

Reflective Essay

Skills in a Global Context

My name is Brennen Lockwood and many experiences have shaped me into who I am today. Of these experiences, all have enhanced and improved my skills in a global context. Despite my progress in this regard, looking back it is difficult to appreciate just how far I have come. Turning to the future, our global society seems on the brink of change. Regardless of the new direction to be determined, it is clear that global competency will assist me in any role I pursue.

Before embarking on my international studies, even before starting university, my perspective was limited. While I had moved provinces in grade 8, this did not invoke great adaptability or communicative skills. Instead, I remained deeply connected with my previous friend group and made minimal effort to form connections in my new community. In the new high school I failed to participate in knowledge-expanding extracurriculars, preferring to instead play hockey, where the crowds were predictable and I would not be forced outside of my comfort zone. Even during the onset of my post-secondary journey, I only grew close with the roommates assigned to me in dorms - one of which I knew from high school.

With all of that being said, once I became comfortable in this new university setting - everything changed. To begin, I started participating in the abundance of activities offered at TRU. I went to club days, I joined intramural volleyball, I became a part of TRUSU, and eventually connected with the study abroad team. While preparing for my own international travels I became adept at navigating the various processes associated. For China, I rehearsed checking the Government of Canada website for travel restrictions and advisories, including recommended vaccinations. In New Zealand I learned that taxi services are not preferable everywhere because I was severely overcharged upon arriving in the country and catching one to get to my new dorms. After this experience I became a more complete global researcher and was able to utilize public transit instead for the remainder of my trip. During these travels in their entirety, I became familiar with the essential tasks which must be addressed prior to any scenario, including safety and access to finances. While in the midst of these scenarios, making connections with those around myself, such as my roommates in New Zealand or my coworkers in Nunavut, showed me that communication is the basis of achieving any goal. For example, I would not have understood how to set up a bank account in New Zealand without asking my roommate Kyla, who was a local, for guidance.

As my communication and other skills associated with global competency, such as adaptability, empathy, and curiosity became more honed, the strength of global learning has been revealed to me. Using past experiences as a guide, I now begin each new opportunity or setting by introducing myself to others. With my increased ability to communicate, I search for commonality even among those who appear to have none to myself. I recently began a new job, using this understanding I have garnered rapport with my 63 year old boss from India. Other instances have also occurred, while working in a group project this semester, I

utilized my deeper understanding of empathy to appreciate the potential reasons for a group mate's absent work. In the past I would have assumed blatant neglect and just written their part. Now I recognize that everyone has an entire being apart from the relationship to my own life that I witness. In this scenario, we had an earnest and open-minded conversation where I discovered that they had picked up additional shifts at work. A desirable outcome was reached where I would write the current part of the project and they would write the next once their availability was less strained. All together, global skills allow me to cooperate and interact with others more efficiently. At my new job, I believe that these skills and the relationship they have helped me create will lead to me getting a promotion.

While considering professional settings, it is clear that global skills will be a vital aspect of my life. As I graduate in less than a month, my new capacity to cope with ambiguity and uncertainty will guide me during this next chapter. I have aspirations of pursuing a career related to law, with that being said I am wholly unsure of my exact ambitions. Regardless, I now know how to communicate with people from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures. While in China, I learned to endure and operate with others even in the face of language barriers. [Within unique settings such as formal dinners, university negotiations, and street markets I was encouraged to cope with uncertainty. By following others' lead and asking questions, I learned to navigate these unknown settings efficiently. In the future, this experience will allow me to adapt to more situations and achieve realistic confidence in the face of adversity. Together, my time spent in China was crucial to developing my international skills.](#) Despite the ultimately positive experience, looking back it is clear that this outcome was not always guaranteed. Another aspect of my preparation involved speaking with my grandparents. Together they spent nearly 3 decades living and working in China as school teachers. While they enjoyed their time there, they warned of many uncomfortable realities. I remember them criticising the air quality and unique social etiquettes such as the beijing bikini. These reflections of their own time spent in the country definitely encouraged prejudices within me, even if I did not acknowledge it at the time. Upon arriving in the country myself, my naiveness was immediately revealed. China was stunning, the air quality was equivalent to everywhere else I had been, and the cultural nuances enriched my travels rather than diminishing them. Together, the difference between others' perceived reality and my own have shown me to avoid bias. In the future, I will recognize that bias could prevent me from pursuing beneficial opportunities. All together, [the skills I enhanced during my global journeys will enable me to pursue my ambitions as they unfold without regard to geographic concerns. I am globally competent, and with that I can go anywhere, meet anyone, and become anything I want.](#)