



Global Competency:

The New Necessity in Public Education

Modern schools face a new challenge: *how to prepare students for success in a globally connected workplace.* Beyond the mastery of core subject matter, our students will be expected to compete in the *global arena.* To confront *global issues.* To collaborate across international boundaries.

And what is more, America itself is becoming more “global” each decade. If students are to thrive as our country continues to diversify, they must be able to work effectively with a diverse group of people.

How can educators prepare students for such a complex challenge? The term “Global Competency” offers a practical solution by identifying a specific skill set for the modern workplace.

A globally competent student:

- *Comprehends world affairs, events, and global issues.*
- *Interacts productively with people from a variety of cultures and geographies.*
- *Incorporates diverse perspectives to seek creative solutions to a variety of problems.*

While understanding the goal of global competency is a step forward, additional efforts are needed to prepare our youth. According to the Association of Graduate Recruiters, companies cannot find enough applicants with the skills needed for positions that require international fluency.

If we hope to equip students to compete in a global economy, “global competency” is a new necessity in education.

The U.S. will be less competitive and less secure if our schools do not urgently expand instruction in world languages, economics, and cultures. Knowledge of the world is no longer a luxury for the few, it is a necessity for all.

– Vivien Stewart

Executive Director, National Coalition on Asia and International Studies in the Schools

Our “Global” America

According to a report from the U.S. Census Bureau, immigrants comprised 13% of the U.S. in 2010, or about 40 million people. This number is projected to increase to just over 68 million in the next 50 years – *an increase of 70%.* The fact is, today’s students *will* encounter increasing diversity, whether locally or abroad.

“How do EXCHANGE STUDENTS impact YOUR school community?”

Many schools across the U.S. have embraced the common goals of “teaching diversity” and “modeling global awareness.” But in practice, these are challenging concepts to effectively impart to today’s fast-paced youth. We reached out to high school teachers and administrators across the country, who shared with us their thoughts about hosting exchange students. Many reported that hosting foreign exchange students is a simple way to encourage global awareness and introduce an international perspective in a very tangible, personal way.



Keith Mainland

World History and World Affairs Teacher at Monarch High School, Colorado

When I have an exchange student in class, I have them give a presentation about their country. We talk about cultural biases, both theirs and ours. We're living in an ever-shrinking world, where a growing number of people have interactions with those from other countries, cultures, religions, and ideologies. It's important that everybody starts to recognize their own cultural biases, and having an exchange student in class makes that discussion deeper and richer.

Keevin O'Neill

Principal at Vicksburg High School, Michigan

As a principal, I truly appreciate the opportunity to host foreign exchange students on a yearly basis. The infusion of a variety of cultures into our high school has been a worthwhile experience for our students.



Gwendolyn Lukas-Doctor

Theater Teacher at Monarch High School, Colorado

Learning to communicate with someone from a different culture can be a challenge. Our students learn that individuals from different countries may have different ways of expressing themselves, and they have to rise to the challenge of finding ways to communicate effectively. That's an important skill for our students to grasp.

Erik Ostergren

Dean of Students at Westside High School, Texas

Bringing exchange students into the school adds perspective to the classroom. I wish more of our kids could go on exchange themselves, but for most that's just not an option right now. The only way they can get exposure to the world and develop global awareness is to have people from different countries come to them. In my classroom, we talk about global issues, like global warming. I tell my students that these issues effect the whole world, so they require a different perspective. And when students learn alongside international students, they start thinking about the world differently.



“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeing new lands, but in seeing with new eyes.”

– French novelist Marcel Proust

Study Abroad: A Growing Trend in Higher Ed

According to the Institute of International Education (IIE), many universities now actively support study abroad opportunities for their students. But why?

A growing body of research shows that “multicultural experiences” provide lasting benefits that simply can’t be taught in the classroom.

One such study by William Maddux, an associate professor of organization behavior at INSEAD, found that “multicultural engagement” predicts how “integratively complex” a student’s thinking becomes.

More generally, people who identify with more than one culture display “better problem solving and more creativity.” These same people tend to be “more likely to create businesses and products and to be promoted.”

As mounting evidence reveals the unmatched benefits of exchange, it’s easy to understand why universities are on board. But why wait until college? We can prepare our youth to excel in college and beyond. Let’s start *now*.



Stand Out!

How to Build Global Competency through Student Exchange

Youth Exchange provides schools with a concrete means to increase diversity, strengthen instruction, and build programs that imbue students with global competence. These 21st century schools are well-equipped to sustain themselves as viable places of learning.

Whether hosting an exchange student or participating in a program of study abroad, students who engage in Youth Exchange attain a 21st century skill set that includes:

- Improved communication
- Improved problem solving capability
- Greater knowledge and awareness of other cultures, traditions and customs
- Improved sense of self and purpose
- Greater capacity to engage in shared projects
- Improved critical thinking

Excerpt taken from the CSIET Position Statement on the Benefits of Youth Exchange

We're committed to YOU.

Our mission is to increase global competency and international understanding by facilitating opportunities for meaningful cultural exchange. We invite you to partner with us as we work to spread awareness of the benefits of exchange in an increasingly interconnected world.

iE-USA has provided our schools with hands-on care for more than a decade. Whether your school has enjoyed many exchange students or is just beginning to develop an exchange program, our commitment to quality youth exchange will make your job easier. We provide schools with trained local representatives, offer 24-hour emergency support, and promise highly screened students and host families.



Let us prove it.

“The quality of people combined with the vision of the iE organization make them well worth pursuing in order to obtain high quality, well-supported exchange students and families.”

– Mike Carroll, Superintendent North Central Education Service District, OR

Call us Toll Free at 888-266-2921 or visit iE-USA.org for more information.

Get Students Involved

6 Easy Ways to Add International Enrichment to Your School, Now

- **Invite exchange students to speak** in social studies or language classes, or in a school assembly. Students have a lot to give – make use of their unique perspective!
- **Collaborate with nearby elementary or middle schools.** Invite exchange students to create and implement a cultural presentation for younger students.
- **Encourage language classes to develop hands-on activities or final projects.**
For example: a short play enacted in a foreign language and performed for the school community.
- **Invite students to participate in youth exchange on any level.** Send a yearly email to your school staff and/or parent population asking them to consider opportunities to host an exchange student or study abroad.
- **If possible, increase the exchange student population at your school.** Aim for at least 1% so that your students have a better chance of interacting with an exchange student on a daily basis.
- **Encourage one or more students to start an international club.** Both international and American students should work together to help the entire school engage in meaningful activities. *For example: international banquets, international service such as raising money to donate to a relief project or to fund an international author to make a speech, etc.*



Study Abroad

The “Fast Track” to Global Competency

While schools in the U.S. must continue to implement global skills into their curriculum goals, *study abroad remains one of the best ways a student can quickly gain a broader perspective of our interconnected world.*

iE-USA offers affordable study abroad programs to Argentina, Australia, Belgium, China, Costa Rica, France, Germany, Italy, New Zealand, South Africa, Spain and Switzerland.

Learn more at iE-USA.org.

To request study abroad materials for your school, email usa@international-experience.net or call 888-266-2921.

