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**DIVERSITY AND WORLDLINESS AT THE COMPASS SCHOOL:
A PROJECT IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

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A capstone submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA.

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ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates how the application of International Education principles and practices to curricula at the Compass School of Westminster, Vermont would augment worldliness and diversity as well as improve the overall quality of education offered at this secondary school. This research identifies deficiencies in areas pertaining to internationalization and diversity and provides recommendations to remedy these deficiencies. The realization of these recommendations would help to increase students' preparedness for participation in a globalized society and would provide an enhanced educational experience for all. This research is intended to support faculty and staff at the Compass School by providing an analysis of opportunities and challenges as well as a set of clear recommendations and frameworks for further program and curricular development.

Keywords: preparedness; worldliness, internationalization, diversity, globalized society

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-The future belongs to those who prepare for it today.

Mr. Malcom X

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This study seeks to determine how one may further develop worldliness and diversity at a post-secondary educational institution in rural Vermont. My research is based on my internship and Reflective Practice at the Compass School located in Westminster, Vermont. *Worldliness* refers to a person's broad view and perspective of the world. *Diversity* refers to a variety of different human experiences, identities, and backgrounds in a given environment. For example, racial identity, cultural practices, and religious beliefs would be embodied differently by students with different backgrounds. The effectiveness of implementation of international curricula towards the cultivation of worldliness and diversity is here discussed. Interviews with professionals in regards to challenges and previous successes in the fields of international and diversity education, combined with my attendance at teachers' conferences and visits to multiple schools in the southeast region of Vermont, have given me a clear picture of processes and practices that may be helpful in improving Compass' quality of education through internationalization. In this paper, I broadly define *internationalization* as the process that will render a person more worldly.

Background

Compass, founded in 1999, is an independent co-educational private school in Windham County, Vermont. It serves 80 students from 7th to 12th grades. Compass aims to produce students who are knowledgeable, academically successful, community minded, culturally aware, responsible, healthy, self-aware, and self-directed. The school values diverse experiences outside and within the classroom. It also emphasizes groupwork and community building. Although this high school is considered non-traditional, its students earn the same test scores and academic results as their conventionally-educated peers in the state of Vermont.

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With a commitment to self-directed learning, Compass requires students to not only participate in shaping their education, but to produce a portfolio of their work before graduating. Due to its philosophy and pedagogy, Compass is considered to be a leader in experiential learning and community involvement; the school is sought after by people in other counties in Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts.

Compass has limited opportunities for cultivating worldliness among its students. The curricula at Compass touches lightly on world issues such as conflict, neo-colonialism, religion, and culture. Students study Spanish but have no other foreign language options due to limited funding. Many students are very interested in Japanese culture, but the school does not presently have resources to address this. The 11th grade class trip abroad demonstrates the height of Compass' international education efforts; through this class-wide project, students work together to design and implement an international trip based upon their interests and learning goals. Classes in recent years have traveled to Nicaragua and Spain to study Spanish, and to India to develop their preparedness for life experiences abroad. Compass prioritizes concepts of social justice, equity, diversity, race, sexuality, nationality, and anti-oppression in its classes – all of which are topics that could (but do not yet) extend to international perspectives. I noticed that even in a school that has received many prizes and is valued by the community for having a safe and sound environment, there is a lack of information and formative experiences pertaining to diversity and International Education.

Compass' tuition fee is approximately \$16,000 USD. Eighty percent of its students receive some form of financial aid and a few are able to afford their entire tuition. The student

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body is comprised of youth that do not have public schools in their rural towns as well as students with public school options who choose to pay to attend the private school. Opt-in students come from the surrounding towns of Westminster, Athens, Marlboro, and Wethersfield. The entire student body of 80 students is of U.S. American nationality and, apart from three students, all self-identify and/or present as white in terms of race. The school is comprised of eleven teachers and five administrative staff members who also self-identify and/or present as white; nothing in the interviews with participants in this research indicated otherwise. The professionals who participated in this study are seasoned teachers who have been upholding the school's mission and directives for many years. ||

I served as an intern at Compass from September 2018 to June 2019, during which time I co-taught humanities classes. I assisted all the Spanish classes, tutored students in Spanish and humanities courses, participated in events and staff meetings, and provided feedback on how to improve experiential learning. As an intern, I had ample opportunities to interact, observe, plan for lessons, grade assignments, and participate in a myriad of events. Additionally, co-teaching Spanish classes and co-leading field trips gave me opportunities to observe the conduct and practices of the professionals at the school, as well as the curriculum itself. All of these pathways provided me insights and a framework for the research I conducted through books and interviews.

In order to provide some comparison between a small private school and a large public school, I also conducted some research at Brattleboro Union High School (BUHS). While Compass is an independent school, BUHS is a public school serving approximately 800 students

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in Windham County, Vermont. It has a small Advanced Placement Program and a Collegiate High School Program where students may gain college credit while they attend the high school. BUHS also has a successful international education program benefitting a portion of its students. This program features trips, the hosting of exchange students, clubs, guest-speakers, events, and a myriad of programs for the students to go abroad over the summer. There are approximately 100 education professionals at the institution in Mathematics, Social Sciences, Modern and Classical Languages, Music, Physical Education and Sports, Science, and Library. Most of them hold some level of teaching certification.

Conceptual Framework

The International Education community believes that this field is fundamental to fostering peace, security, and positive leadership in a globalized society. According to the Association of International Educators, “International education advances learning and scholarship; builds understanding and respect among different peoples; and enhances constructive leadership in the global community” (NAFSA, 2019). Knight (2004) defines internationalization as including an intentional process of connecting an institution or agency to globalized society. She draws a parallel between internationalization and globalization; globalization – the phenomenon of the whole world being connected through the economy and information sharing – is positioned as part of the environment in which the international dimension of education is increasingly important. Foreign language acquisition, cross-cultural learning, and increased mobility of student bodies and faculties are common priorities in the field, as they support these overarching goals of building strong global leadership.

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Connection to one's community, and furthermore to the rest of the world, is deemed by international educators to be essential for a quality education. The field of International Education proposes that the process of learning about one's community, region, and country enriches a pupils' experience and leads them to success in exchanges and study abroad programs (Knight, 2004; NAFSA, 2019). As a student develops a sense of who they are within their home community, they become more open to learning about the world and how people and cultures are interconnected. One challenge to such community-based and globally-oriented engagement is a lack of diversity in many educational settings; a lack of students and teachers from different backgrounds may be disadvantageous to a learning community when it tackles important societal and global issues.

The field of International Education implements many programs, initiatives, and curricula to support the above goals. For example, cross-cultural education measures that unify the standards of instruction (credits), such as the Bologna process in Europe, enable students to learn together across national borders (Reinalda & Kulesza, 2005). The UNESCO International Bureau of Education leads global dialogue on curriculum, focusing on comparative analyses of educational systems (UNESCO, 2019b). Increasing participation of diverse students in study abroad programs has also become a major focus (United Nations, n.d.). Scholarships, education on immigration, education for immigrants, tours, and professional development training all additionally support internationalization and global collaboration.

The implementation of curricula towards internationalization such as exchanges, foreign language, and exposure to diversity and different worldviews is key to the efforts of this

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research project because internationalization, diversity, and worldliness better prepare students to participate in a globalized society. My research explores how teachers at Compass may include, deepen, and refine International Education in their curricula in order to foster worldliness and diversity – and in so doing, improve the quality of education offered to Compass students. The primary question for this research is: “How can one improve the implementation of international education and diversity curricula and programs at the Compass School?”

Literature Review

The idea that internationalization improves the quality of education is a recurrent theme in the literature. Formative efforts that prepare individuals to be global citizens and advocates are considered elements of a high-quality education. Internationalization would not simply include addition of new curricula, but would also improve upon existing curricula. From combatting imperialism to enhancing acquisition of intercultural skills, an international education is a better education. Wilkins and Juusola (2018) even propose that an internationalized education is a more personally satisfying form of education because it provides more depth and breadth to students and communities. Benitez (2019) additionally asserts that internationalization modifies beliefs regarding quality in teaching because the demands of the globalized world redirect institutions’ norms and values.

Within these overarching perspectives, three important areas of internationalization are relevant to this study: positive development of state and society, student preparedness to contribute to a globalized world, and the role of diversity.

Positive Development of State and Society

Mobility across countries and cultures, which is fostered by internationalization, creates professionals who can better respond to state and societal needs through their academic and intellectual networks. Bolsmann (2008) argues that one of the most important rationales for internationalization is the reciprocity of benefits that occurs when intellectual and academic resources are shared. The formation of worldly leadership, reciprocity, and exchange are major efforts towards better international understanding. Qiang (2003) and Wilkins and Juusola (2018) agree that scholars benefit from studying in multiple locations and having access to a wide array of academic resources. Bolsmann further notes that more well-rounded scholars will result in a net gain of individuals oriented towards international understanding – a skillset that ultimately can create economic gain for states. This rationale leads governments to cooperate in embarking on these programs (Lee, 2014). Onk and van der Werf (2011) concur that efforts to cooperate across networks in different countries are of valuable political and state gain. Economically, internationalization improves the labor market because it forms professionals who can more creatively and inter-disciplinarily address big picture challenges. Through internationalization, one can hope for a better future because economies and societies will be stewarded by more effective and diplomatic leaders and professionals.

Internationalization can also be seen as a remedy for isolation and extreme versions of nationalism. Lee (2014) notes examples of curricula created for the specific needs of different national bodies. Students around Hong Kong and Singapore are implementing high quality curricula that connect students with other cultures and perspectives. Students from

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surrounding regions (mainland China and Southeast Asia, for example) can thus obtain high quality education in their own regions, rather than traveling to the United States. Wilkins and Juusola (2018) applaud Qatar because the country has made major internationalization efforts in order to improve its own educational system; this is particularly notable because, to this point, internationalization efforts have largely been emphasized in industrialized countries and centers of power.

Internationalization can also support decolonization through severing neo-colonial ties to historically dominant educational institutions and countries. Lee (2014), Waters (2018), and Wilkins and Juusola (2018) agree that creation of local and regional curricula serve this goal; rather than relying on a former metropolis or colonial center for educational leadership, nations can focus on and diversify localized knowledge production. As these programs grow and curriculum improves, students from both the locale and abroad can pursue high quality education in a myriad of locations instead of simply seeking Western traditions of higher learning.

Student Preparedness for Contributing to a Globalized World

Cosmopolitanism is the concept that a person is not starkly nationalistic but instead oriented toward humanity in a global context. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.), cosmopolitanism is to be widely sophisticated internationally. Internationalization distinctly fosters cosmopolitanism. In reciprocal fashion, cosmopolitan values influence curricular decisions and curriculum development (Dronkers, 1993). A cosmopolitanism attitude

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is key to the development of worldly individuals because it encourages students to engage with foreign cultures and concepts with an open mind.

International education also fosters cultural ties and intercultural competence, which are highly desirable professional skills. This quality of education prepares students for personal and professional success in a globalized world. It increases their potential for success if/when they study and work in different countries (Qiang, 2003; Wilkins & Juusola, 2018). Onk and van der Werf (2011) explore how internationalization has been the source/reason/genesis for shared books, international programs, and joint degree programs, which are a boon to both students and faculty. Dronkers (1993) notes that in order to become part of an international network, a school must contribute knowledge to that global community; through this contributive process, students become better acquainted with and more knowledgeable of different knowledge systems.

All of the authors of this literature review agree that internationalization and diversity improve the curricula taught at schools. Waters (2018) and Onk and van der Werf (2011) discuss how the curriculum of local schools have improved once they are connected to other countries and communities. Waters (2018) proposes that international curricula increase the global reach of a community and therefore improves the education of that community. Despite these strengths, internationalization on its own is not an adequate measure of success. Student needs must also be met in the various locales and regions where they study. Fakunle (2019) found that the quality of students' education may be jeopardized by the fact that their needs and concerns are not necessarily being heard by the schools they attend. This indicates that

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there is a lack of coordination between an administration's directives and what students actually need in their pursuit of international education. While student mobility is a potential indicator of the success of internationalization efforts, further needs assessments of students must be conducted in order to determine current limitations in implementation.

The Role of Diversity

Owens and Syedullah (2016) propose that diversity education is important not only to be allies to different communities but also to be honest stakeholders in society. In *Teaching to Transgress* (1994), bell hooks asserts that the role of the teacher may be augmented as an effective facilitator of healing and positive culture. Participants and stakeholders – including community members, educators, staff, government officials – come from a variety of cultures and ethnic backgrounds; therefore we must hold diversity at the forefront of any discussion of internationalization.

Hans de Wit (2002) reminds us that the process of internationalization of education is as old as the Renaissance, during which time the minds of a world that sought to improve itself turned to ideas from abroad. I would argue that the process of internationalization through learning exchanges dates back much further to intercontinental agricultural and spice trade routes thousands of years ago. Even still, Hans de Wit reminds us of the historical importance of international and intercultural exchange of ideas. In a modern context, the field of International Education aims to de-hegemonize education, especially as different regions of the world become important players in the global arena. For example, Qatar's internationalization efforts (see above) diversify the field and bring in perspectives and contributions not rooted in

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Western epistemologies and pedagogies. Diversity with the field reflects the diversity within globalized society. Students need this exposure in order to learn from it.

In addition to understanding diversity across international networks, a high-quality education must address the topic of diversity within a country's own society. For example, Takaki (2008) argues that historically in the U.S., many communities, especially those of color, have been pitted against each other systematically. These communities have been prevented from collaborating and cooperating in ways that would limit the ruling class' privileged position. Tatum (2017) additionally notes that the legacy of segregation in the educational system of the U.S. continues to effect modern schools and students. Students may also learn about indigeneity and foreigners in this country such as immigrants and migrant workers (Suárez-Orozco, M. and Suárez-Orozco, C., 2015). It would be a disservice to any student not to be exposed to such historical and current issues.

The unanimity of opinions favorable to the implementation of international education and diversity suggests that it is necessary to further investigate how to properly implement these principles. Pragmatically, through observing an exchange between Arab-Palestinians and Israelis in Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, Yemini (2014) concludes that although it is difficult to implement mobility in secondary schools all across the board because each school is inherently unique, internationalization at the post-secondary level is a useful focal point for addressing deficiencies in curriculum and instruction. Pedagogically, Darder (2008) demonstrates how Freire's (2018) approach to education may inspire diverse knowledge production that centers

the students' experiences, analyses, and educational leadership; in such educational praxis, the teacher is a vector of liberation for all. |

Research Methodology

This research explores how to better implement and promote international education at K-12 schools in order to improve quality of instruction. Towards that end, I employed multiple methods for observation, inquiry, and data collection. Co-teaching; substituting; visiting schools, museums and historical societies in New England and Quebec; conducting field trips; chaperoning student body events; and learning from regional diversity and equity specialists all contributed to my developing framework and eventual data collection design.

Community Activities

I consistently attended Abenaki Culture and History workshops, which led me to understand local conceptions of and perspectives on indigeneity through crafts, story-telling, music, presentations, and open forums on the history of the dynamics among different ethnicities in the Americas. Throughout these workshops, I was also able to investigate and learn about discriminatory practices and mishandling of Indigenous people and cultures. Additionally, attendance at historical society events and museums in Boston, Vermont, Montreal, and Quebec City contributed to my understanding of how the history of colonialism and national development has been shown and dealt with for the general public. While Compass has had a program addressing these histories and realities in the past, it does not currently address these aspects of the local and regional Indigenous community in a significant way.

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I attended two social justice conferences in Massachusetts where issues of diversity in education, standardized testing, assessments of disadvantaged students, and community/political dynamics (the outside world affecting the school settings) were abundantly presented and discussed. Issues such as truthfully listening to students, Israel/Palestine, Islamophobia, and the role of food/meals at the institutions were all important aspects of developing my data collection methods.

All of these community activities prompted my consideration of how experiential learning may engage these venues for educational purposes including academic development, curriculum development, and program implementation. Each activity and venue was informative and transformative in my teacher training and research practice.

Interviews

I conducted eight one-hour long interviews teachers from Compass and BUHS. Because my research focused primarily on Compass, most of the interviews I conducted were with staff and faculty at Compass; only two of the eight interviews were with BUHS teachers. These interviews consisted of a set of questions pre-formulated based on the goals of this research (see Appendix A).

I interviewed six professionals at Compass about their backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives on current educational issues. Of the humanities teachers, one has taught at Compass for eight years, another for five years, and another for three years. The Spanish teacher has been there for 12 years. I also interviewed two volunteers, one of whom has been there for four years and another who has been implementing a program for just one year. ||

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interviewed two professionals at BUHS to provide some comparison between a small private school and a large public school. At BUHS, one social studies teacher I interviewed has taught at the school for over 20 years, and the other for seven years.

Presentation and Discussion of Results

Compass

Diversity. Compass' learning environment is appropriate for diverse opinions and personalities, according to the teachers I interviewed. Compass is a haven for students who have been bullied or considered misfits at previous institutions. Free thought is highly encouraged and the teachers aim to avoid imposing their own worldviews on students. Diversity of socio-economic realities and perspectives within the school community combined with a variety of personal experiences from previous school settings has a remarkably strong impact on Compass' philosophy of open inquiry. Successes with the Gay Straight Alliance and Anti-toxic Masculinity class, for example, demonstrate that non-conventionality occurs smoothly in this environment, which is a praiseworthy celebration of diversity in a school. All those who participated in this study overall spoke very highly of the learning environment. |

One way that this life experience diversity benefits Compass is in its rotational Exploratory Sessions and Extended Learning Opportunities. These sessions are interim classes that happen throughout the semester on a myriad of subjects that are not explored in regular classes. They are formulated to cater to a variety of interests and are not permanently offered. Mechanics, crafts, garden/farm, natural cosmetics, and music are some of the topics offered

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through these temporary workshops. While these workshops offer a variety of exploratory content, they mostly center around arts and ecology; due to lack of time for faculty to develop new sessions, they do not generally offer sessions related to business, finance, and economics. For students who are less interested in arts and ecology, this is a disappointment.

The primary area that needs improvement in terms of diversity is in racial and cultural composition of students and faculty. While many of the students and faculty at Compass consider themselves to be diverse in terms of personality and life experience, the vast majority of school community members are white and of Protestant backgrounds. Students often use labels such as “nerd,” “jock,” and “gay,” along with racial stereotypes. The teachers reported feeling discouraged that they must spend time explaining why students should not use these words instead of focusing on learning about other cultures, countries, and regions.

The interviews revealed a particular incident that speaks to the impact of a lack of racial diversity – and capacity to effectively tend to racially-derived tensions – at the school. Some of the interviewees discussed a situation in which an African-American student reported being negatively affected by racism at school. One interviewee stated that the student had definitively been wronged. Another recalled that he “was so attached to his African-American identity that it affected his performance.” While confusion remains about what actually happened, all agree that the situation still feels unresolved. While attending Compass, the student would often complain about his experiences of unconscious racism in the school community. The student felt frustrated that he could not take full advantage of the educational opportunities being offered to him because dealing with unconscious racism was requiring too

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much of his attention. School administrators often conversed with him about his experience, but the general attitude remains that the situation was not well-handled by the school.

Compass' "diversity of life experience" philosophy might have failed to successfully address and enable conversations about and resolutions on institutional racism. Denial of the inconsistency of the handling of the behavioral problems with the student of color equates with denial of racism.

Several interviewees expressed difficulty knowing how to resolve the negative effects of institutional racism and denial of racism. Two teachers agreed that institutional racism may be affecting the recruitment and outreach efforts at Compass; potentially, a lack of diversity training is detrimental to those interactions and transformative efforts. Although anti-racism training might not be feasible and even out of reach, the teachers expressed they have the necessary freedom to design their curriculum, which can create opportunities for exploring race and racism. Actual delivery and implementation are challenging because many students demonstrate resistance when encouraged to examine their identities.

In addition, Compass' lack of racial diversity has caused challenges in instruction of writing, reading, and analysis. The teachers think that a lack of racial diversity in the school and students' lives prevents pupils from being able to analyze certain themes and issues in history and literature. Without racially diverse perspectives and experiences in the classroom, it is hard for students to conceptualize many issues around racism and diversity. Despite attempts to facilitate discussion and analysis in creative and collaborative ways, students continue to fall short of the level of analysis teachers aim for. The persistence of this problem could indicate

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faculty might need more help from experts in order to implement more effective teaching methods.

Teachers are willing to be exposed to other ideas of curriculum design that would improve praxis. Although they are desirous that all grade levels have the opportunity to improve their attitude towards travel and foreign languages, for example, concrete ideas on how that would be achieved were not mentioned. Fortunately, they have been discussing – both at faculty meetings and during the interviews – the urgency of exchange students for the future of the school. Teachers also expressed interest in improving the Physical Education program, which they believe might attract more diverse students. They are eager to add international students to the community and also to strengthen socio-economic dynamics, but no solid ideas were suggested other than bringing in athletes and exchange students.

Compass instructors are committed to using a variety of pedagogical philosophies, methods, programs, and curriculum designs that promote self-directed learning. Compass students choose how they want to work on the subjects being introduced to them. There is no dictate on how performance must be accomplished. The faculty and staff are very competent while ensuring that the students take their own direction for their proposed projects and demonstrations of learning. Students at Compass devote an amazing amount of time producing art, a portfolio of their work, and having one-on-one check in's and evaluations with their teachers. Aligned with this open-minded and self-directed flow of learning, teachers also have a lot of flexibility in what they teach. This enables them to give a lot of attention to the design of semester units and to adapt them as necessary to meet student needs.

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Teachers use “Learning Realms” rubrics to aid in evaluation. Students often demonstrate their learning through writing, public speaking and presenting individually and in groups. The evaluative process is complex because the teachers are not equipped to deal with an important element of community involvement – the parents. At times overwhelming with demands and at other times neglectful, parents exert an influence on their children that affects performance. At the same time, the teachers sometimes rely on parents’ helping to teach the Extended Opportunity Learning Courses. This creates a challenging dynamic.

The biggest reported challenge to Compass’ pedagogy is participation. The interviewees relayed the problem of timidity in class discussions. In general, throughout faculty presentations, classes, and projects, students are mostly quiet. Examinations of identity and particular social issues produce even greater reticence among students. Instructors reported that topics of race relations, the LGBTQ+ community, the U.S.’s role in the world, immigration, minorities, and Latin America and Spain were particularly delicate for the students. The students get uncomfortable, drop out or passively watch discussions. Only a few students frequently participate in discussion sessions. One instructor said that students seem to grapple with asking themselves what they think about the subject at hand during these discussions. Another doubted the students have a world view (yet). Teachers are often unable to verify whether the pupils have fully understood and/or feel comfortable with content such as feminisms, literature by People of Color, spirituality, social movements, etc. Verification often occurs with the “intentional conversations” (check-ins) during which an instructor checks on how a student is conceptualizing complex concepts such as white supremacy. The teachers at Compass wonder what the values and worldviews of their students might be. Further inquiry

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into what would support introspection and draw out personal perspectives was agreed upon by the teachers as a valid area to study.

Another challenge to active and consistent participation is that Compass students often participate in class solely based on their personal interests. For example, with Spanish as the only language option, the few students who are interested in French and who have interest in other languages (Greek and German in particular) are often inconsistent with their efforts and projects in Spanish classes. Within the self-directed learning paradigm, teachers wonder how to add and enforce a participation requirement for evaluation. Without adequate administrative support to carry out faculty suggestions and/or determine consequences for students, some teachers have become a bit disengaged in this realm.

Another area where teachers feel a lack of support is in developing, planning, and delivering the temporary Exploratory sessions. The teachers base curricula in regular classes on needs assessments, on the success of previous units, and on previous materials and curricula; the Extended Learning Opportunities and Exploratory sessions, however, demand more of their attention and efforts. They agree that this has been onerous, even with occasional volunteer assistance. At times, they find themselves pre-occupied, stressed, overworked, and with a lack of direction.

Overall, Compass teachers struggle to understand how the students are learning and forming relationships to the content, material, and each other. Some students are far more advanced than others. There are prodigies and drop-outs in a very small school. There are students who choose to go to Compass and others who go because their town does not have a

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public school. This range in intellectual development and enthusiasm for learning is notable in the student body.

Internationalization Efforts. Compass offers a few impactful elements of international education. However, these are mostly relegated to English, American literature, and Spanish courses. All the staff and faculty are satisfied with the implementation of the 11th grade Global Connections Voyage, past international exchanges (especially with Japan), and also the Know My World virtual exchange with Turkey I conducted with the coordination of another SIT graduate student. Based on these experiences, they are desirous for more.

At Compass, the enthusiasm for the Global Connections program – the 11th grade trip abroad – is easily perceived throughout the interviews. One of the Spanish teachers noted that he is very enthusiastic, however limited the program might be. (With extreme reliance on the Global Connections trip to a foreign country that speaks Spanish, they miss opportunities to learn about other regions and countries.) The general consensus is that this trip reinforces students' collective identity, increases awareness of their socio-economic backgrounds, and leads them to discover uniqueness within the parameters of the community. "Despite socio-economic differences, they are very sheltered," affirmed one of the interviewees. Exposure to the world is thus a main goal of the voyage. Other goals include teaching students to be competent abroad and experiencing personal and academic growth, such as through being limited to communicating in Spanish. This trip has brought the students together despite their differences. For example, they worked on a presentation of the best photos of the trip and gather to discuss special moments of the trip abroad. I observed the 12th grade students gather

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to discuss the events of their 11th grade trip. It was clear that they were still bonded as they reflected upon the cherished experience they had had together.

For the duration of the virtual exchange with another class in Ankara, Turkey, the students did not consistently make efforts to learn about the country of the students they were engaged with. They were not solicitous even though the opportunity was adequate. The Compass students readily discussed throughout the exchange their cultural interest and taste for entertainment products (tv shows, movies and publications) but they fell short to share about Vermont and New England. One interviewee concluded that the students were enthusiastic about cultural hotspots and interested in further exchange, but may need training in order to share other aspects of their background. However, sharing about their reality in Vermont was not accomplished.

Throughout my internship, many students relayed to me their fascination with Japanese culture. However, this interest is not reflected in school curricula. For example, there is not a Japan Club or encouragement for the students to learn about Japanese culture. In addition, the previous Japanese exchange efforts have not been openly showcased or further pursued. The student body does not encounter continuity of the benefits from those endeavors. Activities and programs that could be facilitated to support their interests have not been conducted. From the teachers' perspective, the students are stuck in a mentality that the learning and exchange happened strictly within a specific timeframe and are unable to regard the exchange as having life-long impact. There is here a tension between continual interest by the students

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and the teachers' desire for students to be able to apply what they have learned in one experience to other experiences.

Congruent with my own observations, Compass teachers unanimously agreed that they are interested in exposing students to different realities lived by people elsewhere. Thus, there was appreciation of the virtual exchange with Ankara. "I would love to take them to New York City," said a teacher. More teachers expressed interest in future trips to Vermont's neighbor to the North, Le Quebec. They would like to develop visits to other cities because the students do not have enough day-to-day exposure to diversity in their hometowns. Both of those destinations, the teachers explained, would be pivotal to promotion of exposure to life in different settings in the vicinity. They also want their students to be familiar with the realities of a city with large immigrant populations. Unfortunately, multiple teachers also expressed that limited time and resources for implementing international education and diversity curricula are major obstacles to achieving these dreams.

The teachers are inquisitive about how to implement International Education and diversity programs. They identify People of Color, international students, Latinos, First Peoples, and Quebecois as communities they would like to integrate into the school community. They are unsure of how to recruit because of a lack of expertise and existing connections to those communities (especially of Color). They would like more guest speakers to address relevant topics with students. They mentioned the need to reach out for participation – perhaps through a guest speaker program – of politicians, leaders, and elders as they develop relationships and expand the school community. Relatedly, students have complained about intergenerational

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missed interactions and dynamics, indicated that better leveraging of existing relationships would be beneficial. Limited resources, time, and expertise all pose challenges to the fruition of these endeavors. Teachers also seek to improve their Sex Education program because it does not meet the extents of what many students in the U.S. are exposed to. The teachers feel limited because they do not have experts to teach this subject.

Curricular Opportunities. Compass' curriculum, which addresses the environment, immigration, and political reform, is designed to broaden students' worldviews and increase their competencies and participation in urgent national and global issues. Successes in implementation and outcomes is, however, variable. While Compass teachers feel a great degree of freedom in how and what they teach, they lack time and resources to develop and implement adequate curricula towards developing worldliness and diversity awareness. They also wonder if this is because of their students' lack of awareness and clarity of their own worldviews.

Past educational endeavors with projects, museum visits, presentations, guest speakers, and the library's collection of books and media have contributed positively and effectively to the collegiate and refined approach Compass seek to deliver to students. Still, "There is room for improvement to further include diversity and international education in the curricula, especially in regard to the literature throughout the courses," a teacher reported. While not consistently articulated by all of the interviewees, this teacher's conclusion matches not only data collected from interviews but also my observations in faculty meetings, school assemblies, departmental planning sessions, student activities, and other events. The professionals at the

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Compass School have demonstrated acquaintance with programs and curricula that would support future efforts: KROKA Expeditions, Facing History, the Howard Zinn Project, and “Choices” Program of Brown University, all of which could be useful in future endeavors.

Making time for debriefs and integration of educational experiences is an important, yet sometimes, missed, curricular opportunity. A partnership with Gogi Abroad in past years brought students to Tanzania. Unfortunately, the outcomes of this trip were not shared or communicated adequately between the partner organization and Compass teachers. This was a missed opportunity, and there may be more like it.

The teachers understand that the lack of diversity and rigorous internationalized curricula does not prepare their students for a globalized society. Due to previously mentioned constraints, they tend to rely on constant communication with students. The teachers make time to address issues with every student, despite having not enough time to maximize curriculum and program development. They sincerely hope for the best for students upon graduation. However, they wonder how they will do outside of their rural setting and they feel their hands are full.

BUHS

The teachers at BUHS reported similar challenges to implementing diversity education and international exchanges – namely resources and support. However, the challenges they face with regard to students’ response to such curricula was very different. The issue of non-participation did not come up in these interviews. Instead, the teachers at BUHS reported the lack of preparedness of their students to handle certain issues. They suspected that this lack of

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preparedness is a matter of age (9th grade) and maturity. They explained that the students are just too young to deal with important issues such as racism and the heritage of diversity in the U.S. today. “The topic is too difficult,” said one teacher at BUHS. “It is difficult for a ninth grader to learn about racism and diversity,” said another. For many ninth graders, the subject becomes overly philosophical, rather than tangible.

Conclusions

With regard to diversity, professionals at Compass display good intentions. However, they might be oblivious to their lack of insight in recruitment, outreach, and understanding of how racism affects students and student performance. Greater expertise on the issue may be required to understand exactly how to implement anti-racist and diversity trainings for the purposes of clarity for the community at large.

To the teachers of Compass, it has become clear that students either do not enjoy or do not feel comfortable with introspection, self-examination, and sharing their thoughts and opinions openly. This leads to the question: If their learning environment effectively enables inclusion and freedom of thought, why is there consistent difficulty with introspection and self-examination? The students need training on how to share about themselves with deep understanding of locality, community, and the region as they learn about the other and “otherness.” In addition, consistent discussion on meta-cognition and emotional intelligence must be integrated into the daily activities of instruction. With a bit of preparation, students will hopefully be able to share a bit of themselves and their community with the world and learn about the world in return.

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How may Compass more meaningfully connect its students to their own community as they learn about the world? How would this support them in participating in a globalized society? Opportunities to become acquainted with the diversity in their own communities and countries must be optimized. They must also be encouraged to understand other parts of the world. Trainings for faculty and staff on racism and implementation of international educational materials would be beneficial. Further learning about topics such as immigration and the role of the U.S. in the world would be valuable for Compass students. Over-reliance on the Global Connections program for personal growth and broadening worldviews may be a problem because just one effort to internationalize is not enough to promote worldliness and preparedness for a globalized society. There might need to be additional possibilities and opportunities to learn about the world.

Overall, Compass is very true to self-direction; students are encouraged to seek their own path and flourish utilizing the resources of the school. This focus on individual development within a context of collaboration defines and enriches the community. However, active participation is not consistent. If Compass is truthful about addressing diversity, and if they truly espouse a growth mentality especially in relation to increased enrollment, they may have to engage in additional training and implement international education and diversity curricula for all.

Recommendations

Creating and strengthening the connections to other communities, especially the international and im/migrant ones in the region and elsewhere, must be made a priority.

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Explicitly, attempts to instill in the youth the relevance of enthusiasm and eagerness to understand others outside of their community as part of preparation for participation in a globalized society ought to be persistent. For the purposes of recruitment and outreach for all the programs (enrollment, guest speakers, interns, staff, faculty, meals, travels, mentors, tutoring), it is necessary that the community is trained in anti-racism, oppression, and diversity.

The articulation of clear goals must be available and shared by all, especially since they highly value collaboration and connection to community. Maintenance of evidence of previous successes such as participation in youth programs abroad and previous Global Connections voyages would assist in this process. They would be able to refer to previous accomplishments in the field to inspire further guidelines.

The professionals at Compass would benefit from trainings abroad, international co-operation programs, and a strategic framework for assessing needs and accomplishing desired goals. These formative endeavors would improve long-term delivery, facilitation, and implementation of internationalized curricula. The leadership of the school's community must be included in the review of results in order to democratize the discussions, efforts, and decision-making processes.

The evidence from the assessments would be key to articulated needs and proposals to various stakeholders and donors. There should be cycles and/or specific timeframes for each venture. Continuity of organizational efforts towards a clear picture of activities would support actions stemming from the internally-developed framework.

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Course curricula can be designed to strengthen academic interconnectedness and student understanding of issues pertaining to the environment, health and wellness, geography, history, religion, gender, race, ethnicity, and other identity-based community elements. Students should be encouraged to participate in programs through activities, media, readings, events, and other diverse learning materials. Throughout these experiences, the questioning of commonalities and differences as they pertain to power, privilege, inequality, and inequity must be brought to the forefront.

The already positive and effective learning environment would benefit from an articulation of the need for engagement and open-mindedness from all. Intercultural communication workshops and events such as Diversity Day, cinematic festivals, and “meet-ups” with other schools would be useful for achieving worldliness within the home community. An ability to engage in intercultural dialogues must be prioritized, as well, throughout these learning activities.

A deeper understanding of the self-consciousness that led to a lack of engagement in class discussions is urgent. Are the students hesitant to share publicly because of their peers or attitudes from teachers? In what setting(s) would these discussions be more engaging? What are the flaws of the school environment that might have resulted in this reticence on the part of the students? Clarity on communication with students who have been identified as timid participants would be critical. Further inquiry on how engagement (class participation) has taken place as it relates to outcomes (grades) would be beneficial to both students and teachers.

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Production of a framework and structure for the students to share their achievements and reflections on all these programs they have participated in would be beneficial. It would encourage those who are more passive to provide feedback. Perhaps publicizing/publishing these dynamics and results would create more cohesiveness/inclusion.

Events that would bring together Compass students and students from other schools along with international community members are recommended. They could already fully engage the students at BUHS studying Spanish in a properly constructed setting such as a meal or an event or outing. Diverse professionals and community members ought to play a significant role in these events for the purposes of validation.

In terms of academic instruction, it would be helpful to be attentive to the framework of diversity and internationalization with overarching themes to focus on topics of relevance. These themes could be related and derived from the students' experiences and/or from goals based on the understood gaps in educational curricula and outcomes.

The creation of a platform for the faculty to discuss their concerns would be useful, too. At the moment, they exchange e-mails with their concerns before faculty meetings and also use the e-mails to follow-up on the plans of action. Instead of limiting these exchanges to e-mail, they might benefit from a platform through which they could more easily track, follow-up, and voice their concerns. Project management software could be a good idea.

A conversation on priorities must be proposed. Since they already have a strong instructional materials on U.S. History, politics, and constitutional studies, they may focus on the following lacking elements: sexuality, immigration, foreign languages, diversity, finance,

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economics, etc. Organizational support and even reformulation of their framework could be necessary to achieve the desired balance between academic and personal/character development.

Limitations

I was not able to interview all of the staff. Not interviewing all the teachers impeded my understanding of how all the faculty conclude what they need to do to solve the school's problems. Additionally, I was not allowed to interview the students. Not being able to interview the students limited my understanding of how they experience and interpret the lack of diversity in their school community. |

Future Research

Unfortunately, this analysis has not drawn significantly from community dynamics and/or students' concerns. However, these community dynamics and students' perspectives did come up in the interviews with the professionals and throughout my presence and observations at the school. The concluding remarks from those interactions have shown that the learning environment and academic sphere may welcome follow-up by other researchers and practitioners.

A further analysis of the outcomes of the previous classes on Comparative World Religions, Latin American Studies, and Holocaust Education would be appropriate for examination. The outcomes of those classes could be elucidative examples for future frameworks for the school because they are designed to expose students to the world outside of Vermont. Further inquiry would require more interviews in the Southeast region of Vermont,

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which would necessarily include the Sending Center of Westminster (a district formed by the towns of Westminster, Athens, Marlboro, Wethersfield because they do not have a school of their own for the grades 7th to 12th), which provides the school its basis for enrollment. Further inquiry could include professionals in other districts and counties. In addition, one would need to interview parents, volunteers, community members, and other professionals who have been involved with the school. An analysis of the profile and responses of stakeholders would be key to implement suggestions and recommendations because it would provide an appropriate framework for analysis.

The question of whether they are ready to share these successful experiences for the purposes of International Education would be fodder for further inquiry.

Closing

At this moment, the Compass School is not internationalizing. To do so, Compass faculty and staff would have to relate their principles and previous efforts on community building with their needs for diversification and internationalization. The constraints of their resources would require gradual implementation to fully engage employees, students, families, and community members. Although the learning environment and collegial professional culture is adequate for the implementation of the proposed measures, the impetus has not been consistently and/or clearly articulated.

It would be beneficial for the institution to implement global studies and diversity because it would clearly expand the horizons and improve the quality of the education of its students. The faculty, staff and others would also benefit from the development of projects

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related to preparedness of the community for a globalized society. The improvement of implementation of curricula and programs for the purposes of worldly awareness and diversity may certainly enhance the experience of a school that has always valued inclusion and involvement for cultivation of the youth.

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Appendix A: Interview Guide

- 1- What is your name, years of teaching and years at this institution?
- 2- What is your education background? What subjects have you taught?
- 3- International Education advances learning and scholarship; builds understanding and respect among different peoples; and it enhances constructive leadership in the global community. In light of this statement, what do you think is being done at this institution for the environment of International Education?
- 4- Diversity refers to there being a variety of elements in a given environment in terms of background such as race, culture, religion and experiences. In which ways do you think there is diversity at this institution?
- 5- What are your impressions in regard to the success of the student body in broadening their worldview? What have you noticed in the students' development towards the end of their time at this school?
- 6- Would you, please, describe to me what happens at this school in terms of International Education and Diversity?
- 7- Would you, please, describe or discuss to me how you design your curriculum?
- 8- What have been challenges you've encountered at this school?
- 9- What do you think are some tactics to broaden the diversity of the student body?
- 10- Are there any specific programs or curriculum designs you would like to implement?
- 11- If you could implement initiatives in international education and diversity, how would you do it?

