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**A Consensual Qualitative Investigation of Internationalizing the Undergraduate and Graduate Psychology Curricula**

Lynette H. Bikos, Ph.D., David R. King, M.A., Nicola F. De Paul, B.A., Rebekah L. Forman, B.A.  
 7 August 2009

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**Agenda**

- Purpose of the Project
- Method: Consensual Qualitative Research
- Resulting Domains & Core Ideas
- Invitation for Comments and Feedback

.pdf versions of the slides, CQR frequency table, and domain/core idea definitions are available at:  
<http://www.spu.edu/depts/spfc/clinicalpsych/faculty-staff/bikos.asp>

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**Purpose of the Project**

- Investigate how stakeholders in undergraduate and graduate psychology programs:
  - define an “internationalized curriculum,”
  - anticipate as intended outcomes of the internationalizing process
  - identify successes and challenges to the internationalizing process

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**24 Participants**

**Gender**

- 42% male
- 58% female

**Faculty Role**

- 25% Graduate Psychology
- 21% Undergraduate Psychology
- 46% Both Graduate/Undergraduate Psychology
- 8% Other responsibilities (e.g., administration, retired)

**Nationality**

- 75% U.S. National
- 16% Dual-National with U.S.
- 8% Foreign National

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## Consensual Qualitative Research (CQR; Hill et al., 2005; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997)

- Interviewed stakeholders
- Analyzed data into domains and core ideas
- Created CQR frequency table and wrote domain/core idea abstracts
- Presenting data to stakeholders to get feedback
  - What did we get right?
  - What did we miss?
  - What are the implications (and potential utilization) of our results.

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## 6 Domains and 30 Core Ideas

- **Domains**
  - Definition
  - Hurdles
  - Instructional Elements
  - University Structural Development
  - Research & Networking
  - Anticipated Student Outcomes

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Table 1  
*Summary of Domains, Categories, and Frequencies for Undergraduate and Graduate Professors*

Domain	Category	Frequency	Respondents	Units
Definition	Culture defines structure and perspective	General	24	80
	Need for global standards	Typical	12	20
	Psychology needs to expand beyond the U.S.	Typical	10	19
	Distinguish international from cross-cultural and multicultural	Variants	4	4
Hurdles	U.S. hegemony	General	17	58
	Policy regulations	Typical	11	18
	Institutional financial resources	Variants	8	12
	Second language difficulties	Variants	6	7
Instructional Elements	Student interest and success	General	5	7
	International coursework when appropriate	General	28	88
	Cross-cultural collaborative learning	Typical	18	18
	Professor expertise and teaching	Typical	10	12
University Structural Development	Clarify student techniques	Typical	7	8
	Teaching techniques	General	28	85
	Support for international learning	General	18	80
	Administrative financial and organizational support	Typical	18	28
Research & Networking	Administrative financial and organizational support	Typical	18	18
	Constitutional university collaboration	Variants	7	8
	Faculty access for internationalization	Variants	7	7
	Connectivity of international institutions	General	20	58
Anticipated Outcomes	International students and faculty collaboration	Typical	12	18
	International journals and professional associations	Variants	8	12
	Culturally appropriate research methodology	Variants	7	8
	Technology as a resource	Variants	5	7
Anticipated Outcomes	Develop professional competence	General	18	88
	Increase cultural competence	Typical	12	18
	Improve perspective	Typical	11	18
	Build personal development	Variants	6	8
Anticipated Outcomes	Need global recognition	Variants	6	7
	Develop professional competence	General	18	88
	Increase cultural competence	Typical	12	18
	Improve perspective	Typical	11	18

Note. N = 24. General = applicable to all cases or at least 16 of the cases; Typical = applicable to at least 10 of the cases; Variants = applicable to at least four cases.

A Consensual Qualitative Investigation of the Internationalizing Undergraduate and Graduate Psychology Curricula: Domains & Core Ideas Abstracts

**Definition:** Internationalizing psychology is defined as broadening academic programs and the field of psychology as a whole to incorporate international and specifically non-North American research into a country's indigenous psychology. Fundamental to this process are the seemingly conflicting goals of maintaining curricular and professional requirements while at the same time recognizing and making space for the unique differences in psychological constructs which exist cross-culturally.

**Culture defines perspective and structure:** Religious, national, political, and university systems facilitate the development of theoretical perspectives and educational structures within the field of psychology that are representative of their own unique context and values. This results in dramatic differences in psychological training across national borders.

**Distinguish international from cross-cultural and multicultural:** Broadening of psychological study to include that which is distinctly international is critical to the development of holistic curricula. The term international is distinct, specifically referring to the diversity of research, psychological constructs, and intersections taking place across national boundaries, whereas the terms cross-cultural and multi-cultural refer more specifically to the study of diversity within national boundaries.

**Need for global standards:** Inclusive of internationally agreed upon standards for Clinical M.A./Ph.D. programs, licensure qualifications, writing structure, journal publication criteria, and consistent and culturally sensitive IRB requirements. Such shared standards would facilitate collaborative research and research across national boundaries; they would also enable international students based in the U.S. to become immersed in their home countries, and ideally would simplify and clarify the process for international scholars to submit their work for publication in top journals.

**Psychology needs to expand beyond the U.S.:** U.S. methods and psychology faculty need to acknowledge the fact that our psychology is U.S. based (Western derived) and is not universally applicable. To ignore the perspectives of non-North American scholars narrows the breadth of psychological study unnecessarily and prevents us from recognizing our own cultural limitations. In order to truly understand the richness of psychological constructs, U.S. psychology needs to embrace international (minority) perspectives and learn from the research produced in other countries.

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**Core idea:**  
**Culture defines structure and perspective**

*“People address issues from different perspectives. How do you do cross-national research? The whole mindset is different.”*

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Table 1  
*Summary of Domains, Categories, and Frequencies for Undergraduate and Graduate Professors*

Domain	Category	Frequency	Respondents	Units
Hurdles	General		17	56
	<b>U. S. hegemony</b>	<b>Typical</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>
	Policy regulations	Variant	8	12
	Insufficient financial resources	Variant	7	14
	Second language difficulties	Variant	6	7
	Student interest and concerns	Variant	5	7

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**Core idea:**  
**U. S. Hegemony**

*“The next step is to reach out. How do we go about this in a non-offensive, non-superior way. I think the best way is to presume we don’t know anything, to ask individuals from other countries to provide information to us, and to consider their ideas without comparing them to our accreditation and teaching standards.”*

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Table 1  
*Summary of Domains, Categories, and Frequencies for Undergraduate and Graduate Professors*

Domain	Category	Frequency	Respondents	Units
Instructional Elements	General		23	63
	International comparisons when appropriate	Typical	13	16
	<b>Cross-cultural collaborative learning</b>	<b>Typical</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>17</b>
	Professor experience aids learning	Typical	10	12
	Creative classroom techniques	Variant	9	10
	Teaching resources	Variant	7	8

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**Core idea:**  
**Cross-cultural collaborative learning**

*"If you see international students as people who do not know much because they are not American, they are only the objects of teaching, not as people who can contribute in class. However, if you invite international students to share their own experience, it makes for such a richer learning environment. The students tend to become very close to each other the more they understand each others' experiences."*

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Table 1  
*Summary of Domains, Categories, and Frequencies for Undergraduate and Graduate Professors*

Domain	Category	Frequency	Respondents	Units
University Structural Development	General	23	95	
	Support for immersion learning	General	16	30
	<b>Multi-level curricular reconstruction</b>	<b>Typical</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>24</b>
	Administrative financial and organizational support	Typical	10	13
	Faculty professional development	Variant	8	12
	Cross-national university collaboration	Variant	7	9
	Faculty vision for internationalization	Variant	7	7

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**Core idea:**  
**Multi-level curricular reconstruction**

*"It is too easy to just create handbooks on X or Y culture. This is significant, but when we say we want to train multicultural psychologists we talk about building a knowledge base, self-awareness, and skills. I see it as similar to if you want to integrate international issues - you do need to give specific knowledge - this is helpful, but it must be combined with the other two pieces. Only talking about the cultural differences does not make your student competent. There are different levels and different dimensions."*

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Domain	Category	Frequency	Respondents	Units
Research & Networking	General	20	53	
	<b>Connections at international conferences</b>	<b>Typical</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>
	International student and faculty collaboration	Variant	9	10
	International journals and professional associations	Variant	8	11
	Culturally appropriate research methodology	Variant	7	9
	Technology as a resource	Variant	5	7

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**Core Idea:**  
**Connections at international conferences**

*"International colleagues need to have friendships and relationships with those in the United States. Going to APA conferences builds these relationships. I have learned a lot from working with teachers overseas, including solving problems differently."*




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Domain	Category	Frequency	Respondents	Units
Anticipated Outcomes	General	19	66	
	Develop professional competence	Typical	12	19
	Increase cultural competence	Typical	12	16
	<b>Broaden perspectives</b>	<b>Typical</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>16</b>
	Guide personal development	Variant	6	8
Teach global responsibility	Variant	6	7	


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**Core idea:**  
**Broaden perspectives**

*"Internationalizing the curriculum will lead students from a more narrow and exclusive perspective toward a broader and more inclusive perspective in their understanding and interpreting the behaviors of others."*



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**Next Steps**

Current project


- Audit
- Receive stakeholder feedback

At the professional level

- International teamwork
- Buy-in at multiple levels




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**Thank You!**  
(especially to the 24 participants who provided us with such rich, informative, data)

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## **A Consensual Qualitative Investigation of the Internationalizing Undergraduate and Graduate Psychology Curricula: Domain & Core Idea Abstracts**

### **Definition:**

Internationalizing psychology is defined as broadening academic programs and the field of psychology as a whole to incorporate international and specifically non-North American research into a country's indigenous psychology. Fundamental to this process are the seemingly conflicting goals of standardizing curricular and professional requirements while at the same time recognizing and making space for the unique differences in psychological constructs which exist cross-nationally.

- *Culture defines perspective and structure*  
Religious, national, political, and university systems facilitate the development of theoretical perspectives and educational structures, within the field of psychology, that are representative of their own unique context and values. This results in dramatic differences in psychological training across national borders.
- *Distinguish international from cross-cultural and multicultural*  
Broadening of psychological study to include that which is distinctly international is critical to the development of holistic curriculum. The term international is distinct, specifically referring to the diversity of research, psychological constructs, and interactions taking place across national boundaries, whereas the terms cross-cultural and multi-cultural refer more specifically to the study of diversity within national boundaries.
- *Need for global standards*  
Inclusive of internationally agreed upon standards for Clinical M.A./Ph.D programs, licensure qualifications, writing structure/journal publication criteria, and consistent and culturally sensitive IRB requirements. Such shared standards would facilitate collaborative research and research across national boundaries, they would also enable international students trained in the U.S. to become licensed in their home countries, and ideally would simplify and clarify the process for international scholars to submit their work for publication in top journals.
- *Psychology needs to expand beyond the U.S.*  
U.S. textbooks and psychology faculty need to acknowledge the fact that our psychology is U.S. based (Western derived) and is not universally applicable. To ignore the perspectives of non-North American scholars narrows the breadth of psychological study unnecessarily and prevents us from recognizing our own cultural limitations. In order to truly understand the richness of psychological constructs U.S. psychology needs to embrace international (minority) perspectives and learn from the research produced in other countries.

## **Hurdles:**

In the process of internationalizing the curriculum, interviewees mentioned a number of roadblocks that keep the process from moving forward. These include U.S. dominance in defining psychological phenomena and practices, a number of political and university-wide rules and regulations, lack of funding, second-language difficulties, and student interest in the process of internationalizing the curriculum.

- *U.S. Hegemony*  
A generally mentioned idea is that the U.S. has much greater influence on psychology than other nations and other nations, whether actively or passively, have adopted the U.S.'s research and practice rather than develop a native style. As one interviewee put it "American psychology is a leading rule. American psychologists have worked hard to establish some clear rules for counseling people. I think American psychologists have accomplishments in learning how to make rules for how to counsel people. However, we also need to recognize that American psychology's are not rules that apply everywhere."
- *Policy Regulations*  
Several of the interviewees mentioned policy regulations from country to country that hinder international teacher exchange programs, student collaboration, and attendance at research conferences. This included political oversight and control of psychological research and practice, as the following interviewee indicates, "How does the government regulate this – if they believe that you are on a hot topic like an enemy country, they may intervene and talk to you and tell you not to talk about it in the class – some topics are mainly political and actually forbidden – I want to focus on conferences with Europe and America , so I have to check with the government to make sure I can go – telling them exactly what I'm going to do and say to get permission to go – monitoring and supervision of the program – not quite clear what they are doing but active passively."
- *Insufficient Financial Resources*  
Many interviewees discussed an enthusiasm and buy-in at their universities for student immersion experiences, the creation of new internationally-focused courses, and attending international conferences, but were limited by the financial resources of their programs. As one interviewee stated "It's hard for departments to take an interest because they want to make courses that students will take, it's about money. Universities/Colleges need to make room in programs. Money is a hurdle to fund this kind of advancement."
- *Second-language difficulties*  
Some interviewees mentioned the language difficulties that arise when students and faculty from different countries communicate with each other. Part of the problem comes from cultures that do not encourage the learning of languages outside their dominant language. Interviewees gave recommendations for improving communication such as writing down thoughts, as it is a clearer and slower way of presenting an idea than speaking, and monitoring the tendency for fluent speakers to dominate conversations, as is seen in the following quote. "One of the things that is important for students to learn – many Americans speak only ONE language. If they haven't had International experience, they are often unaware of challenges of operating in a second language. In student

groups – I help students learn to monitor their own tendency to dominate the conversation – when a native speaker talks too fast it is hard for International students to process and participate.”

- *Student Interest and Concerns*

Some interviewees mentioned that it is important for students to take interest in the process of internationalizing psychology and to ultimately, be a part of the process. As many of the international learning experiences are created for the student, it is important for the student to give feedback on his or her personal experience, including concerns or fears the student may have about immersion learning or other situations that may cause a student to feel uncomfortable. This idea is brought up in the following statement. “It is also imperative for students to some students are really interested, and some just don’t care - the motivated ones dig into it. But there is tremendous variability in this - talk to me next year, I’ll have insight from actual experience.”

### **Instructional Elements:**

Instructional elements refers to the specific methods, tactics, and resources used in internationalizing the psychology curriculum.

- *Cross-cultural collaborative learning*

Cross-cultural collaborative learning offers the chance for students to recognize their cultural differences and then to explore the uniqueness of each other’s ethnical makeup. One participant offers a suggestion for cross-cultural collaboration, as “students could have conversation partners with international students.” Another participant offers a more broad example, having “students work on written assignments together – give a group a case, then they make a decision and support it, take notes, think through together, write together, learn together.” By using the resources students bring to the table in their own cultural background, they can learn from each other and work together to find answers.

- *Creative classroom techniques*

Implementing unorthodox methods when teaching international curriculum allows students to broaden their understanding of psychology in the international context. Some ways of doing so are bringing in speakers, offering extra-curricular involvements, and innovative assignments. One participant offered numerous suggestions for creative learning, such as “projects for students on ethics and philosophies of different groups or policies... ethnographic field studies, sending out on assignments, go to a Polish festival, etc.” It is through these techniques that learning about other cultures can be personalized and understood in a real-life context.

- *International comparisons when appropriate*

One technique to internationalize the curriculum in the classroom is to compare different methods and approaches internationally. One participant suggested the inclusion of “international sources in textbooks, [not just] from a US population, as educators we need to talk about this a lot... use research from other countries.” Another participant noted the limitations of international comparisons, because “When I teach Statistics I don’t use International comparisons and I don’t see it as relevant – I am teaching a set of tools.”

Still another participant noted the need for awareness of what international comparisons are missing, where in the development of psychology other countries' contributions have been overlooked in favor of a largely western theory. Understanding how different cultures approach psychology not only educates students on different cultures and ways of practicing psychology, but also offers them alternatives to traditional western methods.

- *Teaching resources*

Instructors have to be creative and know what resources are available to draw from in the process of internationalizing a class. Knowing what journals are likely to have international content, developing relationships with teachers in other countries, and recognizing the limitations of traditional textbooks are all ways of evaluating resources to add to a class. One participant suggested that “We need to collect Syllabi from instructors around the country and create new syllabi,” and another stated that “faculty need to make sure to post what they are doing internationally,” both of these examples suggesting faculty collaboration to enrich their respective classes. A common theme regarding teaching resources was the lack of diversity in textbooks. One participant lamented this fact, remarking that “textbooks didn’t use to have any international content, nor pay any attention to nationality, race, ethnicity, so I try and come up with examples to enrich the teaching.” While there are resources available, sometimes it is up to the professor to enrich the content for the class.

- *Professor experience aids learning*

Just as personal experience in an international context benefits students directly, it also has an indirect effect when professors can contribute their own personal experiences. One participant extolled the need for faculty to be internationally involved, as “we give examples from the life around us; if the international is around you, you will draw from those examples” as you teach. Another participant was even more decisive about the need for professor experience, saying that “it is more important for faculty to travel than for students, and then we model. You need to know what it feels like [to be in an international context]” to successfully convey the need for such international understanding to your students.

## **University Structural Development**

Requires university administrators to provide the necessary resources and support for faculty and students to engage international elements within the classroom and beyond. Administrative support for faculty vision for internationalization, professional development, and cross-national collaboration, in conjunction with support for student immersion learning experiences facilitates the incorporation of international elements into the entirety of a program’s training model.

- *Administrative financial and organizational support*

Critical support provided by top-level university administrators that enables tenure track faculty to pursue international research interests without sacrificing their prospective career advancement. This institutional support is characterized by visionary administrators who grant sabbatical quarters and release time from heavy teaching loads, as well as provide funding for international conference attendance and logistical support for internationally focused projects.

- *Cross-national university collaboration*  
Student focused partner programs that are jointly sponsored by collaborating faculty from at least two universities in different countries. They expose students to the psychological constructs belonging to the other culture and facilitate collaborative learning between participating students through virtual classroom activities and immersion experiences.
- *Faculty professional development*  
Faculty participation in Fulbright or other teaching exchange programs, international travel, and internationally focused continuing education courses enhance the knowledge and experiences that faculty bring into their classrooms. These learning experiences also enable young faculty to incorporate international themes into their research and put faculty members in contact with prospective research collaborators.
- *Faculty vision for internationalization*  
International students, personal overseas experience, and international colleagues inspire faculty members to integrate international elements into their courses and dedicate class-time to international issues and perspectives. Young faculty and international faculty tend to be the most interested in broadening program curricula to include international elements and it is their vision which frequently encourages administrators to value the incorporation of international constructs into the larger training model.
- *Multi-level curricular reconstruction*  
The reconceptualization and restructuring of a program's entire training model must begin by moving beyond faculty resistance and grow to incorporate international elements and research where appropriate throughout the entire curriculum. Although this may begin with the revision of syllabi or the addition of one or two classes, additional international students and faculty must be recruited to participate, curricular deficiencies must be recognized and addressed, and the entire structure of the program needs to be evaluated.
- *Support for immersion learning*  
University administrators must structure psychology programs so as to provide support for international students on their campuses, as well as to provide practical student learning experiences for all students. Such practical experiences may include practicum or field-work experiences either abroad or in diverse communities within the U.S., they may also include study abroad experiences and second language training for students. These experiences provide students with hands on exposure to international populations and provide them with the experience of being a minority, enabling students to move beyond their textbook understanding of international issues.

### **Research & Networking:**

Part of internationalizing the curriculum is sharing ideas and building relationships from country to country. This can be done through connecting at international conferences, participating in joint research ventures, subscribing to international journals and becoming a member of

international associations, understanding how to do research in a culturally sensitive way, and using new form of technology to shorten the distance between people from country to country.

- *Connections at International Conferences*  
Many interviewees discussed the possibility of forming new relationships with people from around the world at international conferences. International conferences are a great place for students and faculty to learn about research from around the world and build partnerships with other students and faculty that may lead to collaborative research down the road. One interviewee mentioned the importance of forming international relationships and how conferences are a great place for these to start. “International colleagues need to have friendships and relationships with those in the United States. A lot of Taiwan PhDs have graduated in the States. Going to APA conferences builds relationships. I have learned a lot from working with teachers overseas, including solving problems differently.”
- *International student and faculty collaboration*  
Some of the interviewees stated the importance of students and faculty collaborating with each other in the form of teaching exchange programs, joint research, and student-to-student interactions. The following quote discusses how basic interactions between students from different countries in a classroom context can start relationships. “Before doing the program each student from (one country) had a buddy at (the other country) and vice versa to interact with each other through email. They hosted each other during the program. After the program ends, they still have a relationship with each other. Some are even cooperating on symposiums at APA.”
- *International Journals and Professional Associations*  
Some of the interviewees mentioned the importance of subscribing to international journals and becoming a member of professional associations. The interviewees were also encouraged researchers to publish in foreign journals, as the following quote suggests. “It’s important for English speaking countries to publish in journals around the world – either in English or collaborating with other psychologists in other countries and translating the articles into the language of the journal. It is also important for U.S. journals to be more open to international research.”
- *Culturally-appropriate Research Methodology*  
Some of the interviewees discussed how research is conducted in different ways from country to country, and how certain steps such as obtaining informed consent are approached differently from country to country. As the following quote indicates, it is not always practical to take native research practices abroad because certain problems, such as receiving signatures from illiterate participants, are bound to come up. “People who are on IRB’s or the NIMH that fund research must be involved in creating sensible policies that don’t cause research problems. For example, informed consent should be obtained without requiring signatures. We need to negotiate this with IRB and funding agencies to make research practical in other cultures.”
- *Technology as a Resource*

Some of the interviewees mentioned the value of technology in helping students and faculty collaborate with each other across the globe. Specific new forms of online communication, such as social networking, blogging, and interacting via online conference rooms, are changing the way people communicate and are narrowing the physical distance between people of different countries as the following quote indicates. “Examples of IBTs are social networking sites (Facebook, MySpace). There are also browser-based collaborative tools such as blogs and wikis.... Video and audio sharing sites such as YouTube and Google Video, and podcasts/webcasts...they seem like great tools, but there would probably be authorship difficulties. Maybe future psych seminars could be done over the internet? Psych seminars are now being done online.... these seminars are called Webinars, I think. Other disciplines are doing this routinely. These are great tools for doing research. I actually had students tap into their Facebook friends to administer a few surveys and we collected a lot. We can therefore collect data from various parts of the world.”

### **Anticipated Outcomes for students:**

These were the effects that participants expected for students as a result of an internationalized curriculum.

- *Broaden perspectives*  
Participants hoped that as a result of the internationalized curriculum, students’ personal viewpoints on the world would be expanded. As one participant said, “Internationalizing the curriculum will lead students from a more narrow and exclusive perspective toward a broader and more inclusive perspective in their understanding and interpreting the behaviors of others.” Students will begin to see other people and views as valid and useful to learn about, as well as breaking down prejudices against the unknown or preconceived notions. Another participant contributed “We live in a world that is very, very connected. We have close contact with people internationally whether we’re aware of it or not.” Broadened perspectives allow students to become aware and accepting of such connection.
- *Increase cultural competence*  
The anticipated outcome of increasing cultural competence refers more specifically to the ways in which students understand and respond to other cultures. One participant referenced this idea with “creating greater attention to the cultural context. Creating more awareness of one’s cultural context and social identity, more personal things in addition to professional, [and] increased sensitivity to within group differences.” Understanding culture within groups, between groups, and within one’s own culture, and using this understanding to be more effective in every cultural interaction is the ultimate goal of increased cultural competence.
- *Teach global responsibility*  
A more internationalized curriculum can help students to recognize their role in the world and take the responsibility of that role seriously. One participant viewed global responsibility as learning “to be more flexible and nicer to humanity as a whole. You become a more effective and more helpful counseling psychologist wherever you are.

You learn another stance, becoming the minority. You learn to become humble.” Seeing one’s self as a small piece of a greater and varied whole is a perspective one must have to approach other cultures. A sense of global responsibility infuses cultural interactions with openness and acceptance, as well as a willingness to learn about other ways of life.

- *Guide personal development*

When students are exposed to an international curriculum, they learn about themselves as much as they learn about international cultures. As one participant put it, their development is “more personal and emotional, confronting one's own emotions and ability to function in a multicultural world. Examination of personal prejudices and personal attitudes” is a personal development goal achieved within an international curriculum. The personal development piece in anticipated outcomes recognizes the internal changes students undergo as they are exposed to international curricula.

- *Develop professional competence*

Another goal of internationalizing the psychology curriculum is developing students’ professional skills to more well-rounded and capable of dealing with a variety of different cultures. One participant explicitly labeled a goal of an internationalized curriculum as to “prepare students to work in a multi-culturally complex and dynamic context and provide them with a repertoire of skills to meet the other’s needs more accurately.”