities, and institutions. Johnson’s insight is at the core of the challenge that we currently face. If Blacks’ multidimensional identities, strengths, and weaknesses are perceived to be already-known, then political and economic institutions, staffed by individuals trained by global educational systems, become ineffective in deploying their agencies to engage and understand Black persons.

Indeed, in the Netherlands, it took the killing of George Floyd and the BLM movement to enable a reflection on why (White) people on the national Dutch holiday of St. Nicholas celebrate “Black Pete” by painting their faces black. For that community, it did not matter that “Black Pete” is a fictional character presented as St. Nicholas’s sidekick. Absent

“magic” of information technology, George Floyd would have become an already-read text without the cellphone video as usable evidence in a court of law, or anywhere else. As an already-read text, George Floyd, like Germany’s Oury Jalloh and Achidi John, the Netherlands’ Mitch Henriquez, Australia’s David Dungay, and France’s Adama Traore, was already guilty of “threatening police officers” and thus killed with impunity.

### *Can International Educators Help Reduce Prejudice?*

International educators are significant in closing the gaps in the collaborations to promote human rights and social justice, globally. IEs would do a much better job if we would go beyond cultural celebrations of difference. We need new strategies to reform international education organizations to be inclusive, such that comparative insights are part of students’ learning and intercultural skills. For example, HEIs should intentionally work to educate and collaborate with scholars and institutions from the Global South, to take ownership of economic and political developments in their home countries. What would the efforts reveal on peoples’ experiences with human rights violations that currently push migrants to seek political and economic freedoms in industrialized countries? And, if we are successful in the foregoing projects, what are the likely effects of national populism on international students?

HEIs enjoyed great budgetary support from governments during the Cold War. However, declining government budgetary support for HEIs at the end of the Cold War led to increased recruitment of international students. The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the inequality amongst institutions and students and thus provided reasons for developing deeper intercultural knowledge, globally. University communities are platforms for building international and cultural knowledges. Beyond the classroom, engaging intercultural knowledge reform should include off-campus assignments in local communities. Prejudice

reduction and service learning-curricula enhancements can bridge intercultural knowledge between campuses and their communities. Indeed, simple friendly curiosity and interest about international students will likely enhance intercultural learning for everyone.

What the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear is that Blacks—irrespective of their locations—have been the targets of (White) people’s ugly behavior worldwide. With its global cultural dominance since 1945, there is evidence that when America is beautiful, the world tends to be more beautiful and vice versa. But these are dangerous times for liberal democracy and so IEs must do their part to preserve that beauty. Given that the existing educational foundation does not align with the structures of contemporary power, curriculum reform needs to incorporate the idea that people are people globally.

The core ideas that gave rise to the popular nationalism that has fragmented global collaborations, including in HEIs, remain embedded in the minds of the over 70 million people who voted for Mr. Trump in the US in 2020. The Biden Administration presents an opportunity for IEs to first check individual prejudices that unconsciously undermine genuine non-racial international educational practices. A window of opportunity offered by the new administration could be used by IEs to intentionally rethink how to engage HEIs to lead us toward the light of justice that education is meant to provide for everyone.

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### ***Biography***

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## *A Return to Idealism*

Chrissie Faupel, Appalachian State University

My recent dissertation work focused on the history of study abroad program providers. This research aimed to shed light on when and why program providers were founded and more importantly, what story their emergence tells about the field of education abroad. This research has been enlightening and throughout the process, I have gleaned some insights that are salient to the current situation we face during this global pandemic. In fact, two major themes emerged that are relevant here: the professionalization of the field of education abroad and a changing narrative of why study abroad even exists. I would like to consider these two themes in more detail to learn an important lesson as we do our best to survive—and dare I say, thrive—throughout this global crisis.

### *The Professionalization of the Field of Education Abroad*

For my dissertation research, I interviewed several study abroad “grand elders,” our esteemed colleagues who have devoted decades to working in education abroad and have much to teach us. Most of the grand elders that were interviewed proudly stated that when they began their careers, there was no field of education abroad to speak of. They had to forge their own way and to learn what it meant to be an education abroad professional. This gave the field an air of informality, as people “were not professionally trained” (M. Steinberg, personal communication, July 13, 2020). Because there were no formal education abroad training avenues, many professionals entered the nascent field from other disciplines. Woolf (personal communication, July 24, 2020) described this time as “exciting...people were inventing stuff ... [there was a] rich interaction of disciplines ... [where you] flew by the seat of your pants.”

This evolution of the field was similarly illustrated by the program providers' histories, as well. For example, many of the early providers maintained that their students' international experiences would be measured by the positive impact to the social good. Over time, standards and assessment outcomes were developed by the field and program providers were expected to provide quantifiable outcomes to justify the positive impact to participants of their programs.

This is an example of how education abroad has experienced isomorphic change from normative pressures to conform with higher education institutions. Efforts have been made to standardize the field so as to “define the conditions and methods of their field ... and to establish a cognitive base and legitimation for their occupational autonomy” (DiMaggio and Powell, 152). For these reasons, one could argue that normative processes contribute to institutional isomorphism among study abroad program providers. As the field further professionalizes due to an increased number of graduate programs in international education, the field may witness a greater degree of isomorphism from normative pressures.

### *A Changed Narrative*

Many of the early providers included in my research study were founded on idealistic and altruistic notions. Participants were encouraged—and motivated—to participate out of a sense of the common good. It was believed that exchange between young people of different cultures would be a benefit to both the study abroad participant and the host country national and perhaps more importantly, a benefit to the world at large.

We see this in the strong belief of School for International Education/Experiment in International Living founder Donald Watt when he said that people of the world can only learn to live together by living together. We see this in the motivation behind IES Abroad when former Nazi political prisoner Paul Koutny founded an organization to help rebuild war-torn Austria. We see this in CIEE as a nascent organization that was formed to provide transportation services to organizations dedicated to peace and understanding in the aftermath of World War II.

At a certain point, there was a “sea change in the rhetoric of education abroad” (M. Woolf, personal communication, July 24, 2020). Study abroad programs began to be marketed as a means to develop the individual. Emphasis was placed on the benefit to the individual in the form of enhanced job opportunities, increased graduate school acceptance rates, and higher starting salaries post-graduation. While this change in the narrative seems to have happened slowly and subtly, it does seem to coincide with political changes that came with the rise of neoliberalism.

This idea of liberal market economies, emerging in the 1980s and coinciding with the administrations of Ronald Reagan in the US and Margaret Thatcher in the UK, had a profound effect on many aspects of society, including international and higher education. This study shows evidence of neoliberalism tendencies as a factor in the emergence of study abroad program providers during this time period. This has come in the form of company mergers, acquisitions, relationships with investment companies, and stronger affiliation with the business industry rather than the education industry.

While there is nothing inherently wrong with this change of narrative, this does highlight a change in the field of education abroad.

## *The COVID-19 Silver Lining*

The current pandemic has brought the field of education abroad to its knees. We are having to rethink what we do and perhaps more importantly, why we do it. In a sense, as we emerge from this pandemic (and we will), we will have the task before us to build our field anew. The parallels to the stories of the study abroad grand elders are striking: they forged a path within a new field with the opportunity to shape it in the direction they thought important.

What a unique opportunity we are suddenly faced with: to be able to have such a profound effect on our professional field. We must ask ourselves: what should education abroad look like? What is our main goal and how do we get there? And we must answer these questions, thereby forging a path in this new world of education abroad that will emerge from the ashes.

Were I to ask (and answer) these questions of myself, I would like to see us change that narrative back again. What do we do? We provide opportunities for young (and young-at-heart) people to experience new viewpoints and ideas. Why do we do this? Because we want to make the world a better place. It is out of this sense of the common good—that studying abroad can benefit the world at large and not just the individual—that drives me to do what I do.

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## *Biography*

**Dr Chrissie Faupel** has worked in international education for almost a decade. She serves as the Director of Education Abroad at Appalachian State University. Chrissie received her MA in International Education from the School for International Training (SIT) Graduate Institute and has recently completed a PhD in Educational Leadership and Policy from the University of South Carolina.

## *Hitting the Pause Button: Reflecting on Where We Are as a Field*

Nick J. Gozik, Elon University

In the midst of a worldwide pandemic, it is understandable that those of us in education abroad have quickly gone into action. In many cases, our livelihoods and the survival of our institutions have depended upon fast and nimble thinking, with the development of new products and services. Perhaps if we were to be honest, we might admit that there has also been relief in staying busy and in “doing something”. As the adage goes, “idle hands make fretful minds.” All of this is entirely reasonable, and, in fact, we have seen quite a bit of innovation, which is indeed inspiring.

Nevertheless, I am left with a nagging feeling that we are not making the most of this period to move our work forward. Much comes down to a need to put a pause on things, even for just a moment, to consider where we have been, where we are now, and where we want to go. One might imagine us taking a giant remote control and hitting the “freeze frame” button, locking all actors and action in place. In fact, it might be argued that our frenetic activity is exactly what has both helped us survive, while also preventing us from developing a clearer, long-term vision. To understand how we might re-center our thinking, here I suggest that we begin by taking a note from transformative learning theory, from within the scholarship on teaching excellence.

### *Transformative Learning*

From the perspective of transformative learning theory, our current period represents not just a crisis yet also a point of rupture, which can be quite productive if also challenging. As Jack Mezirow (1991) explains, transformative learning takes place when:

we encounter experiences, often in an emotionally charged situation, that fail to fit our expectations and consequently lack meaning for us, or we encounter an anomaly that cannot be given coherence either by learning within existing schemes or by learning new schemes (p.94 in Whitelaw, Sears, & Campbell, 2004, 11).

Such anomalies need not be as catastrophic or as life changing as a pandemic. In some cases, curricular changes and technological advances have prompted teachers to rethink the way in which they approach their content and pedagogical practices. Rebecca Hovey and I have similarly been investigating the ways in which faculty leading short-term programs are impacted by their experiences overseas, helping them to gain a deeper and more varied understanding of students and teaching practices, both abroad and on their home campus.

The natural tendency with any sort of upheaval is to find a way to move on and return to “normal” as quickly as possible. However, there is a value in taking a moment to reflect, beginning with an exploration of what Patricia Cranton refers to as one’s “Authentic Self.” Cranton starts by asking teachers to consider “Who am I, really?” leading to a self-assessment. Through an approach referred to as “process reflection,” they are then encouraged to think about how they can be most effective and, importantly “authentic” in re-envisioning what and how they teach (Sanderson, 2008, 284). Borrowing from this logic, we might ask: “Who are we ... really” as a field? And how might we rethink how and what do? If there was ever a time to ask these questions, this is it.

### *Who are We, Really?*

In addressing the first question above, it would be misleading to paint the work of international educators in binary terms of all good or bad. Let us be honest: there has been tremendous success over the past century and especially over the past several decades, particularly in terms of increased mobility. The Erasmus+ network has completely opened

the door to mobility within Europe and beyond since the inception of the Erasmus program in 1987. The US has similarly come a long way since the first study abroad program was developed in 1923. Today nearly 350,000 US students study abroad each year and, on the incoming side, the US has hosted more than one million international students for the fifth consecutive year (Institute for International Education, 2000). The latter is especially remarkable given increased immigration restrictions and anti-immigrant rhetoric over the past several years. Such an expansion has been fueled by government initiatives, increased funding for institutions and students, and the expansion of lower-cost travel, among other factors. Just as importantly, there has been a diversification of who goes and where they study, with mobility efforts no longer being limited to elites.

At the same time, the field is a victim of its own success. Much of the work is subsumed within commercial activities. A walk through any major conference site, when held in person, includes an exhibit hall where there may be hundreds, if not thousands, of exhibitors. The money is real, with international education not just being a sideline activity, yet also a driver of economic growth. The Australian government, for instance, announced in 2019 that international students had contributed \$37.6 billion to the Australian economy over the course of a fiscal year, an increase of \$5 billion from the previous year (Australian Ministry of Education, Skills, & Employment, 2019). Yes, that is billion with a “b”. At the institutional level, many budgets are tied integrally to the numbers of international and study abroad students. Changes in immigration policies, political rhetoric, economic downturns, and health and safety—including the recent pandemic—quickly demonstrate how reliant many have become on the business of mobility.

Within this hubbub of activity, a question remains as to how well students are being served. Is the field simply engaging in academic tourism? To what extent are students engaging with

locals? For US students, the truncation of workweeks, with no courses on Fridays and sometimes Mondays, prompts the question of whether students are actually living in their host cities or treating their residences as pieds-à-terre. In a desire to satisfy customers, are students being sufficiently challenged to move out of their comfort zones, to integrate into local communities, and to gain the intercultural knowledge that they are promised? Even students who may enjoy the idea of freedom and liberty often return reporting that they had wished for more local friends and in admitting that they might have traveled less. On home campuses, there is likewise quite a bit of segregation between domestic and international students, pointing to similar concerns around immersion.

Additionally, there are mounting questions around the impact of mobility on local communities and the environment (Redden, 2019). The reduction of tourism due to the pandemic has been of financial concern yet has also been a relief to locals in tourist destinations, who for the first time in many years are able to move more easily around their cities. At the same time, the pandemic has highlighted ongoing disparities in wealth and privilege, which too often characterize unequal partnerships within international education. It would be an error not to note the (post)colonial aspects of mobility measures, which are embedded in the types of experiences students have (Ogden, 2010), the agreements that are signed, and the realities of who has access to international programming.

### *Where Do We Go from Here?*

Despite these challenges, there is much room for hope. As noted, mobility efforts are not all good or bad. Most international educators joined the field out of a passion to help students, faculty, and staff become more globally oriented, and that drive still exists. The question, then, is less about motivation and more about recalibration. Here, I believe that reflection of

the sort that Cranton espouses can help us set to temporarily aside what we do, to remember why our programs and services exist in the first place.

There can never be a one-size-fits-all strategy for global programming, with too much variation by country and institution/organization. Regardless, all entities have an opportunity to return to their core values and goals, asking the following questions: Why were we founded/organized? Who are our key constituents? What do we hope to accomplish? And what do key indicators say about our success so far in delivering on our stated outcomes? The latter will require not just focusing on customer satisfaction, but also about results through data mining and outcomes assessment. In the spirit of backward design, only after these questions have been answered will it be time to come back to whether a given set of programs and services are truly the best fit for what an institution or organization hopes to accomplish.

Much of this falls within basic “planning 101,” yet all too frequently many of us forget to reflect in this way. Instead, we often add newer programs and services without fully vetting what already exists—adding more rings to the tree trunk, if you will. Nonetheless, it will be likely that, coming out of the pandemic, educators will be faced with fewer resources and it will be even more necessary to determine what works. With reflection, it may be that will finally make the shift toward increased on-campus internationalization at home efforts and rely more heavily on technology—something that has become much more viable in the past year.

If the large-scale questions will continue to loom, just as important is what takes place at the ground level. Individual offices and professionals can equally take advantage of this time to go through the same reflection exercises. In an education abroad office, one might evaluate

both the programs made available to students, as well as the education abroad process itself. If the team wants students to become more fully immersed in local cultures while abroad, are the programs offered best designed to help facilitate such engagement? Likewise, are students adequately prepared at each stage of the education abroad process, i.e., from marketing/outreach to advising, pre-departure, onsite orientation, and reentry? This is an ideal time to start experimenting, borrowing from other fields and in making the most of technology.

### *Conclusion*

Reflection often feels like a luxury. However, the risks of not engaging with the type of soul searching and reconfiguration discussed here are significant. For decades, our programs and services have expanded, yet many of our models and processes have remained largely untouched. Through the lens of transformative learning, the pandemic is a point at which we can go back to core values and desired outcomes and evaluate whether we are still on the right path. If we do not do this work now, we may find ourselves out-of-touch. Just as importantly, this is a time to ensure that our work is meaningful and value-added, delivering on the promises we have made to our constituents and ourselves as educators.

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## ***Biography***

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## *Stuff Happened to Us*

Michael Woolf, CAPA: The Global Education Network

### *As Flies to Wanton Boys*

There is certainly no need to retell narratives of loss, disruption, and alteration. I have nothing much to add to those pandemic stories. Instead, I'm going to think aloud about what has happened to us, what may happen next, consider how these events have impacted the languages we use, and, finally, what we have done, and might do, to support each other.

This is not scholarship, but rather a set of personal perspectives on what has been an extremely disturbing time. There is an overwhelming sense of sadness, but also a perception that in the turning of this strange world we have encountered absurdities and disjunctions that both Franz Kafka and Groucho Marx would recognize.

Surreal political environments combined with the invisible menace of COVID-19 forged an environment that would challenge the credibility of the novelist who was foolhardy enough to invent it—George Orwell's *1984* meets Don Siegel's movie *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*.

The title of this piece, "Stuff Happened to Us," is intended to suggest an aspect of the pandemic that may not be at the forefront of the stories we have been telling each other. Like the protagonists of Orwell's novel, Siegel's film, or Kafka's nightmares, we have learned that we are not in charge. Who or what controls events may not be clear but the agency we felt we had has evaporated. In earlier times we may have evoked King Lear's despair:

As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods;

They kill us for their sport.

Budgets, travel plans, conferences, and professional development were all tossed out or became a pale virtual simulacrum of their original conception. Carefully wrought strategic plans became paper souvenirs. Like the confetti that litters damp streets after a wedding, they are a remnant of more optimistic times. It is common for international educators to imagine how we may change the world. Instead, we have learned how the world may change us. For many, this has felt like seismic thunder. If nothing else, we may take from this a greater sense of humility, recognize the limits of our potency.

### *The New Reality?*

Latest clichés talk about the “new normal” or “new reality.” The implication is that the pandemic will permanently change what we do and how we do it. We have heard this argument before. I would not deny that the impact of COVID-19 will cast a much longer shadow than that of SARS or even, perhaps, that of international terrorism. Nor do I seek to under-estimate or trivialize the impact. This pandemic has hurt in profound ways. Above all, lives have been lost on a hideous scale. The World Health Organization estimates that over 4.5 million people have died as a consequence of COVID-19 (as of September 2021).

In our own world, colleagues lost jobs, income, security, a sense of purpose and identity. We tend, unfortunately perhaps, to identify ourselves by profession which speaks both to our inner sense of self and locates that self externally within a shared understanding of purpose, status, and function.

I know I have missed the community that we draw upon for personal friendships and professional enlightenment. Geography has shrunk. At times, lockdown has felt a bit like lock-up. Certainly, Zoom is better than nothing, but it cannot replace those exchanges that occur in corridors, that spill over into shared lunches, drinks after work, and all the other sites of engagement that enrich our lives. International education is a relatively small world: we speak to each other from a place where assumptions, values, and ideals are shared. We communicate as a community within which there are, inevitably, disagreements and conflicting perspectives, but they occur within a spectrum of beliefs that is narrower than most. It is probably impossible to be xenophobic, parochial, or openly bigoted when the work we all do is based upon the belief that we have much to learn from diverse peoples in unfamiliar places. That world, for the time being, is compromised.

The question is, of course, what will happen next: restoration or revolution? Phrases like the new normal imply that our world has been altered for the long term, if not forever. Most generations take the view that the things that have happened to them are of utmost significance. That is sometimes true but not inevitably or necessarily so. It is an affront to a sense of our own importance to consider that what happens to us may become a footnote in history or even, perish the thought, be forgotten.

An historical parallel may throw a little light here. It has always been convenient to blame infections upon foreigners. This is something we have been doing for centuries and that tradition has been sustained by the “Chinese virus” and the “Indian variant” identifying, ironically, the two most important national markets for international student recruitment for US, UK, and Australian universities.

The 20th century witnessed the “Spanish” Flu. Toward the end of World War I, this pandemic spread across the world. It lasted, in one form or another, from February 1918 for almost 2 years and probably killed more people than the war itself. As many as 50 million people may have died and about a third of the world’s population were infected (circa. 500 million). In short, following the cataclysmic slaughter of the war, this blow must have felt like imminent Armageddon.

That said, it did not fundamentally change the world or create a new normal, nor did it materially alter behavior. Consider the impact within the United States. About 675,000 Americans died in less than 2 years (roughly 80,000 more deaths than the estimated US Covid-related total as of June 2021). By April 1920, the epidemic had petered out to coincide with the beginning of a decade popularly characterized as liberated and hedonistic. Economic prosperity in Europe and the US, with significant growth in consumerism, was accompanied by a lifting of many social restraints and conventions, particularly in the great cities on both sides of the Atlantic. The noise of the “Roaring Twenties” drowned out the pain of the epidemic. The environmental historian Alfred Crosby in 1976 observed that “Americans took little notice of the pandemic, and then quickly forgot whatever they did notice.”

I am not in any way trying to minimize the impact of COVID-19, but we should recognize that our historical lens is a narrow one. What happens to us, we believe, is uniquely important. However, history is written in contemplation and, in the future, we may not be seen as the critical actors that we imagine ourselves to be.

There is, then, another possibility. Amnesia may be stronger than memory; the desire to rebuild more powerful than a willingness to accept the notion of a new normal.

## *Words, Words, Words*

Another rather less significant impact of the pandemic has been to create new linguistic usages. These change over time anyway. For Shakespeare, a “punk” was a prostitute, not a devotee of terrible music. In my younger days, the idea of “queer studies,” an emergent discipline in higher education at home and abroad, would have been unthinkable. “Queer” may have been unfortunately heard in the turbulent streets but never in the enlightened environs of academia. “Queer” started life in the 16th century to describe odd or eccentric behavior, nothing to do with sexual preference. “Freak” also began life in the 16th century with a cluster of meanings including abnormality of nature. By the 1960s, it meant fan and could be used in non-pejorative conjunctions. You could therefore be a normal jazz freak—an accountant with a taste for Charlie Parker perhaps.

I’ve become aware of people saying “I don’t have the bandwidth” which I originally took to be a complaint about an internet supplier. It is now a synonym for “I’m too busy.”

I’m also intrigued by oxymorons such as the idea of “military intelligence” or the implications of “civil war.” In the pandemic, we have had some bizarre new conjunctions to ponder. “Social distancing” puts close and far into unlikely proximity. What would the opposite be: “lonely intimacy” or “isolated familiarity”? At the heart of it all is the space we have designated as “virtual reality,” two concepts that might be seen as being in some kind of collision. But we shouldn’t be that surprised. After all we live in a world where everybody understands the meaning of false facts and fake news.

Then there was Peter Thornley and Clayton Moore—both figures from my childhood. Peter Thornley appropriated the identity of a Japanese Samurai warrior and was highly successful in his chosen profession. Clayton Moore adopted the role of a hero engaged in a crusade to restore justice and moral order to the chaos of the American West. His friendship with a figure who may have been Comanche or Potawatomi became probably the most famous enactment of fictional reconciliation between White and Native American in popular culture.

Peter Thornley was best known as Kendo Nagasaki, the wrestler who assumed an “exotic” Eastern identity, the role of a mystic healer, who simultaneously dismantled unfortunate opponents. Clayton Moore played the role of John Reid playing the role of The Lone Ranger, but to his faithful sidekick, Tonto, he was “Kemosabe,” yet another identity accumulated around the mysterious figure. It is no wonder that many episodes ended with the question: “Who was that masked man?”

Things get more complicated: Tonto translates as “fool” in Spanish. Kemosabe, an invented term, nevertheless means something in Navajo. It translates intriguingly into “soggy shrub.” The common thread in this rambling discourse, a symptom of lengthy lockdown perhaps, is the mask. The primary use of a mask was to disguise real identity for any number of useful or nefarious reasons. Thornley hid his mundane English face behind the fearsome artificial visage of the Samurai. Moore used the mask to obscure his origins so as to become a mysterious, powerful force rather than the vulnerable individual he probably really was. Bank robbers use the device for more or less the same reasons, to cause consternation and to disguise their individuality. A mask is an aid to the performance of a role that liberates oneself from the tyranny of the self.

The mask now has a quite different purpose. In my myopic case, it serves to render me more breathless and “virtually” sightless as my glasses immediately fog up. It has also made London look more like Tokyo where they understood the protective benefits way before the dense West got the idea.

I am looking forward to the time when we can use the mask for its best purposes: to rob banks or pretend to be someone else.

I want “zoom” to mean go faster again, and “to be muted” used to describe the cruel injustices of totalitarians. Galileo was muted by the doleful inquisition, Pasternak by Stalin.

I particularly look forward to ending social distancing, to spending my time in tactile reality, not constrained in an oxymoron. I look forward to real and metaphorical hugs across the spaces that have separated us. That is why we do the work we do—to cross the boundaries we have constructed to keep us apart.

In that blessed time, we will begin to demolish walls and rebuild bridges. That means more than words.

### *What’s Missing?*

The story goes like this: when the pandemic struck, education abroad rightly focused on students—their welfare, getting them home, and then ensuring that they could finish their

studies online. With remarkable speed, we were able to deliver, in one way or another, courses from a distance.

This was much more than an adjustment. It meant abandoning some long-held beliefs and practices. The importance of mobility; the significance of teaching in place (situational and experiential learning); the value of engagement with new ideas in unfamiliar places; enrichment through meeting people who don't necessarily believe in what we believe in, and who do not behave in quite the same ways; learning through chance observations and accidental encounters: these cornerstones of education abroad mostly evaporated in response to new necessities.

The world became swiftly smaller, geography shrunk. Boundaries were defined by the computer screen. That is not meant to be skeptical or critical of alterations imposed upon us. We were no longer in control of the sites of learning and did the best we could in reduced circumstances. Online learning cannot be study abroad but it is, instead, studying *about* abroad, a significant activity of the mind. What is missing is the conjunction of mind and body actively engaging together in places where we have not been before.

That is a summary of a familiar narrative, and it does credit to education abroad in that it locates student welfare, well-being, and learning at the center of the story.

There is something missing, however. That is, us. We too have been through trauma. The work we love has, for the most part, stopped. Jobs have disappeared. Universities and colleges, many in challenging situations before the pandemic, have been forced to readjust priorities. Revenues have been slashed. Colleagues have gone.

This has been a period of profound insecurity and stress that has impacted us in ways that we may not yet have fully recognized. But we are a community that at times of crisis has frequently come together to find ways to support each other. Friendships have proven to be stronger than competitive rivalries. Alliances have formed that demonstrate that we are, in troublesome times, better together than apart.

That leads me to my last thought. We have missed and lost many things, entered into linguistic surrealism, but we may take some consolation. There is a particular, special message that might lighten darkness and offer solace in the wreckage.

I can find no better way to say this but with this inadequate thought. When we share pain, we ease the burdens of heart and mind. We are lonely but not alone.

### *Biography*

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## *The University of Minnesota Virtual International Internship Case Study*

Martha Johnson and Christine Anderson, The University of Minnesota

In the spring of 2020, the unimaginable happened. The world came to a halt. Poetically referred to as the Great Pause, life as most people knew it changed in ways we could not have imagined. Many institutions and industries have undergone transformations, for better or worse, that will inform the future far beyond simplistic notions of returning to business as usual in the post-pandemic world.

Higher education in the US and abroad has experienced seismic shifts and minor earthquakes, crumbling the foundations upon which institutions have stood for decades or, in many cases, centuries. Technology-resistant faculty and administrators are being forced to embrace virtual models and revise coursework and curriculum. The value of education is being questioned even as new conversations around modalities for learning and instruction seek to explore the potential benefits the forced pedagogical experiment may reveal.

Educators teaching and managing programs based in experiential learning models, perhaps even more than classroom-based study, are struggling to reconsider the potential for situational learning in the absence of, or serious restrictions to, place-based access. In the wake of evacuations and unprecedented limitations for global mobility, international education has been forced, or perhaps invited, to reconsider the core goals of the endeavor.

This is the situation we at the University of Minnesota Learning Abroad Center (LAC) found ourselves in as decisions to cancel May and summer 2020 programs became inevitable. The LAC is one of the largest study abroad offices in the United States, sending over 4,000 students abroad annually in recent years. At the time the difficult decision to cancel all May and summer programs was made, hundreds of students were in process for program participation. In this article, the decision and process involved in our development of a rigorous and quality virtual internship program will be reviewed, as well as the possible implication of the success of the program for international education post-COVID.

### *Approval and Support on Campus*

The LAC administers a portfolio of program options through a network of sites around the world, some dedicated to University of Minnesota programs and others through partnerships with educational organizations providing expertise and infrastructure in diverse locations and with specific educational models. Two of these partners are CAPA and CET. Just as we were embarking on discussions internally as to what could be offered to students, both of these organizations communicated equal interest in exploring virtual options for students. The possibilities were enhanced by investments and training both organizations had already put in place, giving them an advantage in the race to develop new models.

There was, however, concern that virtual experiences would not be supported by undergraduate education partners at the University of Minnesota. The university had been, generally speaking, reluctant to embrace online pedagogies and virtual or hybrid models for learning. It certainly seemed the right time to pursue or “re-ask” the question in the wake of the university’s abrupt need to move all coursework online for the last six weeks of the spring 2020 semester. Additionally, the question of acting as School of Record (SOR) for virtual coursework arose. The University of Minnesota provides SOR transcripts for a select

set of program partners, including CAPA and CET, and has a carefully developed set of processes for course review and designators within the university's framework.

Ongoing program consultation, particularly in terms of academic oversight, is provided to the LAC by the Learning Abroad Center Advisory Committee (LACAC). The membership of LACAC includes assistant and associate deans or unit heads from various colleges or academic units at the university, all whose primary roles are engaged with undergraduate education. The role of LACAC includes, but is not limited to, assisting with program and curriculum oversight, program development, school of record mechanisms, and engaging with affiliate and university partners. An emergency Zoom meeting with LACAC was convened to ascertain both the willingness to provide transcripts for virtual SOR courses and the university's own willingness to allow University of Minnesota students participation in virtual opportunities.

We anticipated resistance to virtual internships and felt confident about the approval of content or language courses. The response from the group was, ironically, somewhat the opposite.

Concerns were immediately expressed about language courses, as the University has robust online offerings that had been expanded for the summer of 2020. Suddenly online courses were perceived as competition in a way in-person study abroad had never been. Others felt that it would be inconsistent to transcript courses but restrict University of Minnesota students from taking them.

Conversely, there was immediate enthusiasm across the board for virtual internships. While we had primarily been thinking in terms of serving students who had intended to pursue

internships abroad over the summer, the LACAC members perceived a broad and immediate need to provide opportunities to the many students across the university whose domestic internships had been cancelled because of the pandemic. The group saw the program as fulfilling an urgent need, and strongly urged the LAC to develop the opportunities as quickly as possible.

Ultimately, the decision was made to allow the SOR courses, but to require approval for University of Minnesota student participation at the departmental level. Virtual internships were unanimously approved for all students.

### *Placement Fit vs Destination*

Developing our virtual internship program required us to move into a new conceptual space in many areas. One discussion was about how to market the experience. Were students more interested in a strong internship placement driven by industry fit, or was it more important to focus on destination? As international educators, we are trained to develop learning around a student's study abroad location. We are experts in intercultural learning and the theory that informs our work. Therefore, how does one recruit and serve students working in an international virtual environment?

We found an overwhelming interest in virtual international internships in our student population. This led us to consider further how to serve these students. We decided to create a main webpage explaining the overarching goals of the program; industry types available; and the remote, host-country destinations. From this main page students can click into their destination of choice knowing which industries are available.

The chart below illustrates the University of Minnesota student interest in virtual international internships. Of note is the across-college appeal of the program. This included enrollment from one of our coordinate campuses located in Rochester, Minnesota. It is our hope that this will allow us to engage more students to think globally about their career choice, and possibly to recruit some students who may not have considered studying abroad to do so after their virtual international internship.

<b>Summer Enrollment 2020</b>	61
<b>Fall Enrollment 2020</b>	221
<b>Fall Enrollment by College 2020</b>	
Biological Science	11
Continuing & Professional Studies	5
Design	14
Food, Agriculture, & Natural Science	12
Liberal Education	93
UofM Rochester Campus	3
Science & Engineering	15
School of Management	48
Education & Human Development	20

## *Communication*

To make virtual international internships successful requires a large team: education abroad professionals, instructors, internship coordinators, and site supervisors are all instrumental. Students can get lost in this web that is ultimately their support system. It is important to be clear with students who they should be communicating with at different times of their internship experience. The connection with their instructors became a natural bond. Therefore, introducing the instructors to the people in the host-countries working directly with the site supervisors became important. We designated this position as “internship coordinator.” We hold a virtual orientation for students that covers general information about working abroad, including virtual professional norms, expectations, academics, cultural considerations, and tips for success. An emphasis is placed on professionalism in a remote environment.

After this orientation, students have a virtual group orientation with their host-culture internship coordinators to learn specific information about working in their placement country, as well as knowledge about their host-country that is unique to each site. This could include history, gender, country-specific norms, work laws, communication, and hierarchy. The main goals of this orientation are to interest and engage students directly with the culture within which they will be working, and to provide information on the professional norms in their placement country.

## *Academics*

Creating the syllabus for virtual remote internships was another space to step back and consider how this was a different experience from in-person learning abroad. This new environment gave us an opportunity to explore the multicultural dimension as opposed to

the bicultural space with in-person internship learning. Guiding a student to understand and succeed while working on-site often uses a comparative framework between their host-country and the US. Teaching on-line, with students working and connecting remotely in countries all over the world, opens up space to explore on a global level.

This space should be interrogated. Small group work was satisfying for students. They were able to connect with each other on a basic human level and discuss interactions unique to them: How can we communicate with our supervisors? How do we function as professionals in Zoom meetings with our host-country colleagues? How should we balance the academics with our work life? It is key to balance this natural dialogue with deeper analysis to guide students to consider why they are working remotely.

To lead students to look up from the quotidian to a place of inquiry, we used the Global Perspectives Liberal Education requirement at the U of M as a framework. This challenges students to cultivate “habits of the mind.” Specifically, students are asked to: think ethically about the important challenges facing our society and world, reflect on the shared sense of responsibility required to build and maintain a community, connect knowledge and practice, and foster a stronger sense of individual roles as historical agents.

Examining COVID-19 through a country specific-lens allowed students to consider their role on a personal, professional, national, and global level. We intentionally created small groups of students who were working in different countries. In these small groups, students researched their own internship placement country’s response to COVID-19 as well as the response in their peers’ countries. Interrogating and contrasting national responses to COVID-19 brought an ethical dimension to the student experience. Exploring the systems that were put in place, or were not, and connecting that to the impacts on the industry where

they were working, created a bridge between the virtual and the “real.” In addition, students’ contact with their colleagues lived situation brought in the human condition. Ultimately, our hope is that this is building pathways for students to grasp their role as change agents in an uncertain world. In this space, students can begin to grapple with the “why” of their positions as virtual interns.

## *Career*

The importance of connecting an experience abroad with the ability to articulate career skill and competency gains continued to be a goal. We sought advice from our Career Services colleagues in order to weave learning and expectation holistically throughout the virtual internship process. Prior to going abroad, students learned tips that were unique to working remotely, such as how to create structure for themselves, establish a workspace, and develop a communication plan with their supervisor between time zones. As in in-person interning, intercultural learning complements career skill development with a focus on flexibility, adaptability, and most importantly: the ability to shift one’s perspective through awareness of others’ cultural contexts. Career guidance continued developmentally in the course through goal setting, learning about their chosen industry within their internship placement country, and creating videos of themselves in mock interviews. In their small groups, they critiqued each other’s LinkedIn profiles and their responses to the S.T.A.R. technique.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The STAR technique is a method of answering questions that is comprised of four steps:

- **Situation:** Describe the situation and when it took place.
- **Task:** Explain the task and what was the goal.
- **Action:** Provide details about the action you took to attain this.
- **Result:** Conclude with the result of your action.

Learning Abroad Center staff worked with University of Minnesota Career Services professionals to create a document for students to highlight and articulate their virtual international internship experience to employers. Information for students includes a list of skills they should be able to hone in order to describe the competencies attained in remote professional work abroad. For example:

- Autonomy and self-advocacy within a virtual work setting
- Ability to virtually collaborate cross-culturally
- Advanced communication skills in a virtual setting with a language barrier or in a second language

This emphasis on building students' confidence and self-awareness is evident in the following quote from a summer participant in the Virtual International Internship program:

Even if I don't end up working abroad, the soft skills that I've gotten from this can be applicable to basically any sort of communications or journalism or editing field that I go into ... I've proven that I can work independently and write X amount of articles in a certain amount of time, and I can come up with those ideas and work with my supervisor who's in a different country.

Jessica interned at *News- English* (a news magazine based in Florence, Italy).

### *Outcomes & Challenges*

The initial feedback we received from the summer cohort was positive. For example, one instructor reported, "The small group discussions have been very well received too as it gave the students the opportunity to compare and contrast experiences as well as providing a chance to make new friends." We also received positive feedback from site supervisors who

enjoyed working with our students and did not receive negative feedback from the placement sites.

Unfortunately, only 12 students responded to the evaluation out of 60 students who interned this summer. Despite the low response rate, the following data stands out. The 2 most difficult areas for students were communication with the site supervisor, and not feeling involved at their work environment. We plan to do more training with supervisors and students on creating a communication plan going forward. We will also discuss more pointedly at orientation and throughout the internship that students need to be proactive in reaching out to their supervisors. The latter issue of lack of involvement at the internship site may be one of the limitations of a virtual internship. This may be a matter of setting the correct expectations for students on what they will and won't get out of the experience.

Conversely, 11 of the 12 students responded positively to this question: "The internship enhanced your ability to communicate effectively and navigate in a global, virtual environment." Ultimately, this is the best skill they could gain as long as they can articulate it for future remote employment. In response to the statement: "The course instructor was helpful," 11 students said they agreed or strongly agreed. We have noticed with in-person internships abroad that students often feel the companion course is not necessary, although later they will report that they learned valuable skills. It may be that with a virtual internship abroad, students are aware that they need more guidance to adjust and succeed and therefore, the value of the course is apparent earlier in the experience.

We are invested in learning how best to support students in a virtual international internship. Importantly, we have seen student interest across colleges at the University of Minnesota, as well as with professors and advisors. This makes our work continuing to

enhance and modify the course, placements sites, and communication across these sectors all the more vital.

### *Implications*

The field of education abroad has a history of resistance to change, new models, and technologies. Many institutions and practitioners resisted, for instance, the development of short-term programs and made assumptions about impact and learning being reliant on duration. And yet research has consistently shown that well designed and taught short-term programs can have measurably significant learning outcomes and impact. While the needs of COVID precipitated the development of the virtual internship program, we have tried to avoid a comparable assumption of deficit.

We tried to be intentional in approaching the program as an explicit pedagogical model rather than a substitute. We have also attempted to be clear that these are not experiences abroad and have refused to use language that might position them as “virtual study abroad.” Rather, we have sought to highlight the benefits and opportunities the model inherently offers and to focus on the goal of fostering intercultural and professional skills and competencies needed in a work world that is increasingly global and reliant on technology.

The response from students and sites has been overwhelmingly positive. The sites, in particular, report that these are some of the best interns they have hosted. Given that these students do not have the distractions of travel and social priorities that can challenge students abroad this, perhaps, should not have been a surprise.

The success and response to the summer program led us to develop a semester-long option for the fall of 2020. Revisions for this expanded four-credit class included new intercultural exercises and longer projects. The semester class, however, came with a specific challenge regarding registration and participation. Students from the University of Minnesota who study abroad do not pay tuition or fees on-campus. Our model uses a program cost that holistically includes academic as well as other costs, based on the study site, in lieu of tuition. It has never been possible for a student to do a hybrid model for integrating coursework delivered by LAC sites with on-campus offerings.

Like many large institutions, the University of Minnesota has a revenue sharing model for students taking classes from different colleges during their studies. At the university, 75 percent of tuition revenue for each class goes to the college of instruction offering the class and 25 percent goes to the college the student is enrolled in as degree-seeking. Understandably, colleges can become territorial and there are politics involved in who offers what courses. We needed to be granted permission by the Office of Undergraduate Education, at the discretion of the Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education, to embrace the program as a likely permanent part of our offerings. We have since developed a semester-long course that 221 students representing 9 colleges and 67 degree programs/majors have registered for during the fall semester. We have been granted permission to enter into “banded tuition” for the first time. In some ways, this is a watershed moment. It effectively opens the door to hybrid models for the future, including scenarios where students do a combination of courses abroad and on-campus. Now that the precedent has been set and the structural and financial model created, the possibilities for combinations of hybrid study are numerous. We have added sections in French and Spanish and worked with those language departments to secure approval for the class to fulfill major and minor elective requirements.

Students appear more open to non-traditional locations. For instance, more students in the French section requested placements in Dakar, Senegal than in Montpellier, France. Additionally, many of the students in the language sections are not majoring or minoring in the target language. This has led to conversations with the language departments regarding approaching these language-based internships as a “pipeline” because they will demonstrate the use of language in a professional capacity.

We are also discussing models that integrate an initial or capstone experience abroad for the future. We are already seeing participation from diverse students and degree programs that have been underserved by traditional education abroad programs.

Despite the impetus of the program, what we have learned so far has been fascinating and once again challenged us to innovate beyond our usual paradigms and focus on the core learning goals. While we eagerly await a time when travel and mobility are once again possible and attractive, we also now know the virtual world is real, here to stay, and not necessarily a bad thing.

### ***Biographies***

**Dr Martha Johnson** is the Assistant Dean for Learning Abroad at the University of Minnesota. She has worked in international education since 1991 and holds a PhD in American Studies from the University of East Anglia (UK). She has presented at numerous international conferences and has authored articles and chapters for publications including *Frontiers and Text and Performance*. She has served in leadership positions for NAFSA, the Global Leadership League, and the Forum on Education Abroad, and currently Chairs the Board for the Fund for Education Abroad.

**Dr Christine Anderson** has worked in the field of education abroad since 1996. She is the academic director at the University of Minnesota's Learning Abroad Center (LAC). Her research includes intercultural learning on short-term study abroad programs, the impact of an education abroad experience on career competency development, and how an education abroad experience can increase resilience. She administers, and teaches/mentors students on LAC's on-line, culture learning and career development course, "Global Identity: Connecting Your International Experience to Your Future". She has a PhD in Comparative International Development Education.

## *Online Learners and Study Abroad: The Different Lived Experience of Online Students*

Jennifer A. Malerich, Arizona State University

“For our society to achieve its ideal there cannot be an unequal distribution of its most important asset—education.” - Michael M. Crow, Arizona State University President

Online education, previously called “distance education,” has a long history within higher education worldwide. Started immediately after the formalization of the postal system in Europe (Gürüz, 2011), distance education historically relied on educational technologies such as paper manuals, radio, televised courses, and videocassettes to deliver instruction (Dziuban et al., 2016). The University of London (n.d.) has been providing distance education since 1858, calling itself the “birthplace of distance education” (para. 5). Initiated in the United States by the University of Chicago in 1897, 70 universities and 300 private correspondence schools had begun offering distance education as correspondence courses by 1919. Similar correspondence programs started in Australia in 1911, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics in 1926, and South Africa in 1946 (Gürüz, 2011).

Today, the internet has replaced video cassettes and the radio, bringing the opportunity for learning to anyone with a wi-fi connection and a laptop. Rapid technology growth is creating new jobs that require new skills and the retraining of an existing workforce, driving learners to pursue the best education they can afford—regardless of location (Gürüz, 2011). Within the United States, participation in online education is being driven by convenience and access, with the number of students participating in at least one distance education course

growing to represent over 31 percent of total higher education enrollments in fall 2016 (Seaman et al., 2018). The African Virtual University, established to increase access to quality higher education through Information Communication Technologies (African Virtual University, n.d.), estimates a historical enrollment of 43,000 students (Anderson, 2015). In 2016, the Chinese spent an estimated \$698.92 million on online higher education (Docebo, 2017). The 500 million internet users in India represent the second largest market for online learning in the world, or an estimated \$1.20 billion in 2018 (Docebo, 2017). With a long tradition of distance education, the UK has now recognized a cultural shift moving online education into the mainstream, while identifying the need for both high-quality academics and student experience to remain competitively globally (Coleman, 2014).

Rather than a method to internationalize the institution, or to provide access to higher education to a non-traditional student demographic, skeptics see the value institutions place on online education as a way only to improve their revenue stream and bottom line as financial support for higher education has decreased (Rovai & Downey, 2010). This skepticism has led to fears that online learning may serve as a replacement for the physical campus, creating a bifurcated system of “brick universities” and “click universities.” Instead, universities are becoming hybrid “brick and click” institutions (Gürüz, 2011), or “dual-mode universities” as they acknowledge the importance of distance education and the opportunities it provides (Rovai & Downey, 2010) to both local and global populations. However, for far too long online education has operated separately from the mainstream teaching, learning, and research activities of the university. Even most “dual-mode universities” still have a de facto wall between the two delivery modalities, often taking the form of offering different degree programs taught online by a different set of faculty, and sometimes separate administrative offices and policies. With these practices in place, students in online programs are not integrated into the overall fabric of the university physically, organizationally, or philosophically. One significant consequence of physical

distance between online students and their home campus is that online students miss out on benefitting from the more traditional on-campus internationalization techniques such as interaction with international faculty or students, cultural festivals and programming, or student clubs and organizations. Higher education, which touts mission statements and strategic plans calling for the development of intercultural competencies and global citizens, often fails to recognize and include online students in equal and equitable methods of developing those highly valued skills and competencies. By not providing those same skill and competency building activities we feel are so crucial in the field of international education, this chasm of inclusion is leaving a growing number of learners behind.

At Arizona State University (ASU), a large public institution in the Southwestern United States, online education and online students are a valuable part of the educational community. Online education is one way the university feels it is accountable to the communities it serves; by focusing on digital teaching and learning models (designed) to increase student success and reduce barriers to achievement in higher education” (Arizona State University, n.d.a).

As of fall 2020, over 200 ASU degree programs are offered online at the undergraduate and graduate level, taught by the same faculty and with the same degree requirements as the in-person immersion programs. The online population is growing and, as of fall 2019, comprised over 45,000 students (Arizona State University, n.d.b). Based on institutional data, over the last 10 years, increasing numbers of online students are choosing to study abroad, a traditional internationalization method in the United States. Growing from 5 students to over 350 in 2018-2019, online make up approximately 12 percent of the total study abroad population at ASU (Malerich, 2019). However, little research has been

conducted to understand the differences between traditional in-person immersion study abroad students and the growing online population choosing to study abroad.

Seeing this rapid increase in participation, I wanted to understand the online student participating in study abroad, how they may be different than the in-person immersion study abroad student, and how we could create an equitable study abroad experience for this group. To that end, I conducted a quantitative analysis of demographic and academic variables of online students and in-person immersion students participating in short-term faculty-led study abroad programs during the spring 2019 and summer 2019 terms, finding significant differences between the 2 cohorts. These results were further enhanced through semi-structured interviews with online students upon their return from study abroad. I have chosen a few variables to discuss to illustrate these differences.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the online learners were significantly older than the in-person immersion students on the same programs. They also had attended multiple institutions of higher education throughout their 10-year average gap between study abroad and graduation from secondary school. These are students who have struggled to find their educational niche and make the type of dedicated progress toward a 4-year degree in the same time frame as the student who traditionally attends higher education directly after high school graduation. Interviews of online study abroad students revealed that this was often due to family obligations such as children, following a partner to a job in a new location, or their own professional obligations. In fact, several interviews included the background soundtrack of family life, underlining that these students were playing multiple roles in their lives. Some students felt they also hadn't previously found an educational experience that was right for them, allowing them to blend their lives and learning.

Students in the online study abroad cohort were significantly more likely to be enrolled part-time during their study abroad term when compared to the in-person study abroad cohort, reflecting the multiple roles online students are playing while earning a degree. They are not able to dedicate themselves to full-time study. Multiple students interviewed reflected that they didn't even feel a real sense of an academic identity before study abroad. Their study abroad experience may have been the first opportunity in a long time to discuss their classwork or academic interests with other students in person or to identify with peers on the same type of academic journey. The study abroad program helped them develop a sense of an academic self that many found surprising and refreshing.

The students in the online study abroad cohort were also significantly more likely to be the first in their family to attend higher education when compared to their in-person immersion counterparts on the same study abroad programs. While some considered this a potential barrier to participation in study abroad, I have heard beautiful stories of online students acting as storytellers within their communities, sharing their experiences and learnings with their families, their friends, and their co-workers who may not have had the same types of opportunities. With these online students, the reach of higher education and study abroad learnings extend to different audiences within communities to which higher education may not traditionally have had access.

Both online and in-person study abroad students were concerned about the cost of study abroad. When comparing these specific cohorts, there were no significant differences in financial need when considering Pell Grant eligibility, a marker of socio-economic status in higher education within the United States. There were comparable numbers of students at the highest level of financial need in both groups. However, not only did the online study abroad students have to worry about the cost of the programs themselves, they also worried

about how to find caring and cost-effective childcare while they were abroad, and how to ensure their place of employment not only allowed them the time off to pursue their study abroad experience but also didn't suffer from their absences. The online students interviewed worried about how to ensure their bills were paid while they were gone, and whether their partners knew the ins and outs of running the household. While these concerns may also resonate with the in-person learner, the majority of the online study abroad cohort were in different places in their lives at the time they undertook their study abroad programs and therefore carried with them additional pre-departure worries and planning responsibilities.

This quantitative and qualitative analysis undertaken at ASU suggests that the online learner pursuing study abroad differs significantly across multiple demographic and academic variables from the in-person study abroad student. Analysis and discussion of a few of these variables are highlighted in this paper. Additional work must be done to assess study abroad program design implications to meet online learners where they are in their educational and lifelong learning journeys, providing cost-effective, academically sound, and supportive global learning experiences. The stories of struggle, self-reflection, and growth heard from online study abroad students illuminate the value of adjusting study abroad programming to meet their needs. Instead of approaching online learners from a deficit position, we as international education professionals should recognize the strength and resilience that comes with navigating the everyday barriers these students have already overcome to become successful online learners. These are some of the same skills and competencies successful study abroad students need: adaptability, flexibility, and resilience.

Even before the current public health crisis, students were turning to online learning to prioritize education within their busy and multi-faceted lives. The online learner represents a

different student than the traditional in-person immersion student. As increasing numbers of learners return to education to upskill or pursue new career paths in our rapidly changing global economy, these academic and demographic differences are likely to grow, emphasizing the different lived experiences of our students. While this study focused on online study abroad students, there are many new and innovative ways to bring global learning into the online educational experience. It is the responsibility of higher education and international education professionals to provide access to equitable global learning experiences to allow online students the opportunities for growth and success we know are possible and necessary for success in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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## ***Biography***

**Dr Jennifer Malerich** is Executive Director, Academic and Global Engagement at Arizona State University in the Office of the University Provost. She directs the strategic vision of study abroad at ASU working with faculty and senior administration to connect study abroad with the undergraduate curriculum. Jennifer is also studying for a PhD at Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan, Italy.

## *International Education and the Impact of COVID-19*

Colin Speakman, CAPA: The Global Education Network

2020 is already being etched in history as a pivotal year in international education reflecting the impact of the Covid19 pandemic. The watchword continues to be what this field can be like in “the post-mobility era.”

International education usually means some form of physical people-to-people exchange that brings a student into contact with people from another country by traveling there. There are related concepts such as internationalizing the campus; this involves seizing the opportunity afforded by having foreign students enrolled to plan deliberate interactions between these students and local students who may go nowhere. Internationalization, in this sense, is often linked to the development of a global education curriculum that benefits all students including those unable to study abroad. Finally, there is the established concept of “study away” which, while including study overseas, provides an opportunity to move out of one’s comfort zone by temporarily participating in programs elsewhere in one’s own country. All of these are relevant to understanding the impact of the current COVID-19 crisis.

For the US, much international education in the form of study abroad derives out of the pioneering Junior Year Abroad. From that root, semester, summer, and other short-term programming has developed—a mixture of opportunities to attend an overseas university or to travel accompanied by faculty on a US university’s own programs, in both cases bringing back credits toward graduation in the US. In Europe, the Erasmus Project allows EU students to spend between three months and a year at another European university using the European Credit Transfer System. Once travel within the EU is more normalized, this version

of international education, based upon mobility, may be the first to return. However, the UK no longer qualifies for participation and is making other arrangements for mobility (Thynne, 2021).

When I got involved in this field in the mid-1980s, less than one percent of US college students studied abroad (US Department of Education, 1985-1986), and today it is around two percent—this is still an opportunity touching few students and even fewer from BIPOC members of the campuses who are significantly under-represented in such programs. Reactions to COVID-19 may increase opportunities for participation in some models.

By contrast, for most other countries, international education means moving to another country to take a complete degree program there. For English-speaking host countries such as the US, the UK, Australia, and Canada, these international students are a significant revenue stream, paying full fees for tuition and a critical means of support in some academic areas. Data from the Institute of International Education demonstrate that the largest numbers of foreign students come from China and India. In the academic year 2019–2020, China alone sent over 370,000 students, representing 34.6 percent of all the students entering the US from foreign destinations (Institute of International Education, 2020). The second largest group was from India, with over 193,000 students, representing 18 percent of the total intake. Many of these students do not want to pay high tuition fees for online versions of an international program and, in any case, cannot get visas at present.

When COVID-19 first impacted China in a notable way in January 2020, university campuses were already on a long break for Chinese New Year. They did not reopen for in-person classes and the spring semester international students never came, with travel advisories in force. For some independent enrollments in Mandarin courses, Chinese universities offered

online tuition as the only option. Summer programs for international students were severely impacted. In 2021, fall programs could not offer in-person attendance as visas were blocked.

As the virus spread to many countries from late February onward, international students were either brought home or catered for locally in a safer online environment—those who came home were usually provided with online tuition to complete the credits, in cooperation with overseas universities and international education providers. This necessitated a major effort to re-orient students and supply the online courses.

The COVID-19 virus has continued to spread, and cases have persistently risen globally. Travel advisories, visa restrictions, and entry bans have combined with a scarcity of international flights to bring physical movement of students internationally to a near standstill, except for repatriation by charter flights. Although many countries have passed a peak of infection, the US may not have and, in other countries, further waves and new variants are evident. The great hope is the continued rollout of vaccination programs in developed economies which has gathered pace, but it has been regularly said that “no one is safe until we are all safe.”

Therefore, amid continuing restrictions, participation in international education has had to move into a virtual model which may be the only model available in the current circumstances. Many university campuses across the world may need to remain in online format. Those reopening may not be able to admit international students. In some cases, US universities are seeking to teach their international students online (including in specially contracted global learning) before travelling becomes possible again. In China and in Vietnam, for example, specially arranged programs in their home countries were developed

in cooperation with government-recognized local universities. The environment is, in short, constrained, and uncertain.

The risk of importing COVID-19 from countries where most of the population is not yet vaccinated will constrain border reopening and access for international students. China is a good example of this caution, as it is believed that it plans to keep COVID-19 pandemic border restrictions in place for at least another year amid fears over the emergence of new variants and a calendar of sensitive events, such as the February 2022 Winter Olympic Games in Beijing (Zhai and Hua, 2021). Nevertheless, in due course China will reemerge as the most important source of foreign students in English-speaking countries and a relevant destination for Western students in which to study.

The lack of a physical presence of international students has huge financial implications across many academic departments in the US, but particularly for international education centers and the study abroad offices, often funded in part from international students' tuition. This in turn heavily impacts international education organizations. Across all these areas, job losses have been significant (Woolston 2021), and flexibility has been essential. Hybrid programs which start online, with the possibility of continuing in person abroad, are creative attempts to keep students' options open.

It is not an understatement that study abroad is having to reinvent itself to maintain opportunities. It has required creativity to provide an attractive virtual experience without the usually crucial engagement with the foreign country, its peoples, culture, smells, sounds, and that sense of excitement of being there.

How much of that can be incorporated virtually is a major focus, but we live in a high technology era with rapidly developing platforms. The term “Zoom University” has entered regular usage, even employed by Barack Obama in a speech at a virtual graduation ceremony for Historically Black Colleges and Universities. Of course, teaching online is not necessarily attractive to all faculty, nor is the model appealing to all students—and it needs to fully engage both sets of participants. This has been a subject of much discussion. Standards for effective online teaching must be developed, especially to serve the needs of students who did not plan to use that medium of instruction.

Study abroad professionals may need to underpin their roles by looking to organize more study away opportunities in home countries to make available an engagement with a somewhat unfamiliar, yet in-country, environment. They may also become a bridge to on-campus academic departments and faculty that can be encouraged to contribute to online learning experiences for global education. The role of study abroad advisers may need to change—always available and in contact with students abroad for emergencies and advice, traditionally on-site staff at the host campus and/or accompanying faculty are the first point of contact in-program.

Since these “virtual study abroad” students are still in the university’s time zone and may even come onto the local campus, they have a different opportunity to connect on an ongoing basis. Should the study abroad office then have a more direct role in the experience, or should it be left to an academic department or only to online faculty and staff from an overseas site? A similar question arises where program providers are involved: Should the balance between US-based support and overseas support change? Most students would expect to have strong contact with the virtual program sites to maximize foreign engagement.

It is not just students but also some faculty who do not have the resources, time, confidence, or inclination to participate in a physical study abroad program. Clearly, online provision can provide a critical opportunity for widening access and participation. Programs will of necessity be more affordable—a challenge to providers which requires significantly more enrollment to be viable. There is evidence of an increased interest.

An opportunity for addressing the overseas engagement aspect is participation in a virtual internship. Indeed, these were pioneered a couple of years before the post-mobility era so as to increase access to an important career development vehicle as an affordable and flexible opportunity, and they are now rapidly becoming a mainstream offer. Ironically, the pandemic itself has fostered remote working in regular jobs so it is clearly an idea whose time has come.

The investment in virtual provision will not be temporary—online education existed long before the pandemic anyway and I recall having to create a computer lab in London 20 years ago, in the days when students did not so regularly travel with laptops, to enable study abroad students to supplement their physical courses in Bloomsbury with necessary credits from online courses from home campuses. CAPA's Globally Networked Learning technology, which brings together students from different parts of the world in joint projects, has developed well in the past decade. Now all of this needs to be taken forward in its best models in a new era of international education.

One result of more global, virtual opportunities is likely to be a move away from study abroad offerings first presented to students as, “Which country do you want to study in?” and

instead as, “What fields of study do you want to pursue by global engagement?” Clearly, there is no reason to limit an online international education program to the courses and resources of one foreign “destination.” A virtual internship in Shanghai, international marketing course in London, cross-cultural management course in Barcelona, globally networked projects between Dublin and Sydney—that sounds interesting to me.

Physical participation overseas will return when health concerns, travel and visa issues, and some political aspects are all addressed, but we are likely to be living in a parallel universe of actual and virtual experiences going forward. This will help increase the diversity and extent of participation that has been long sought after.

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### ***Biography***

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