Teaching leadership with a global perspective is imperative for all Leadership Studies programs, as daily interactions in economics, culture, politics, technology, communication, and education with individuals around the world have become commonplace. This paper surveys past approaches to multicultural and international education, and describes a “Global Immersion Week” learning activity that uses the “unit approach” as a vehicle to educate students on global issues. Global Immersion Week provided students with the opportunity to read, discuss, and engage in global issues in all core leadership courses during the same timeframe. Results indicate that the learning activity is effective in helping students whet their appetites to explore more global issues and become more globally aware and engaged in current international issues.

As a contemporary term, globalization is a phenomenon that can encapsulate economics, culture, politics, technology, communication, and education. One of the many challenges that accelerating globalization has produced is how to infuse curriculum in higher education with international teaching so that students are adequately prepared to live and work in a rapidly shrinking world. This task is particularly pertinent to leadership studies programs, because unlike the other specialized fields in higher education such as engineering, architecture, or business, which prepare students for particular careers, leadership studies is a generalist and multi-disciplinary program that prepares students to be leaders in various fields.

Teaching leadership with a global perspective was once relegated to the few international relations schools in the United States of America that were producing future diplomats, international organization managers, and international business or finance experts. Business schools then began to offer some courses on global management. Now, teaching leadership with a global perspective has become an urgent imperative for all leadership studies programs, as daily interactions with economics, culture, politics, technology, communication, and education with individuals around the world has become commonplace. For example, an individual who grew up in Goodland, Kansas, population

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4,800, now at the age of 28, may live in Dubai and work for an energy think tank based in Boston.

To find a model for how to teach leadership with a global perspective, it may be useful to examine how multicultural education was first introduced and infused in the higher education curriculum and to learn what lessons there are for infusing international or global education into the leadership curriculum. This paper will present a case study of a “Quick Infusion”—entitled “Global Immersion Week” at a Midwestern university. All the core leadership courses focused on international issues ranging from world trade and fair trade to AIDS, immigration, and health care for one to two weeks. Some findings and recommendations for future work will conclude this paper.

The Multicultural Education Model

Multicultural education, the buzz word of the 1980s, originated in the 1960s in the wake of the civil rights movement as a corrective to the long-standing de facto policy of assimilating minority groups into the "melting pot" of dominant American culture (Sobol, 1990). Through multicultural education, teachers delivered information to educate students about differences. According to Nieto (1992), multicultural education usually consists of lessons in human relations, units about holidays, and food festivals. Gibson (1984) states that multicultural education is a process through which individuals develop ways of perceiving, evaluating, and behaving within cultural systems different from their own. Banks and Banks (1993) present multicultural education as a reform movement designed to change the total educational environment so that students from diverse racial and ethnic groups, both gender groups, exceptional students, and students from each social-class group will experience equal educational opportunities in schools, colleges, and universities. According to Banks (1999), multicultural education has three components: (a) an idea, (b) advocacy for all students having an equal opportunity to learn in schools regardless of their gender, social class, and their racial, ethnic, or cultural characteristics, and (c) an ongoing process of evaluation and adjustments. Bennett (1990) adds that multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that is based upon democratic values and beliefs and seeks to foster cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an interdependent world. A democratic society needs an education system that helps develop its democracy by developing thoughtful citizens who can make wise civic choices (Noddings, 2005). Developing knowledgeable and participatory citizens who can think critically about global connections with their local communities should be a goal of all educators and those concerned about our children’s education and future.

Emerging International Education

In 1979, Lee Anderson offered an identity to what was now being referred to as “global education” or a “global perspective.” With the success of Sputnik in 1958 and all of the U.S. government-sponsored experimental programs inspired by Sputnik, several states started new programs, especially in social studies and second-language areas, to get students involved in broader international studies (2001).
Students do not need to study information foreign or international for this information to be considered global education. Students may study their own community and still be involved in global education, as the influx of recent immigrants to even small rural towns in Kansas can attest. One’s own community is just as much a part of global education as foreign or international studies. According to Reardon (1988), global education is imperative for survival of the human species. Reardon is convinced that global education is synonymous with peace education.

**Comparative Methods for Teaching Multicultural and Global Education**

The future requires individuals who are prepared to function in a global society. In addition, individuals should be active participants in their education. Cole (1990) identified four approaches to disseminate multicultural information in higher education. The first approach is the “pyramid” that builds one multicultural course after the other. Second is the “unit” that includes a multicultural unit in each course. Third is the “course” that suggest a specific course with a focus on multicultural issues. The fourth is “infusion” that impregnates multicultural content into each unit of a course. Each of the four approaches provides a venue to dispense knowledge, insight, and reflection about multicultural education. Multicultural education should be content driven with information exchange and opportunity for discussion. Educators also need to make the connection between global and multicultural education. Global and multicultural education overlap in their goals to develop multiple perspectives and multiple loyalties; strengthen cultural consciousness and intercultural competence; respect human dignity and human rights; and combat prejudice and discrimination (Bennett, 1994). Global education consists of efforts to bring about changes in content, in the methods, and in the social context of education in order to prepare students for citizenship in a global age. With the influx of technology and ease of travel, this broad view of teaching and learning is imperative not only to function in the future but also to thrive.

Content and experience in global and international education need to be infused throughout higher education curriculum. Practicums, internships, and college/university collaborations should be structured so that students work with talented global educators. Courses in foundations, practice, and culture help students examine leadership concepts, from a board perspective (Merryfield, 1994; Tye & Tye, 1992). Consequently, students who gain a global perspective will be better able to compete in the world and be able to promote cross-cultural justice. Students in our nation’s colleges/universities are not only preparing to be citizens of the U.S., but citizens of the world. There are over 6 billion people in the world, and 95% of them live outside the United States (Farinelli, 1990). Yet, students in the U.S. know very little about individuals who reside outside the U.S. In fact, U.S. students can barely identify any country outside its borders, except Canada and Mexico. According to National Geographic (2006), only 37% of young Americans can find Iraq on a map—though U.S. troops have been there since 2003.

Global education prepares young people to understand and interact within a culturally diverse and globally interconnected world. Teaching from a global perspective can prepare young people to understand and interact within a culturally diverse and
globally interconnected world. Global education includes the study of world cultures and religions, world literature, the interrelatedness of world history, global issues, global economy, technology, the environment, political systems, and cross-cultural communication skills. Global education has developed as a K-12 effort to teach young people about their globally connected world. It focuses on teaching students to see the world through multiple perspectives of diverse people, and it purposefully addresses stereotypes of “the other.” Tye and Tye (1992) concur that a global education is both inevitable and necessary. A perspective is offered though a global education that is centered on the concept of connectedness-recognizing local/global connections, the commonalities all humans share, and understanding how national borders have become practically irrelevant for many individuals, from multinational corporations to polluters to terrorists. Global education should not be a separate part of an individual’s education, but one that is covered in every course. Some courses lend themselves to global education topics more readily than others, but every course offered has some aspects where global education experiences and knowledge could and should be included. This change in curricula, to focus globally, is necessary to prepare students to not only function but to thrive in a global society.

Leaders need the skills and tools to gain global knowledge and develop cross-cultural competencies. Higher education curricula and specifically leadership studies curriculum, should allow for infusion of global and international education. Leaders not only need knowledge in their discipline area, but also “global” knowledge about the world. For example, an economics major not only studies the economies of these diverse cultures in different world regions but must also learn about the historical contexts and cultural/political perspectives of these world regions, and how they are connected to the local economy.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine if leadership studies students at a Midwestern university participating in a Global Immersion Week learning activity would acquire an enhanced understanding of global issues and a desire to learn more about these issues. According to Cole, the “unit approach” best fits the current study (1990). A specific unit with a focus on global issues was included in each of the four leadership core courses.

Research Design

The research design for the study was a questionnaire completed following the Global Immersion Week course activity. The course activity took place about the fifth week of the semester. The questionnaire was utilized to collect information related to the student’s understanding of global topics. During a one to two week period, students who were enrolled in the four core leadership courses engaged in “global immersion” course activities that included but were not limited to examination of topics from the book *The Travels of A T-Shirt in the Global Economy: An Economist Examines the Markets, Power and Politics of World Trade* by Pietra Rivioli; a magazine entitled *DiversityInc*. Four separate special issues of *DiversityInc* were utilized: “Leading Women of Color Speak Out,” “Immigration: America’s Lifeline,” “Healthcare: America’s Dividing Line,” and

Students, who were predominately freshmen, enrolled in the Introduction to Leadership Concepts course listened to a presentation and discussed information from the book, The Travels of A T-Shirt in the Global Economy. Specifically, in an assigned activity, students wore or brought t-shirts to class and traced where their t-shirts are made in order to understand international trade issues. Information was provided about the history of cotton and how it related to American slavery, current international markets, and free trade. Students discussed whether or not the manufacturing of t-shirts contributed to the exploitation of others or economic development. They were provided with the DiversityInc 2005 special issue that focused on “South Africa: Facing the Future” and the DiversityInc 2006 issue that focused on “Global Diversity.”

Students enrolled in Culture and Context in Leadership explored AIDS as the globalization of a disease from one infection in 1930 to currently several million people on every continent. In addition, students read and discussed the DiversityInc magazine issue with a focus on healthcare disparities: “Does class trump race?” and viewed the PBS documentary, “The Age of AIDS.” A local AIDS activist also spoke to several of the classes about the changing faces of AIDS, from an affluent, white, gay man’s disease to a poor, heterosexual, female of color pandemic, which is global.

The students in Leadership in Practice looked at immigration/refugee problems and local community reactions. This examination included U.S. immigration policies past and present, and different community responses to the new immigrants. The DiversityInc issue with a focus on immigration was used. Students discussed and responded to a series of questions on immigration.

The Senior Seminar in Leadership class discussed the DiversityInc magazines that focused on, “Leading Women of Color Speak Out,” and “Healthcare: America’s Dividing Line,” as well as discussed current international issues that could impact their future careers. Students responded in writing to a series of questions about the readings and discussion.

Selection of the Sample

The study sample was obtained from a nonrandom convenience sample of students enrolled in four core courses at a medium size university located in the Midwest. Response rate was not 100% due to varying student attendance during the presentation and subsequent survey administration period. The courses included Introduction to Leadership Concepts (n = 423), Leadership in Practice (n = 70), Culture and Context in Leadership (n = 61), and Senior Seminar in Leadership (n = 52). All students enrolled in the course and present on the day(s) of the Global Immersion presentation were invited to complete the survey. Participants were asked to complete the Global Immersion Week Survey and to provide demographic information such as age, sex, high school setting and academic major. The self-administered survey took approximately 5-10 minutes to complete.

Returned usable surveys totaled 606. Overall, the response rate was 85.7%. As shown in Table 1, the sample was predominately female (62.4%). Hometown setting was
determined by where the respondent attended high school. There were 42.1% from rural hometown settings, 41.4% from suburban hometown settings, and 14.9% from urban hometown settings. Participants’ ages ranged from 17 to 55 (M = 19.14).

Table 1
**Demographic Information**

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Gender</th>
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<td>37.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>372</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
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<td>42.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
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<td>41.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average Age | 19.14

**Development of the Week 5: Global Immersion Week Survey**

The instrument used to assess understanding of global topics was the Week 5: Global Immersion Week Survey and can be found in Appendix A. The authors developed the instrument. The instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts in the areas of evaluation, assessment, and instrument design. Feedback was obtained and incorporated into the instrument.

The instrument consisted of three demographic items and five perception questions. The demographic items included gender, age, setting of high school attended, and academic major. The perception questions consisted of a variety of questions addressing the student’s feedback of activities presented during the Global Immersion Week course activity. There was one item requesting additional comments or suggestions for future Week 5: Global Immersion Week activities.

A four point modified Likert scale was used to determine the respondent’s perception of information presented and activities. “This scale is used to register the extent of agreement or disagreement with a particular statement of an attitude, belief, or judgment” (Tuckman, 1988, p. 192). The possible responses ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Items were scored from one point to four points with four being awarded to the strongly agree response.

**External Validity**

External validity pertains to whether or not the research result can be applied in the real world or other similar programs and approaches (Tuckman, 1988).
words, are the research results generalizable from the sample to the population? Research results are applicable to all students enrolled in Leadership Studies core courses as stated above.

**Findings and Discussion**

The purpose of the study was to determine if Leadership Studies students at a Midwestern university participating in a Global Immersion Week course activity would acquire an enhanced understanding of global issues and a desire to learn more about global issues. The first question asked if the global issues that were presented in class made the student more aware of the importance of global issues in leadership studies. In response to the first question, 48% of the students agreed, and .2% strongly disagreed. Fifty-point four percent of the male respondents agreed and 51% from urban settings agreed. The next question asked if the student learned more about global issues than he or she knew before this class. In response, 45.4% agreed, and 6.8% disagreed. Forty-seven point three percent of the males agreed, and 50.2% from suburban settings agreed. Question 3 asked if leadership with a global perspective was important to the student, and 46.2% strongly agreed while 2.8% disagreed. Additional analysis found that 47.8% of the females strongly agreed, and 56.7% from urban settings strongly agreed. In response to the question of whether global immersion week should be offered each semester, 41.4% agreed while 3.3% disagreed. Forty-five point one percent of the males agreed and 51.1% strongly agreed from an urban setting. The final question asked if global immersion week is a good way to incorporate global issues into the Leadership Studies curriculum and 44.2% strongly agreed and 3.3% disagreed. Additional analysis indicated that 48% of the females strongly agreed, and 53.3% from urban setting strongly agreed.

**Conclusions**

Overall, the majority of the 606 respondents agreed that a Global Immersion Week at least whetted their appetites to explore more global issues. Students from urban areas who were exposed to more diverse cultures were more enthused, and females, more than males also appeared more engaged in this method. Further study can be conducted to see why these variations exist.

Other methods being explored by this Leadership Studies program to continue teaching leadership with a global perspective include the following:

1. Encourage more leadership students to go on study abroad or service abroad for a summer, semester, or year, to live in another country, in particular in countries outside of Europe, such as in Asia, Latin America, and Africa.
2. Encourage more leadership faculty and staff to lead study tours abroad in order to entice more students to go abroad by starting them out on shorter trips with classmates, led by knowledgeable faculty and staff. Students are then more likely to go back for a longer study abroad stay.
3. Utilize the Fulbright Professors Program to bring more international guest professors to teach courses at our School of Leadership Studies, and to build up collaboration and networks for future work or study abroad.

4. Utilize our current international students (most of whom are graduate students) on campus as paid guest lecturers and/or Graduate Teaching Fellows to help teach particular cultures to our Culture and Context Classes. Kansas State University has international students from more than 100 countries here on our mid-western campus.

5. Develop a new program to attract more international undergraduate students to take leadership courses with our American undergraduate students, with a focus on conflict resolution and peace studies.

6. Continue to offer Global Immersion Week each semester, using topics of interest to our students.

We recently did Global Warming as the sole Immersion Week topic, with all students working on their individual carbon calculators, and comparing their carbon footprints to those in other countries. With the recent Beijing Olympics in the news, we will focus on learning more about the countries of China, India, Taiwan, and Tibet. The freshmen Introduction to Leadership classes this year will focus on the theme “Think Global, Act Local” and look at world hunger and international aid programs, such as the Heifer Project, and help the local food bank with a service project that will stock the local food bank with several tons of food collected in the community for distribution to families in need locally.
References


Leadership Studies and Programs  
Kansas State University  
WEEK 5: GLOBAL IMMERSION WEEK  
SURVEY - Fall 2006

The purpose of this survey is to obtain information from K-State students enrolled in Leadership Studies classes about their participation in the “Week 5: Global Immersion Week” for Fall of 2006. We hope that data gathered from this survey will result in a better understanding of your participation, and help generate suggestions for the next Global Immersion Week. Thank you for your input!

Please circle the number that most represents your response to each question:

1. The global issues that were presented in my class made me more aware of the importance of global issues in leadership studies.

   Strongly Agree  1  2  3  4  Strongly Disagree

2. I learned more about global issues than I knew before this class.

   Strongly Agree  1  2  3  4  Strongly Disagree

3. Leadership with a Global Perspective is Important to me.

   Strongly Agree  1  2  3  4  Strongly Disagree

4. Global Immersion Week should be offered each semester.

   Strongly Agree  1  2  3  4  Strongly Disagree

5. Global Immersion Week is a good way to incorporate global issues into the Leadership Studies curriculum.

   Strongly Agree  1  2  3  4  Strongly Disagree

6. I am: Male or Female (Please circle one). I am ____________ years old.
I went to high school in a: rural suburban urban setting. (Circle one)

My academic major is: ____________________________________

7. Please share any additional comments or suggestions you may have about the activities and presentations in Week 5: Global Immersion Week. Feel free to write on the back of this page.

Thank you.