

Developing Global Competencies Through Community-Based Research Workshops in the Dominican Republic: A Case Study of a Research Training With Members of a Haitian Immigrant Community

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this case study is to illustrate how the planning and implementation of research training facilitated the authors' practice of skills and enactment of values and attitudes that are necessary to be effective global citizens. At the outset of the chapter, the authors introduce the social and cultural context of the research training. Then, they present the processes of creating and executing the research training by identifying the steps they took to adapt a pre-designed research manual and engage participants in workshop activities. Next, the authors explain how certain aspects of the training allowed them to practice and exhibit their commitment to global competencies. In conclusion, the authors use the lessons they learned to offer suggestions for engaging host organizations and community partners in activities before launching a study abroad course and to identify the everyday opportunities for educators to develop their global competencies.

GLOBAL COMPETENCIES

Opportunities for us to address the following competencies from the Global Competency Matrix were rich in this experience:

Core Concepts

- One's own culture and history is key to understanding one's relationship to others

Values and Attitudes

- Valuing multiple perspectives
- Desire to engage with others

Skills

- Seeks out and applies an understanding of different perspectives to problem solving and decision making

Behaviors

- Commits to the process of continuous learning and reflection

CASE BACKGROUND

International field-based courses are recognized widely to be important opportunities for students to gain first-hand technical training and develop cross-cultural research skills. At the University of Toledo, where we teach in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, we identified a lack of faculty-led experiential learning programs for students in the social sciences. Because both of us had significant combined prior experience in the Dominican Republic as researchers, professionals, and volunteers, we explored the idea of creating a course that would immerse students in field research there. This program would not only provide students with the chance to enhance their practical knowledge and skills, but would also facilitate progress in our own research agendas that focus on international volunteerism, health, education, and community-based work.

Over the course of our first year as colleagues, we discussed our similar experiences in the Dominican Republic, complementary research expertise and interests, shared belief in the significance of engaging in cross-cultural fieldwork, and a strong desire to provide our students with the opportunity to gain hands-on research experience. Both of us completed research abroad during our doctoral studies, specifically in the Dominican Republic and Honduras. Therefore, we had prior first-hand knowledge of the formative nature of international fieldwork and the meaningfulness of learning to overcome challenges that arise when conducting studies in a different country. After much consideration, we agreed to work together to create a field school

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