

SHIFT HAPPENS-- TRANSITIONING INTO A GLOBAL MINDSET IN THE FIRST-YEAR THROUGH REFLECTIVE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

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Abstract

Experiential learning in higher education is identified as one of the most impactful learning methods and recent trends by which students' academic and social development can be fostered. Additionally, the role that reflexivity plays as a bridge between the experience and learning is underscored as a catalyst to making learning authentic and long-lasting for each learner. To answer the latest demands of the increasingly globalized and cosmopolitan society for our students entering the marketplace, it becomes important to arm them with the ability to think about themselves as a part of an interconnected global system; development of global citizenship. However, there is little shared on how these learning experiences manifest to cultivate a global mindset as a foundation to the higher education experience when applied to co-curricular initiatives within the first-year seminar context. Using the latest trends in high impact adult learning methodologies as a conceptual framework of first-year learning, experiential education, and reflective learning to underpin this study, the researchers investigate how students make meaning about their academic, professional goals, and course themes in a weeklong all-expenses paid, learning-by-doing excursion to Washington, DC. The aim of this co-curricular learning initiative is to cultivate new understandings centered around building global citizenship by using guided visits to various governmental and nongovernmental organizations in the nation's capital while reflecting about those experiences using guided prompted questions, group discussion, and journaling techniques.

Keywords: Reflection, first-year, global learning, high-Impact practices, experiential.