

# ASSESSING GLOBAL LEARNING

Considering critical thinking, intercultural capacities, and civic engagement through engaged global learning at home and abroad.

*I think that my experience this summer has taught me that making a global difference takes time. You cannot enter a new culture as an outsider and think that you will start helping people immediately. You have no right to tell people how to change their lives until you understand them. It takes time to develop relationships that are strong enough to induce change*

*It made me feel more empowered, more like I had the ability to make a difference both locally and globally even if I am just one person.*

## THE GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT SURVEY



This institutional report was written by Nora Pillard Reynolds and Eric Hartman, as a component of a larger Global Engagement Survey (GES) research project coordinated through [globalsl.org](http://globalsl.org).

The Global Engagement Survey (GES) is a multi-institutional effort to share tools and analysis, while advancing research and understanding, regarding global learning and high impact practices.

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# Global Engagement Survey 2015

## *Intercultural Competence, Civic Engagement, & Critical Reflection*

The Global Engagement Survey (GES) is a multi-institutional assessment tool that employs quantitative and qualitative methods to better understand relationships among program variables and student learning, specifically in respect to global learning goals identified by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U, 2014). Several established surveys and conceptual frameworks (Bennett, 1993; Braskamp, 2014; Hovland, 2014; Lough, McBride, & Sherraden, 2009; Morais & Ogden, 2011) that examine growth in intercultural learning, global civic engagement, and critical thinking informed the creation and testing of the Global Engagement Survey (GES). In addition to drawing on the strengths of existing scales, it adds opportunities for open-ended responses for evidence of behavioral choices and demonstrable student learning that support self-report assertions.

The GES was developed to address several specific challenges:

- While intercultural learning and civic engagement scholars have made significant strides in tracking student development in these areas, they have rarely integrated their insights.<sup>1</sup>
- When scholars have integrated the insights of these separate fields, they have called for more multi-institutional research, ideally with control populations, with attention to the relationships among program factors, populations, and specified learning outcomes.<sup>2</sup>
- Numerous institutional representatives have expressed interest in gaining access to a survey tool of this kind that would permit them to understand their own programs in comparison with other institutions.

The survey was organized to assess:

- *Intercultural competence.* Ten items measuring intercultural competence were initially taken from the International Volunteering Impacts Survey or IVIS (Lough, McBride, & Sherraden, 2012).
- *Civic Engagement.* Morais and Ogden (2011) designed and validated a survey designed to measure global citizenship. Factors analyses revealed a number of different sub-constructs within global citizenship. We included a number of survey items from key sub-constructs of global citizenship including efficacy, political voice, conscious consumption, and values.
- *Critical thinking.* Ten items measuring critical thinking were developed through use of AAC&U's *Assessing Global Learning* (McTighe Musil, 2009), combined with consideration of Kiely's transformational learning model (2005) and emphasis on the critical tradition in global

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<sup>1</sup> See: Bringle, R., Hatcher, J. & Jones, S. (2011). *International service learning: Conceptual frameworks and*

<sup>2</sup> See: Morais & Ogden (2011) and Sherraden, Lough, & Bopp (2013)

service-learning (GSL) (Green & Johnson, 2014; Hartman & Kiely, 2014; Porfolio & Hickman, 2010).

In 2014, the researchers carried out a pilot of the GES with ten institutions and thirty different high impact programs<sup>3</sup> taking place in the United States and abroad. Findings from the 2014 pilot informed the revision of the GES for the second iteration during the summer of 2015. Twelve different institutions and organizations facilitating more than 50 different programs participated in the 2015 GES.

In the pages that follow we share a survey overview and findings from the total data set. Individual institutions receive findings specific to each institution. For further elaboration on the conceptual rationale for the GES, see Hartman, Lough, Toms, and Reynolds (2015). While this document shares general data, individual institutional reports are confidential and are shared with the hope that they facilitate stakeholder conversation and continuous improvement. Each institution’s participation also supports broad, anonymous data gathering for the field as a whole.

## Survey Overview

The data consisted of participant background information, program factors, and both closed and open-ended questions. The table below provides a breakdown of the items and the competencies assessed.

Global Learning Outcome	Closed items	Closed items (post-only)	Open items	Open items (post-only)
<b>Intercultural competence</b>				
<i>Communication</i>	8		2	1
<i>Self-awareness</i>	7		3	
<b>Civic Engagement</b>				
<i>Values</i>	8			
<i>Efficacy</i>	9			1
<i>Political voice</i>	8			2
<i>Advocacy &amp; activism</i>		3		2
<i>Conscious consumption</i>	10		1	
<b>Critical reflection</b>	8		4	

<sup>3</sup> See: Kuh (2008)

## Mixed-methods

The survey used a mixed methods approach that incorporated open-ended questions to delve more deeply into students' responses to the closed items. If a student responded "strongly agree" (SA) or "agree" to a survey item or "strongly disagree" (SD) or "disagree", then that student would be prompted with a follow-up open-ended question specific to their response [see appendix for full list of open-ended questions].

**Example: Closed survey item (part of the intercultural competence – communication scale):**

I am very comfortable talking about diversity with people of different cultures.

*If SA or A, could you describe a point at which you get uncomfortable discussing diversity with people of different cultures?*

*If SD or D, Can you indicate why you are uncomfortable discussing diversity with people of different cultures?*

## Multi-institutional

*12 institutions and organizations offering more than 50 programs*

In the 2015 GES, twelve different institutions / organizations participated. The institutions (listed below) represent a wide variety of small, faith-based, and liberal arts colleges; large, state flagship, and Ivy League universities; and minority serving-, and predominantly first generation-serving institutions.

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**Participating institutions and organizations:** Amizade Global Service-Learning, California State University – Channel Islands, California State University – Monterey Bay, Cornell University, Dominican University of California, Duke University, Kansas State University, Northwestern University, University of Houston – Downtown, University of Kentucky, Virginia State University, & Westmont College

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The participating institutions facilitated more than 50 different summer programs, representing high-impact programming for global learning.

## Program factors

The GES collects data on variables for each of the programs, which enables further analysis to connect specific programming decisions to global learning outcomes and competencies. The GES collects data on the following program variables (see appendix for full list of program variables, including the percentages and frequencies from the total data set):

Program Variables	Variable Response Options
<b>STEM</b>	Yes   No
<b>Students</b>	All undergrad   undergrad & grad   3 <sup>rd</sup> or 4 <sup>th</sup> year undergrad
<b>Selection</b>	Students are admitted if in good academic standing in the institution   Less than 50% of applicants to the program are admitted
<b>Credits</b>	1 – 12 credits
<b>Required/ elective</b>	Required   Not req. but highly encouraged   Several req. at least ½   Elective   Req. to complete minor
<b>Language</b>	On-campus program (i.e. language not applicable)   English   Not English, req. local language/ advanced/ intermediate / rudimentary language skills
<b>SES</b>	Higher SES than community   Some overlap, mostly higher than comm.   Same SES   Some overlap, mostly lower than comm.
<b>Leader</b>	From host comm. & ongoing relationships   Same as comm.   Relationships over years   visited at least 2x   Once before   First time to host comm.
<b>Location</b>	US/ home comm.   US/ extended stay away from campus   Pre & post in US/ immersion outside US   Int'l students come to US   Entire exp. outside US
<b>Selection</b>	Apply, but rarely rejected   less than 75% accepted   less than 50% accepted   Admitted if good academic standing
<b>Duration</b>	1 -10 weeks
<b>Intervention</b>	Summer   Summer, coursework before & after   Summer, coursework before   One course during semester
<b>Living arrangements</b>	Homestays   Student housing   Apartment with other students
<b>Group size</b>	Number of students
<b>Cost to student</b>	Actual dollar amount and availability of scholarships
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> party provider</b>	Facilitated through another organization (Amizade, Foundation for Sustainable Development, Child Family Health International, etc.)

## Survey completion rates

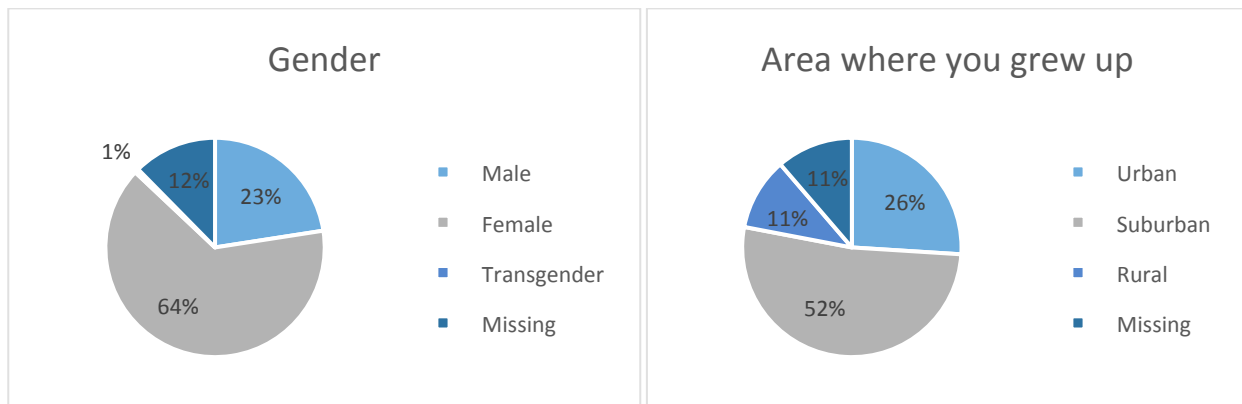
The survey completion rates for this year are represented as follows:



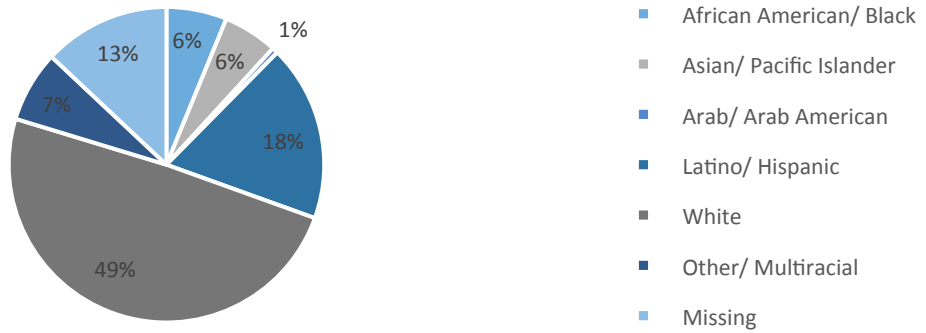
For the statistical analyses that follow, only the sample of matched cases ( $n=177$ ) was utilized to examine significant differences between the pre- and post-test surveys. The survey overview describes initial findings related to the scales and individual items for the overall matched sample. All closed survey items asked participants to respond with the following options: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. After discussing the initial findings for the whole sample, we provide additional institution-specific data for your consideration.

## Participants

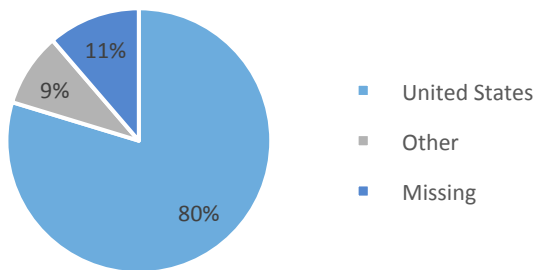
The participants included in the 2015 GES analysis ( $n=177$ ) were majority female (64%), white (49%), born in the United States (80%), grew up in a suburban area (52%), and had not participated in international voluntary service before (59%). After intentionally incorporating institutions that are either minority-serving institutions (MSIs) or predominantly first generation serving institutions (FGSIs), it is worthy of note that although the majority of the participants identified as White (49%), participants also identified as Latino/ Hispanic (18%), African American/Black (13%) and multiracial (7%).



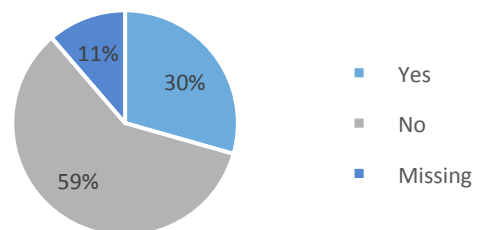
### Racial/ ethnic identity



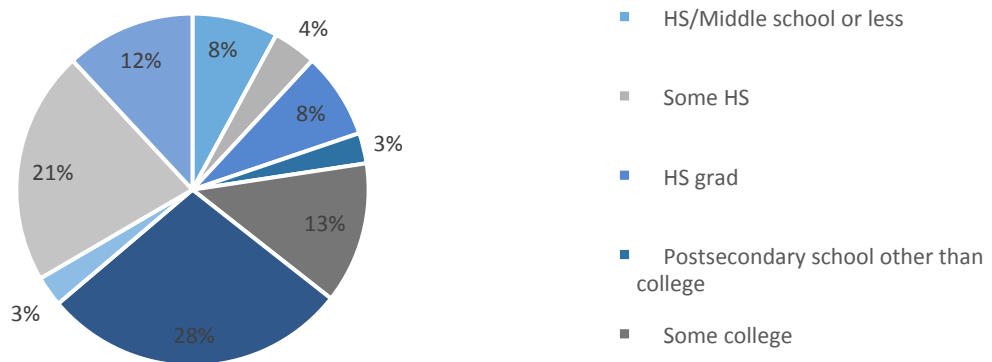
### Country of birth



### Participated in voluntary service before

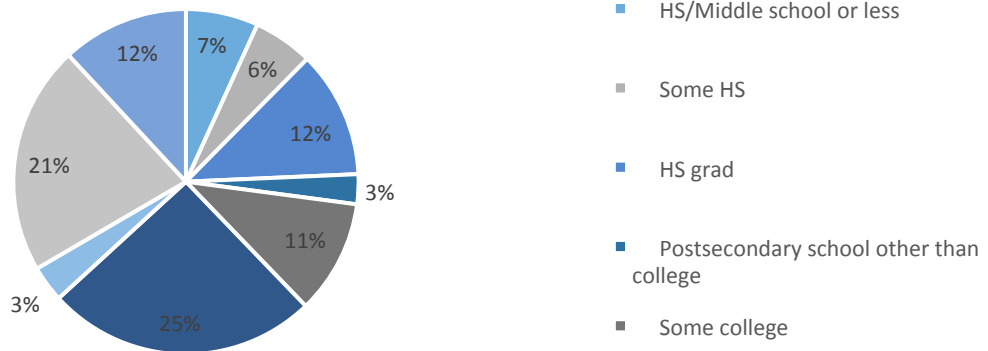


### Mother's education

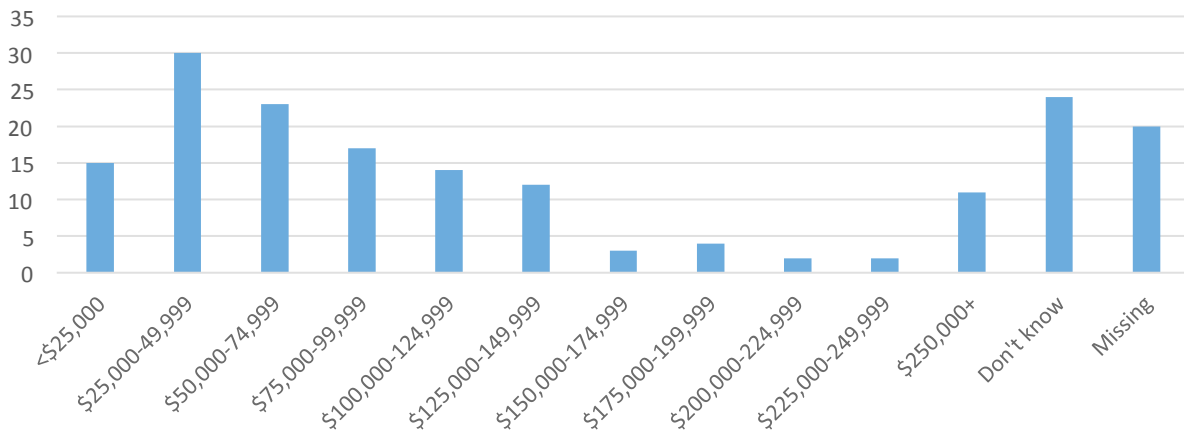




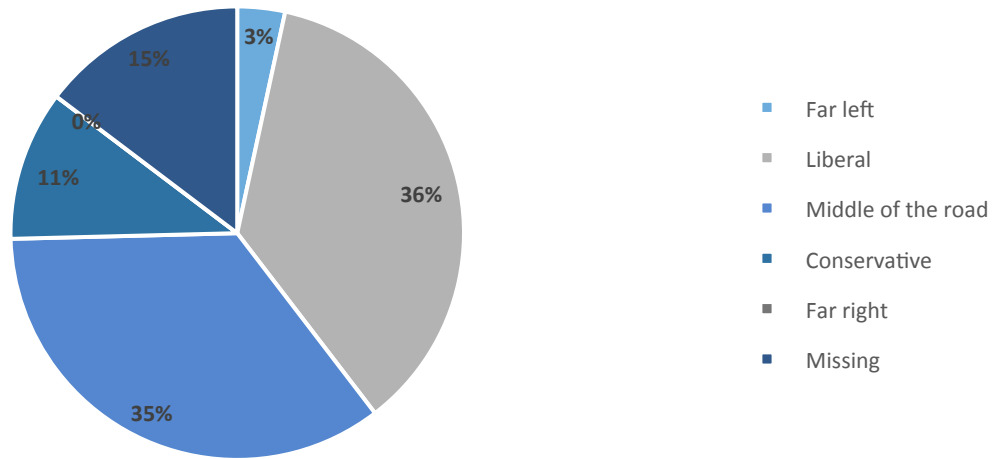
### Father's education



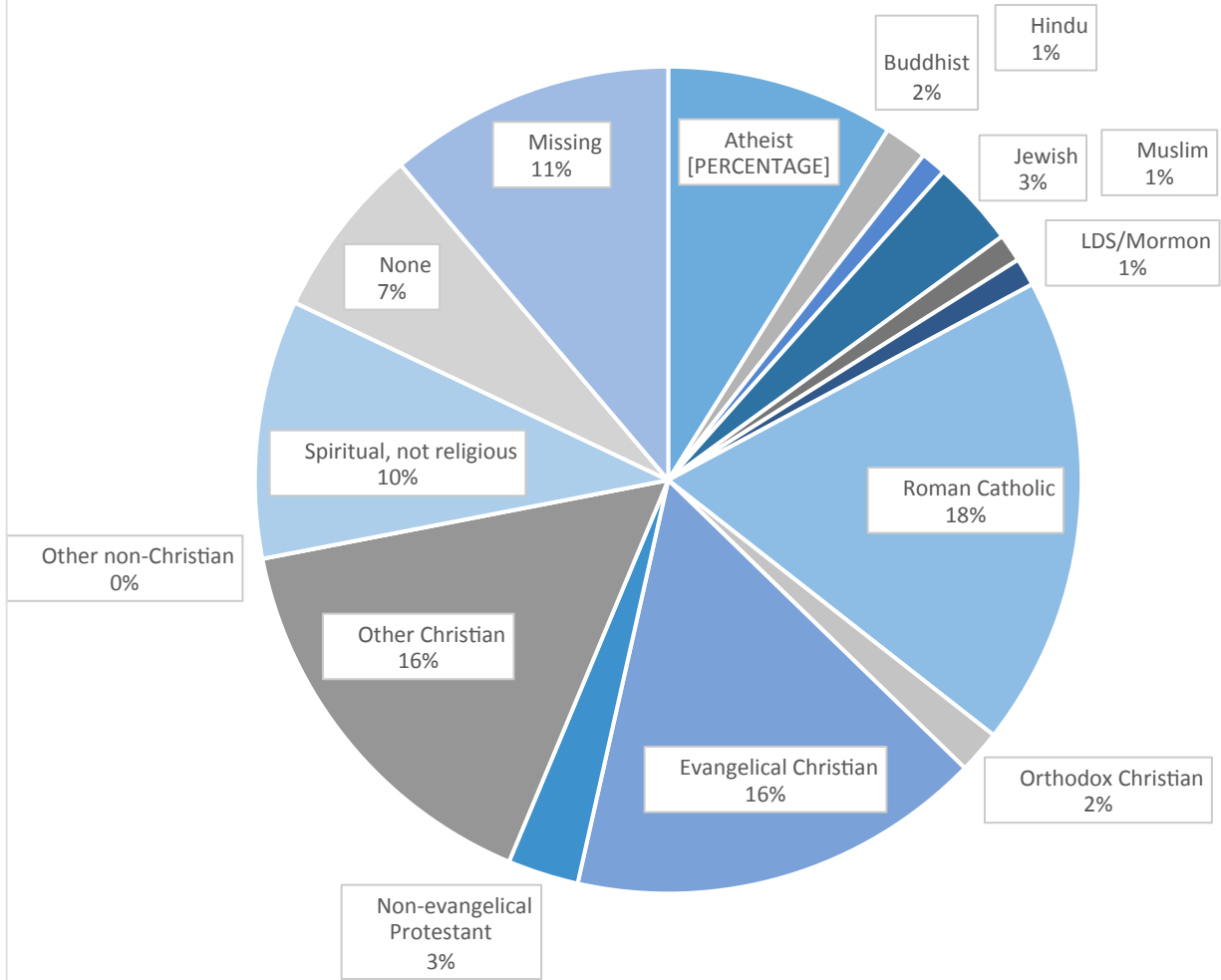
### Parental income



### Political views



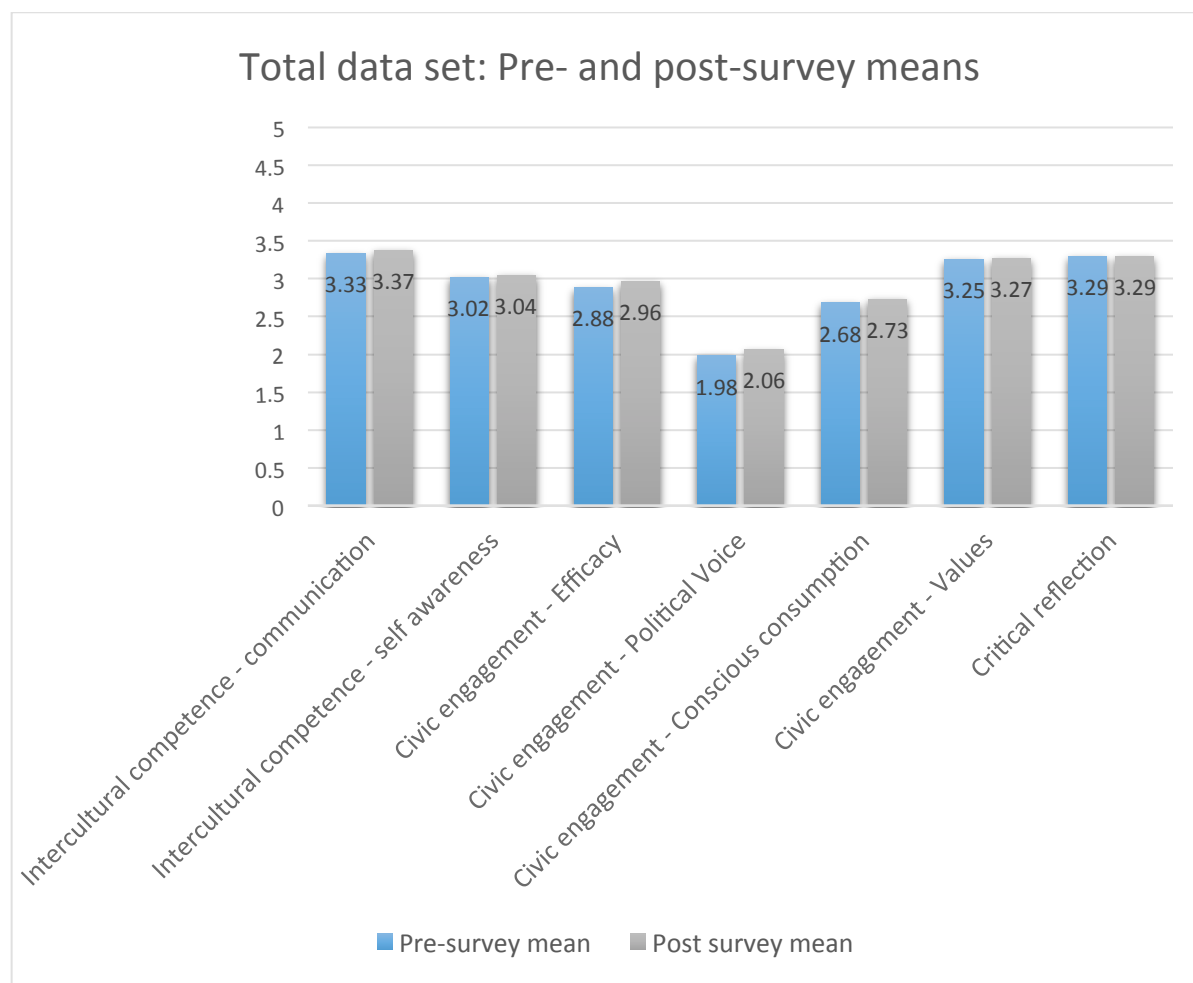
### Religious affiliation



## Findings: Scales

In the survey results, all seven scales held together well (see table below); however, the scales did not show significant difference between the pre- and post-surveys. See the chart below for pre- and post-survey means for all scales. Higher scores indicate stronger agreement with each statement (strongly agree = 5; strongly disagree = 1).

Scale	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Intercultural competence - Communication	0.8
Intercultural competence - Self-awareness	0.71
Civic engagement - Efficacy	0.83
Civic engagement - Political Voice	0.92
Civic engagement - Conscious consumption	0.86
Civic engagement - Values	0.81
Critical reflection	0.83



The tables below provide additional information on each of the competency scales.

Intercultural competence - Communication; $\alpha = .80$
By interacting with people who are different from me, I have learned that I am flexible in my thinking and ideas.
I am very comfortable talking about diversity with people of different cultures.
I have a very strong appreciation of other nations, cultures, and customs.
I am able to communicate in different ways with people from different cultures.
When I am in a cultural space that is different from my home culture, I make efforts to adapt my...
When I am in a cultural space that is different from my home culture, I adjust my expectation and...
I enjoy when my friends from other cultures teach me about our cultural differences.
I am open to people who strive to live lives very different from my own lifestyle.

Intercultural competence - Self-awareness; $\alpha = .71$
I adapt my behavior and mannerisms when I am interacting with / people of other cultures.
I have a hard time working with people who are different from me.
I often adapt my communication style to other people's cultural / background.
I can easily adapt my actions in response to changing / circumstances.
I can easily resolve misunderstandings with people from other / cultures.
I have a hard time understanding the feelings of people from other / cultures well.
I work to develop and maintain relationships with people of / backgrounds different from my own.

Civic Engagement - Efficacy; $\alpha = .83$
I know how to develop a plan to help address an environmental or social problem.
I know several ways in which I can make a difference on some of society's most worrisome problems.
I am able to get other people to care about social or environmental problems that concern me.
I am informed of current issues that impact international relationships.
I feel comfortable expressing my views of important social issues.
I enjoy listening to others views regarding an important social issue.
I am able to write an opinion letter to a local media source expressing my concerns over policy issues.
I feel I have the ability to make a difference in my local community.
I feel I have the ability to make a difference in the global community.

Civic Engagement - Political Voice; $\alpha = .92$
Over the next 6 months, I will contact media to express my concerns about an international problem.
Over the next 6 months, I will contact media to express my concerns about a domestic problem.
Over the next 6 months, I will express my views about international politics on a website, blog, or chat room.
Over the next 6 months, I will express my views about domestic politics on a website, blog, or chat room.
Over the next 6 months, I will contact or visit someone in government to seek public action on international issues and concerns.
Over the next 6 months, I will contact or visit someone in government to seek public action on domestic actions or concerns.
Over the next 6 months, I will participate in an event where young people express their views about international problems.
Over the next 6 months, I will participate in an event where young people express their views about domestic problems.

<b>Civic Engagement - Conscious Consumption; <math>\alpha = .86</math></b>
If at all possible, I will always buy fair-trade or locally grown products and brands.
I deliberately buy products that support marginalized people and places.
I will boycott brands or products that are known to harm marginalized people and places.
I try to reduce my consumption of natural resources.
I try to buy only from companies that provide good conditions for employees in their factories.
I intentionally, "vote with my dollars" when spending money.
I try to spend money ethically.
Sometimes I choose not to purchase goods because I believe they cannot be produced ethically.
To purchase coffee that carries the Fairtrade or Crop to Cup Label, I am willing to pay a dollar more per pound when contrasted with other coffee in the store.
I would be willing to spend \$5 more on a \$20 sweater if that guaranteed that the sweater was made under safe working conditions.

<b>Civic Engagement - Values; <math>\alpha = .81</math></b>
I feel a responsibility to people in my country in need.
I feel a responsibility to people in need globally.
My responsibility to people of other countries is as great as my responsibility to people of my o...
I identify as a "global citizen".
I believe every person in the world is born with certain inalienable rights.
I believe that governments have a responsibility to ensure that all of their citizens have basic...
I believe that one responsibility of governments is ensuring that every child receives the opportunity for a quality education.
If governments are not providing basic rights and opportunities for their citizens, it is up to people like me to work for positive change to support everyone's rights.

<b>Critical Reflection; <math>\alpha = .83</math></b>
I think a lot about the influence that society has on other people.
I think a lot about the influence that society has on my own behavior.
I enjoy analyzing the reasons for people's behavior.
I carefully consider how privilege affects people's opportunities.
I carefully consider how dominant cultural assumptions reinforce inequalities.
When I stop to consider what I know about the world, I realize that even my strongest "truths" are open to change.
I believe it is important to analyze and understand our own thinking processes.
I tend to "see" people that otherwise often remain "invisible".

### Program factors

The following program factors were significantly associated with higher outcomes on the following scales:

Program factor	ICC-C	ICC-SA	CE-E	CE-PV	CE-CC	CE-V	CR
STEM program				↑	↑		↑
More than 3 weeks immersion	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Completely elective	↑	↑		↑			
≥ 4 credits	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑
Students represent generally same SES as community (vs. higher)	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑	↑

The following program factors were not significantly associated with any of the outcome areas: type of students, student-community language relationship, program cost, living arrangements, whether the program leader stayed on site with the students, and the program leader’s relationship with the host community.

Of particular interest, the socio-economic status of the student in comparison to the community in which the student was placed was significantly associated on most outcomes. When the student was similar in socio-economic status to the community, the student showed higher outcomes than when the student represented higher socio-economic status than the community.

## Findings: Qualitative Insights

Across the dataset, the qualitative questions led to several interesting insights. First, respondents were often forced to admit less intercultural experience than their responses to the closed questions would otherwise suggest. Many respondents, when prompted to provide examples of intercultural experiences and cooperation, actually responded “none,” despite having asserted confidence in their intercultural capacities. Also in respect to the intercultural competence section, many respondents pointed toward examples that identified the communication challenge as “the other person,” or, “the other person’s misguided beliefs or overly aggressive disposition.” Numerous other respondents reported clear efforts to be better listeners, while a select few responded to intercultural connection, communication, and feeling prompts in a manner that spoke to “living in tension.” By living in tension we intend to communicate a sophisticated embrace of the challenge of seeing multiple legitimate ways of being and knowing. These types of responses tend to point out the way in which self and other are co-implicated in these questions. For example, one respondent described an intercultural communication challenge as follows,

*Sometimes I fail to understand the ideology and politics in which a person was raised, making it difficult to resolve problems that can fall all the way down to the core of what makes a person a person. Specifically in economics this tends to be an issue.*

In response to prompts about civic engagement, many respondents reported increased engagement interests through experience, particularly increased likelihood of voting or in some cases no change because they already were civically involved. Two programs seemed to expose students to contexts and coursework that highlighted the inadequacies of the political system for addressing host community interests, which appeared to spark increasing cynicism among participants.

Across programs, respondents generally demonstrated increased interest in keeping up with political news. Programs and institutional populations demonstrated significant variation in respect to naming political issues of interest, along with articulating whether future civic engagement would include off campus organizing and advocacy. Again, some programs and institutions seemed to have students connecting host community issues to issues at home to a greater extent than others.

Consideration of the question, “How have you become aware of your own thinking process?” led to a few clear efforts to grow in what Nussbaum (1994) calls critical distance. For example, one respondent noted,

*That’s a very challenging question. I believe my study abroad experience has opened my understanding of my thinking process by adding more “variables” to what I say and how I act to different situations around me. I often have to think would this statement make anyone aggressive or would this hurt someone’s feelings based on their beliefs. Rarely did I have to think about this because I knew my friends and family well enough to make jokes and have them understand it’s a joke. Furthermore, I believe my thought process has become more environmentally sensitive. I try to conserve more on gasoline as well as considering biking to close places when I used to drive.*

While another reflected,

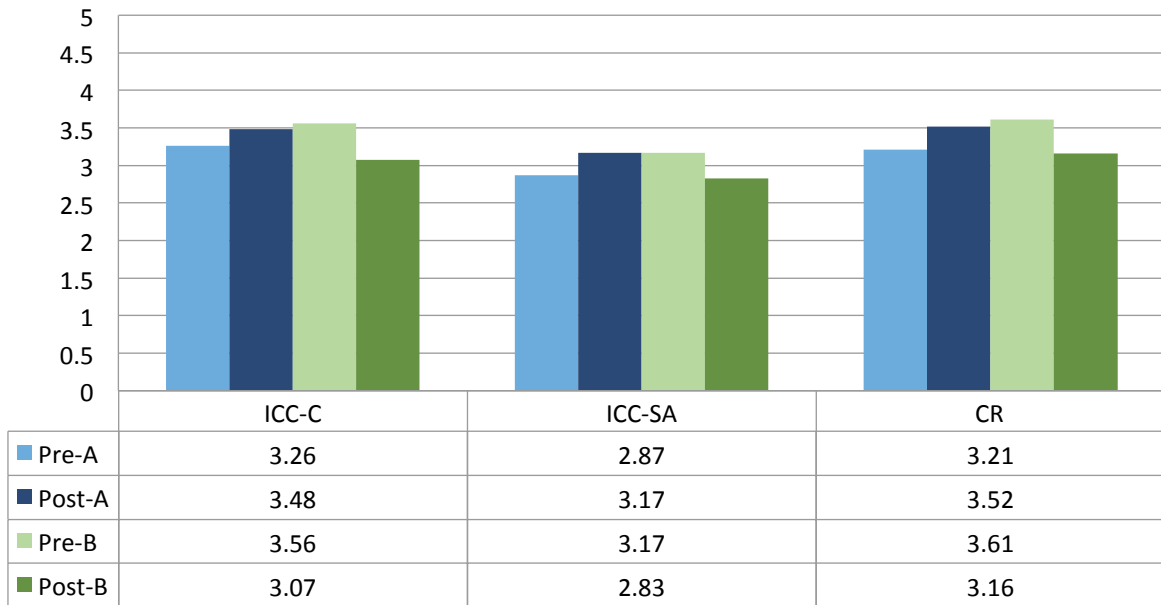
*I realize that I am a product of my own country and my own culture. It is easy to think of yourself as an individual and to want to believe that you are the reason for all your attitudes. But really, your thinking process is a result of where and how you grew up.*

### Comparison with other institutions

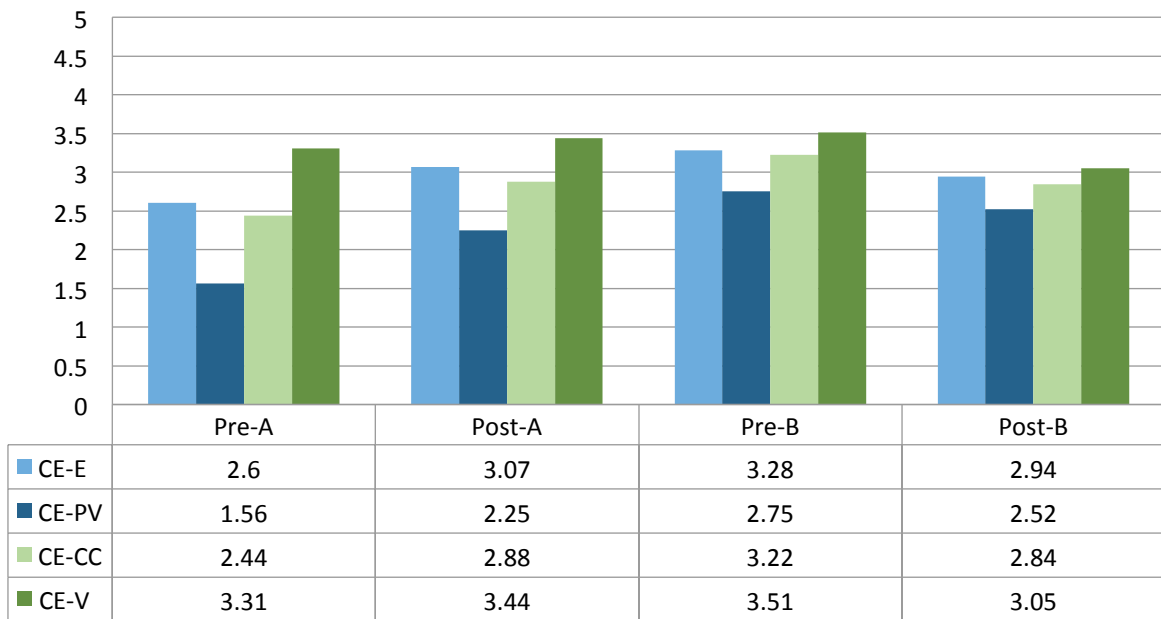
Because the data set is multi-institutional, it enables comparisons between different institutions within the data set. The chart below displays the pre- and post- survey means of two institutions for comparison. Visible trends across these three institutions are intriguing. The data suggest specific institutional program factors drive divergent global learning outcomes.

Institution A	n=20	Private; 13% acceptance rate
Institution B	n=10	Public; MSI; 45% acceptance rate

### Pre- to post-survey means: Two institutions



### Pre- to post-survey means: Two institutions





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