

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP NEWSLETTER



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Composition, Global Citizenship, & Empathy

By Kelsey Maki

Can the traumatic experiences of strangers be translated through time and space? Can empathy be cultivated by reading? Will adding yet another major paper assignment to my course overwhelm students? These are the questions I asked myself when designing a global project for my English 122 classes.

Of course, as a composition instructor, I believe the written word can change people, or, at the very least, awaken what's already there (a seed of empathy, blooming into awareness, finding fruition as ethical action). I've read research that claims otherwise, articles asserting that personal ethical development via "book learning" is an idealistic educational outcome, but I am happy to say that this assignment, born out of Brookdale's Global Citizenship Project, supported what I've always hoped to be true: Studying serious and challenging texts does expand students' horizons; it will help cultivate an educated and aware populace.

My global assignment began during the second week of class, when we went to the library, where, with the help of Blake Doherty, each student self-selected a non-fiction book that addresses a global issue, foreign controversy or event, or public figure (whose native language is not English). For the next two weeks, students mapped out individual reading plans and conducted a rhetorical analysis of their selected texts—commenting on the author's appeals to logos, ethos, and pathos. My students selected books on a range of topics—from totalitarian regimes, to large-scale acts of violence, to stories of personal struggle. Despite the serious (and often depressing) subject matter of these texts, many of my students had what I believe to be formative experiences as they engaged in an assignment that heightened their awareness and increased their empathy.

Here are some reflective excerpts from my students' active reading reports:

- "My book helped me realize how fortunate I am to have the freedoms that I have today."
- The author's "positive attitude and determination can be admired by many such as me. When I am consumed with the negativity and hardships in my life, I can be reminded of her strong-minded outlook on life and realize that there is a light after darkness."
- This book "open[ed] my eyes about how climate change affects my life as well as human's life. Overall, this assignment does not only support me in my class, but also gives me some knowledge about the world's issue[s]."



Above, a number of Kelsey's students in ENGL 122 work on their assignments.

- My book "helped me realize what occurred in the Dominican Republic, and the consequences Trujillo's regime had on the nation."
- "Readers will gain a profound appreciation for their rights, justice and freedom, when reading the stories about the countless injustices that occur under the dictatorship [in North Korea]. When learning history it doesn't just have to be acquired in history class or a museum, one can pick up a book and learn about an entire group of people and gain some knowledge, which is what happened to me."
- "The book affected me in many ways. Seeing how [the author] wrote makes me want to improve my own writing. Not only did his book affect me on an academic side, but also [on the] personal [side]. Seeing how a young boy could go through such rough times and yet stay so positive blew my mind."
- "Some of the personal stories in this book "really left me thinking deeply, almost bringing tears to my eyes. Paying attention to how the author structured this [text] brought my attention closer to how much power and emotional language was used."

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Kelsey is an Instructor of English

Reflections on China, an Interview with Dr. Murphy
by Howard Miller

Last November President Maureen Murphy had the opportunity to travel to China with a delegation of American educators in order to strengthen the College's ties and potentially create partnerships with Chinese institutions.

I recently had a chance to sit down with Dr. Murphy to talk to her about her experiences in China and her impressions of the Chinese students and educational systems she studied.

Q: What are your thoughts about study abroad in general?

Dr. Murphy: I've always been interested in international education. It can be a transformative experience, as it was for my son, who studied abroad in Canterbury, England. Because of that trip, he has an international network of friends and associates who he wouldn't have had otherwise. Anyone who studies abroad returns to the United States with a depth of cultural understanding they could not acquire otherwise.

Q: Tell me about your trip to China.

Dr. Murphy: Dr. Janice Thomas from the International Education suggested that I apply. Our group worked with the College Board and the Hanban Confucius Institute, which is a non-profit organization that works with the Chinese government to facilitate cultural exchanges, among other things. With our cohort, they were trying to learn how to participate in various higher education alignments.

We spent four days in Beijing, three in Shandong Province, and then two more in Beijing. We saw only universities – everything from the most highly selective institutions that train diplomats, to engineering schools, to teachers colleges.

At Shandong there was an Institute for Chinese language and culture. We visited an astounding immersion program at a time when students had been there about a week and a half and were spending about six hours per day in class learning Chinese. There were no American students, mostly Africans, many from Cameroon.

Nowhere did I see a school of business, so I asked. What we were told is that business is what one does; in order to study business, one needs to study culture – American studies, Oceanic studies, European studies. Rather than specifically studying business, the Chinese study cultures.

In the schools we visited, all students were expected to study abroad. It is an expectation of both the university and the family.

And communication was quite easy. Everyone spoke English – our guides, those in the schools, even the street vendors.

Q: Do you think the street vendors all spoke English, or was it only the street vendors you saw who spoke English.

Did you know that if your class assignment is registered with the Global Citizenship Project you can nominate a student for a Global Citizenship Award?

Dr. Murphy: We were pretty well managed while we were there, but there was opportunity to communicate outside of the group. And I was quite impressed to learn just how prevalent English is in China.

Q: Beyond the prevalence of English, were there any cultural surprises on your trip?

Dr. Murphy: The Chinese universities we saw were new – built for the demand.

Did you know that the Chinese government spends the same percentage of its gross domestic product on education as the United States spends on defense? Think about that for a moment.

It was surprising to find that China is a Communist country that has made capitalism work. KFC was prevalent. There was a Walmart. In the U.S. we equate capitalism and democracy, but capitalism can thrive even in this communist country. Don't misunderstand. The party is very powerful and very active. We stayed about four blocks from Tiananmen Square. We had no Internet, everything was scrambled.

So many things are new and modern, juxtaposed against what we think of when we see China. It was really quite impressive.

Q: Were there any other surprises?

Dr. Murphy: The cultural commitment to education was surprising. And it was so interesting being with groups of students with no siblings in a country in which filial responsibility is so prominent. There were a lot more girls than I thought there would be. The one-child policy, we have to remember, had been regional.

Because of the expectations of their families and because they have no siblings who may pick up the slack, Chinese students seem to place a value on their education that our students may not. Like us, they have opportunities. They have the ability to make and save money. There are restrictions on how the money can be used though. For example, permission must be granted to purchase a car, and cars can only be driven every other day, depending on the license plate number.

The cultural differences stood out; so did the similarities. Much like any study abroad experience, visiting China and exploring their educational system was fascinating – an outstanding learning experience.

Q: Thank you for your time, Dr. Murphy.

Dr. Murphy: Thank you.

S4GC, Service Learning, & Clear Water

by Victoria Anderson

This past fall semester I was lucky enough to participate in something I would have never have guessed I would be able to partake in as a student at Brookdale Community College. In Professor Roseanne Alvarez's English 236 Honors class we were assigned Service Learning projects. For our project we were tasked with restarting the Students for Global Citizenship (S4GC) club. We didn't quite understand why until we connected what we were doing inside the classroom to what was happening outside of the classroom.

Professor Terry Konn was our supervisor and the S4GC advisor. She told us many stories about Ghana and Rwanda and the conditions that plagued so many people there. When she told us these stories we thought about the poetry anthology that we had read alongside the various other works of literature that told stories of strife and triumph.

Inspired by these conversations, we decided that we would donate to the Global Water Project. This organization provides clean water to underdeveloped nations by building new infrastructure in impoverished towns. We are focusing on helping by having a "Clean Water Carnival" in the spring. The Carnival will not only help us to raise money for the wonderful organization, but it will also spread awareness about global water issues. There will be tables with information about this issue as well as games and activities. Overall, it is going to be an amazing event to for the college community to gain awareness about clean water issues.

Many students walk around Brookdale with their heads down and arms slumped. We are hoping that by doing this Carnival we will brighten their day and also get them actively engaged with the world. So many people constantly talk about how awful the world is but they never actually do something about it. S4GC provides students with the opportunity to help beyond the Brookdale campus. I am proudly the President of this new club and am so excited to move forward with Professor Konn during this semester.

If you would like to help us with our upcoming event contact me at andstorvic@gmail.com! We would love more help. Our meetings are every Thursday in MAN 106!

Victoria is an International Studies major

STUDENTS FOR GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
at Brookdale Community College
Presents

CLEAN WATER CARNIVAL

Learn about global water resources
Play a water game!
Dunk a professor!

Help us build a clean water well for a village in Africa
Donations can be sent to "The Water Project" at :
<https://thewaterproject.org/community/profile/terry-phd>

Thursday, April 3, 2014
Student Life Center Patio
11:30-1:30 p.m.

For more information or reserve a table contact :
Victoria Anderson, President, S4GC
VAnderson131@mail.brookdale.edu
Terry Konn, Ph.D.
TKonn@Brookdale.edu (advisor)

My Fulbright Scholarship

by Mariana Grassi

I decided to apply for the Fulbright Program right after my graduation not only because of the opportunities of expanding Brazilian culture abroad but also because I wanted to improve my own linguistic and cultural knowledge of English. In addition to that, I had been working as an English teacher since my second semester at a private language course, so I wanted to do something different after my graduation. At that time, becoming a Fulbright Scholar was something that I was really hoping to happen.

I have been teaching Portuguese as a Second Language since last fall at Brookdale. My classes are held at Long Branch campus twice a week. Even though I had experience in working as a second language teacher in Brazil, this is the first time I teach Portuguese as a second language. As a linguist, I think it is amazing the



way my students learn my native language.

Before accepting my position at Brookdale, I had never thought that I would be a kind of connection between The US and Brazil. I like to think that I enable Brazilian and American cultures to have contact to each other and, therefore, it helps my Portuguese language students at Brookdale to refine their language skills.

In addition to the classes I teach every Monday and Wednesday, I have been invited to give lectures and be the guest speaker of particular courses. Consequently, I have contact with people who are not from the Language Department but who are also interested either in my language or even Brazil.

Another aspect that I love about this whole experience is the fact that Fulbright and Brookdale allow me to take courses at Lincroft campus. Last fall, I had the opportunity to study American Idioms and French 101. This term, I decided to continue studying French and also American Literature. My aim is to have contact with different students' profiles so I can have a better idea of how American students are.

Furthermore, the college has now a Portuguese Language and Culture Club which was created by me and a Portuguese student at Brookdale. The club meets every Tuesday at noon, and our aim is to bring people close to Portuguese and Brazilian cultures. Through the club we try to reach as many people as we can to advertise the Portuguese classes.

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"I am not an Athenian or a Greek, but a citizen of the world." –Socrates

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As a result of this amazing experience, working and studying at Brookdale has exceeded all my expectations. First of all, the fact that I am teaching at a Community College is really interesting to me because it is something very specific to the US. Second, being a Portuguese Assistant makes me an ambassador of my culture, and sharing it with my students is really rewarding. Third, I have been given the opportunity to learn about Americans daily life by actually living it. And last but not least, I have been improving my English a lot with the courses I have chosen.

After being aware the importance of my role and how unique this moment is to me, my responsibility lays on the contribution to Brookdale to improve its students' proficiency levels not also by providing opportunities to help students to cover their own language problems but also allowing American students to have access to Brazilian cultural aspects.

Mariana is a Fulbright Scholar from Brazil

Are you working on a project either in or out of class that deals with Global Citizenship? If so, please contact us at globalcitizen@brookdalecc.edu.

International Education Center

2014 Poster Contest

The Brookdale International Education Center is excited to announce the Fifth Annual Poster Contest! We are seeking talented people to help us put the idea of "The World is our Community" into an artistic vision for a poster to be used during the 2014-2015 academic year. The winner will receive a debit card worth \$200. Deadline for entries is April 1, 2014. For more information on eligibility, poster specifications and entry, please stop by the International Education Center.

Co-sponsored by the Office of Student Life and Activities.

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Changing the World with Microloans

by Tom Berke



When we started the Global Citizenship Project (GCP), it was call the "Save the World" project because that is its aim. We sometimes think there's nothing we can do by ourselves, but there is. After meeting with Tiffany Persons of Shine on Sierra Leone as last semester's Global Citizenship Seminar, I decided to get involved with KIVA, the microloan company that works, "to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty."

I aimed to loan money to two entrepreneurs working to improve their lives and the lives of their families. But I found the task of choosing the perfect businesses to support was intimidating. I wanted to pick the most deserving projects in the neediest places. I discovered, after months of trying to focus my effort, that I was no closer to making a decision than when I started looking. I finally decided that since I have an affinity for Southeast Asia and that Cambodia was one of the world's poorest countries that I would support projects in Cambodia. I also decided that I couldn't think of anything more fundamental than providing food for people. I chose two Cambodian farmers who produced food the women would sell in local markets.

Here's what Kiva has to say about the people who received my loans.

Nan, 43, is married with two children. Her family lives in a house with a thatch roof located in the Kampong Cham province's Dambae district. The main sources of her family's income are from farming rice and cassava planting in her village. She has been running her businesses for 23 years, earning about \$15 per day. She is able to save about \$10 each day.

Sarin is 46 years old and married. She has three children, all of whom are dependent on the family and they are now still in school. Living in a village of the Tbaung Khmum district, Sarin grows rice and cassava while her husband works as a paid worker. Having been in business for twenty-eight years, she manages to earn about US\$ 10.

The farmers were half way around the world. I hoped that my contributions would help them start businesses that would give them and their families hope for a better life. When I contributed I felt wonderful. It was great feeling being able to have a positive impact on a person's life. But quickly, I drifted back into by daily routine and put the KIVA loans into the back of my mind until one day a note arrived in my email. I received repayment on a loan! I cannot describe the feeling I had. It was an unexpected feeling of warmth and joy. I felt so great to knowing that my contribution was making a difference in someone's life.

The serendipity was that the repayments allow me to give opportunities to an expanding number of people working to make a better life for themselves, their families and, with a little luck, for their communities. What a great lesson to give our students. It would be wonderful to share with them the feeling KIVA allowed me to experience. Microloan investments are small enough that clubs or small groups working on class assignments could choose projects in selected parts of the world to support and to build valuable learning experiences around.

Tom is a Professor of Chemistry

**GLOBAL CITIZEN PROJECT
NEWSLETTER**

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