

Disaster Preparedness: A Global Virtual Exchange During a Pandemic

Theme: Education in a global pandemic

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Introduction

The emergence of the coronavirus in Spring 2020 forced academic institutions to re-evaluate delivery of global education when international immersion experiences were abruptly halted. Subsequently, faculty at the University of South Florida (USF) in the United States and University of Stirling (UoS) in Scotland, designed and delivered a global virtual exchange (GVE) to provide the opportunity to meet course learning objectives, while continuing critical international relationships.

Aim

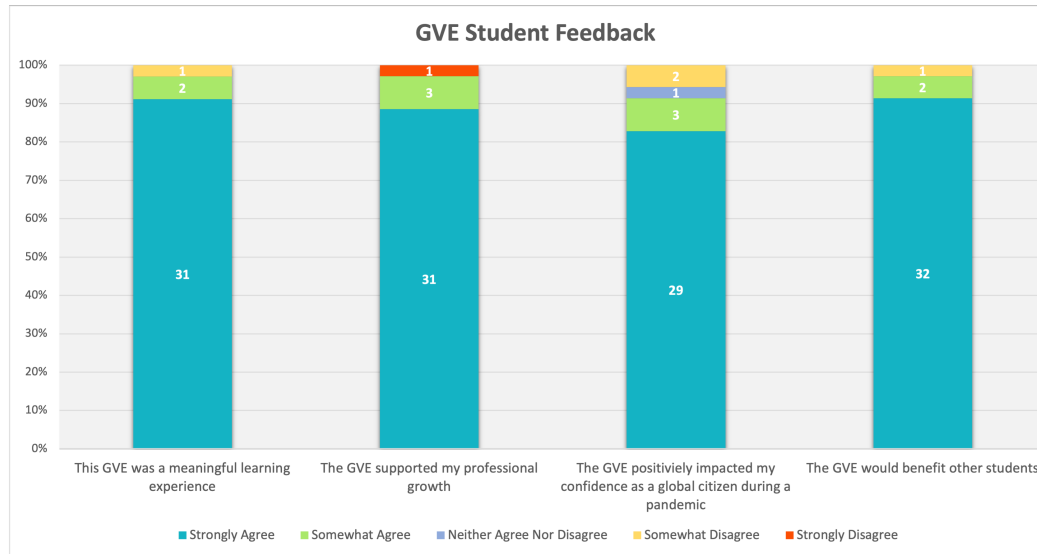
The aim of the GVE was to expose undergraduate (UG) students to public health concepts and provide an opportunity for strategic resource utilization following natural, man-made, and infectious disease-related disasters within each country.

Learning Outcomes

1. Exploration of healthcare systems and diverse populations unique to each country
2. Identification of disaster-response frameworks utilized by each country
3. Development of culturally appropriate, evidence-based solutions to mitigate future disasters, and improve disaster response

Pedagogy

Constructivism and collaborative learning theories guided the design and construction of the GVE content (Kala *et al.*, 2010; O'Donnell *et al.*, 2013). Additionally, Microsoft TEAMS, FlipGrid and Kahoot!® platforms provided flipped classroom opportunities for learning. During the GVE meetings, faculty collaborated with students in one large and several small groups to achieve learning objectives.



Screenshot of participants taken during GVE

Planning

Over six months, key faculty and stakeholders from both countries met bi-monthly to develop a GVE for Spring 2021. The content was delivered over three sessions. Each session included an icebreaker, activities related to disaster planning, and an opportunity for students to provide feedback. Students also collaborated in groups to produce and deliver a presentation to their peers.

Student Demographics

Thirteen UoS honors students who were in the fourth year of their mental health and adult programs collaborated with nine USF UG students who were completing their final semester, in the public health course. Three faculty and one member of the Educational Design Technology Department led the GVE.

Evaluation

The survey used to garner student feedback following each of the three collaboration events was adapted from the Satisfaction with First Clinical Practice Education (SFCPE) tool (Asadzaker *et al.*, 2015). Responses were evaluated and used to identify obstacles and enhance engagement prior to the next event.

Conclusion

As a result of the GVE, USF students earned their Global Citizens Project award and UoS students met course objectives by engaging with international faculty and peers. The GVE also revealed potential budget-neutral ways for students to participate in global experiences in the future, and opportunities to maintain sustainable methods of meaningful collaboration among global partners.

References

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2. Kala, S., Isaramalai, S. A., & Pohthong, A. (2010). Electronic learning and constructivism: A model for nursing education. *Nurse Education Today*, 30(1), pp. 61-66. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2009.06.002>
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