

# Global Competency and International Mindedness in LIS Education

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This article discusses the role of the global competency framework within library and information studies professional education, explores the relevant literature, and places the framework in context of equity, diversity, and inclusion as well as other relevant areas of the field. The author posits that the knowledges, skills, and attitudes of the global competency framework contribute through international mindedness to equity-centered education within library and information studies.

**Keywords:** LIS education, equity, diversity & inclusion, study abroad, global competency, international mindedness, cultural competency

Meaningful advancement in the library and information field regarding equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) remains an imperative. The very recent years of global health pandemic and widespread racial and social justice action propel the already-existing mandate for change. Global competency provides an additional strategy to meeting this need within library and information studies (LIS) education. Conceptually broadening EDI efforts toward a global and international mindset, the global competency framework embraces global realities both *within* and *without* a geographic locale. It also complements the internationalization of higher education (HE) and international education, which is centered on global exchange and learning. Application of international mindedness and global competency can thus support LIS education. Global and cultural competency were introduced to the *Journal of Education for Library & Information Science's* readership in Chancellor's (2018) article "Crossing the Globe: Why Studying Abroad Is Essential to the Future of LIS Education." I explore this global competency framework further, placing it among EDI as well as other relevant areas of the field.

## KEY POINTS:

- The global competency framework can be used to conceptually broaden equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) to the global and international.
- Global competency and international mindedness intentionally extend cultural competency into the international; it internationalizes cultural competency and is EDI work of global perspective and with international dimension.
- Courses developed with international mindedness will help alleviate the problem of few EDI-centered courses offered in programs.

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*Journal of Education for Library and Information Science* 2023

Vol. 64, No. 2 DOI: [10.3138/jelis-2020-0104](https://doi.org/10.3138/jelis-2020-0104)

## Reflexivity statement

My perspective on this subject is formed by my situation and identity. I live in the Midwest of the United States, on the traditional and contemporary homelands of the Dakota and other Indigenous peoples. I work in a predominantly White institution with information sources of local through global scope, and with international and intercultural colleagues, patrons, and projects. Further, my own formative study abroad experience now influences my work as an adjunct LIS faculty member, wherein I seek to teach and learn with global perspective through teaching study abroad. I am Euro American-centric by heritage and majority of cultural experiences. I am White and cisgender female, two predominant identity markers in LIS. This article discusses LIS education in the United States and does not extend to other geographic and professional arenas. I define equity as the state of fairness or equal outcome, particularly in the context of systems. Diversity means the state of being diverse; Lee and Chancellor explain that it “is the difference among us” (as cited in [Association of Library and Information Science Education \[ALISE\], 2013](#)), and the word often refers to representation. I distinguish this meaning from the broader concept of diversity work, which I understand to be attempts to reach a state of representation or to reach inclusion. Inclusion is the state where all are able to thrive, and all are empowered and participatory. Other definitions are presented throughout the article. Following this positionality statement and introduction, I provide a literature review and discussion of the operationalization of global competency, including its deep connection or synonymity with cultural competency. I then explore critical perspective, other areas of foundation and connection in LIS and in LIS education, and close with a discussion of teaching.

## Literature review and operational definition

In the United States, global competency is firmly established in a variety of disciplines and professions including education, business, and health professions as a framework to build and assess global, leadership, and noncognitive competencies such as critical thinking and socio-emotional skills (Chandir, 2020; Esterhuizen & Kirkpatrick, 2015; U.S. Department of Education International Affairs Office, n.d.). The term is closely related to, or a variant of, cultural competency, intercultural competency, international mindedness, and other similar phrases (Deardorff, 2006, 2015; Tichnor-Wagner, Parkhouse, Glazier, & Cain, 2019). While the terms are sometimes synonymized, I suggest that global competency as a framework intentionally extends cultural competency into the international; the global context is a conscious element of the framework. It internationalizes cultural competency. It is EDI work of global perspective and with international dimension. It recognizes interconnectedness and encourages international mindedness during our journey to equity and inclusion. This broadened perspective beyond local or national view thus expands perspective within EDI.

Cultural, intercultural, or global competency (hereafter, *global competency* unless referring to another specific usage) is a flexible, process- and action-oriented framework. Definitions offered by educators include “one’s ability to transcend domain or discipline and properly comprehend cultural norms and global events so that one can interact, communicate, and work effectively outside one’s environment” (Li, 2013, p. 127) and “the skills,

knowledge and mindset needed to live, work and succeed in a global society” (Carter, 2020, p. 25). The specific word *competency* within the phrase does not refer to particular or independent skills that are attained and measurable at one point in time. Rather, competency here is “having the capacity to function effectively” (Cross, Benjamin, Isaacs, Portland State University, & CASSP Technical Assistance Center, 1989, p. 13) and can be understood as abilities developed in a life-long process (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2018; Overall, 2009). The words *ability*, *capacity*, *understanding*, and *capability* would more effectively communicate the processes involved within the framework than does the word *competency* (Deardorff & Jones, 2012). As noted above, definitions and discussions of global competency in the literature closely resemble those of the other similar terms, and to some extent all are interchanged, as well as critiqued and debated.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, use of *competence* versus *competency* may also be contested. The literature is indeed “murky in terms of the clarity” (Griffith, Wolfeld, Armon, Rios, & Liu, 2016, p. 1). The concept captured by the phrase is polysemic and is thus diversely understood. Terminology and definitions differ based on field of application or on exact construction of the framework (Carter, 2020; Deardorff, 2015). It is generally agreed, however, that all terms reference an orienting framework, or a set of concepts. As example, Sue, Ivey and Peterson present the framework as a “metatheory” (as cited in Qureshi, 2020, p. 120), another as “disposition” (Garrison, 2013, p. 1). Further nuancing global competency, Bennett (2014) provides the image of the globally competent as global souls, who recognize a global community. Bennett also frames this work as that which moves us from ethnocentric positions where difference is avoided, to ethno-relative positions where difference is sought after. Intercultural competence, to Bennett, is a bridge between equity, diversity, and inclusion work and international efforts, and demands “that we cannot neglect either side of the equation, domestic or international” (p.155).

The framework’s flexibility precludes precise definition, yet this flexibility along with its interdisciplinarity makes it possible to apply it to numerous fields, including LIS. And there is consensus that the framework provides for capacity to interact effectively and appropriately across cultures (Bennett, 2014). Shared hallmarks found among different perspectives include self-awareness as a foundational basis, and ability to work effectively with others (Esterhuizen & Kirkpatrick, 2015). Deardorff (2006) located three prevalent themes across many definitions: “the awareness, valuing, and understanding of cultural differences; experiencing other cultures; and self-awareness of one’s own culture” (p. 247). As described by an American organization of teacher educators, “Importantly, global competence is not about the world “out there.” It is rooted in understanding ourselves and our place in the world as a foundation for understanding those around us” (Tichnor-Wagner et al., 2019, p. 5). Educators Mansilla and Jackson (2011) point to two capacities at the core of global competency: the capacity to recognize perspectives of others and of one’s self, as well as the capacity to communicate ideas effectively across diverse audiences. The framework is often harnessed and organized into areas labeled as knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSAs), and here the framework becomes more specific or identifiable. KSAs are knowledge (the cognitive), skills (the behavioral), and attitudes or dispositions (the affective). Each are wide-reaching, overlapping, and connected. Li (2013) summarizes these as knowledge about

the world as well as one's own culture, skills to function in an intercultural environment, and positive attitudes toward other cultures.

Others articulate specific ability and capacities. Knowledge often includes self-awareness, as well as knowledge of others' cultures, languages, histories, and lived realities. Essential skills are listening, observing, reflecting, empathizing, communicating, and resolving conflict. Attitudes include cultural humility, curiosity, open-mindedness, respect, and tolerance for not knowing (Bennett, 2014; Deardorff, 2015). Overall (2009) most thoroughly applied these to librarianship as cultural competency. Overall also provided developmental theory, naming three areas or domains wherein development occurs. The cognitive domain includes self-awareness and building cultural knowledge; interpersonal includes cultural appreciation, caring, and matching our practice with our values; environmental relates to the resources and assets, and systems and structures affecting community. KSAs or the domains have different applications among various fields, including in LIS where they are articulated in practice-based cultural competency literature. Press and Diggs-Hobson (2005), for example, articulate knowledge as awareness of systemic barriers affecting users and users' information-seeking requirements; skills include utilizing indigenous or existing information providers; and attitudes include valuing identity and intersectionality in ourselves and patrons.

### Critical theory discussion

Considering the framework with a critical lens is essential, due to the ineffectiveness in LIS to date toward measurable and meaningful equity and inclusion. We have not met often-stated, longstanding goals including representation among library workers, or improved and appropriate services to heterogeneous information patrons (e.g., Dali & Caidi, 2017; Ndumu & Betts-Green, 2018). Current EDI work is palatable (to the dominant) and ineffective (Sutherland and Purcell, 2021) and perpetuates a view of Whiteness as norm and standard (Rapchak, 2019). The prevalent terms are problematic. To Canãs (2017), "diversity is a white word" and used often in attempt to normalize whiteness as the "example of what it means to be and exist in the world" (second paragraph); Sutherland and Purcell replace "diversity and inclusion" with "justice and liberation" (2021, p. 73). Global competency may be a White term and framework, naming yet another concept which produces or reinforces inequality or injustice in attempt to normalize Whiteness. The literature rarely calls out race or engages with White supremacy and racist policy, and could thus provide another example of the long history comprised of LIS ignoring the issue and upholding racist structures.<sup>2</sup>

In many ways, critical theory and critical librarianship support a negative perspective of the framework. Critical librarianship utilizes an ethical or political lens to alert us to issues of oppression and to question assumptions and practices (Association of College and Research Libraries [ACRL], 2017). It demands attention to structural aspects and examination of privilege and power. Critical librarian scholars comment on cultural competency (not yet, to my knowledge, naming global competency). Hudson (2017) considers it ineffective liberal anti-racism, with a goal to create harmony with minimal conflict, and favoring individualism rather than the dismantling of harmful racialized power systems. While cultural competency can be useful to anti-racist work, its many problems include

presenting a “narrative of racism as interpersonal error” (p. 16) and obscuring structural racism. Ghaddar cites scholars of critical archival studies have called for moving beyond “a liberal politics of recognition that emphasizes inclusivity, multiplicity, and self-reflexivity” (p. 7) because of its ineffectiveness and support of structural domination (Ghaddar, 2016). Globally-oriented higher education scholars alert us to concerns with dominant narratives developing around global competency (Gardinier, 2021). These include the related concept of *global citizen* continuing injustices and inequities, and the turn in higher education to internationalization as driven by the global North and Western countries’ assertion of elitism and privilege (Jooste & Heleta, 2017). Another concern is that the skills and knowledge in global competencies, when placed within the global citizenship concept, support capitalism and compete with a global consciousness and sense of community (Akkari & Maleq, 2020).

While critical discourse in LIS does not name global competency, there are intersections. Mathiesen (2016) cautions American librarians at all times against cultural imperialism, which is cultural change caused by and reinforcing the dominance of one group over another. And according to Hudson (2016), the global information inequality discourse in LIS is a key site for the reproduction of racialized discourse, continuing racism, and systems of assumed superiority. Further relevant criticism from the field revolves around higher education’s drive to consider global skills as important due to their marketability. Damasco (Swanson et al., 2015), for example, discusses how

many businesses highlight the importance of being able to work effectively in a global market, and higher education has followed that line of thinking in terms of promoting diversity as a way of building student competence in intercultural interactions as a key component of their college education. Another reason diversity is often touted as a component of an effective workplace is that studies have shown that more often than not, more diverse work teams have proven to be highly productive. But I find these market-driven motivations for promoting diversity to be very superficial and highly problematic. (“Why does diversity matter” section)

Yet some critical lens scholars affirm global competency. Jooste and Heleta (2017) recognize our world as replete with historical injustices and past and present structural inequalities and recommend global competency in place of the global citizen concept. Teacher educator Byker (2019) utilizes Critical Cosmopolitan Theory as a lens for understanding the development of global competencies for critical consciousness, asserting that “[g]lobally competent teacher candidates are a must” (p. 184). Within LIS, Cooke (2017) writes on cultural competency’s connection with social justice, calling for the related cultural humility to both acknowledge and rectify power issues and imbalances. The authors of *Latinos in Libraries, Museums and Archives: Cultural Competence in Action! An Asset-Based Approach* note that critical race and Latinx theory explain underlying biases and policies behind cultural inequities in systems (Montiel-Overall, Nunez, & Reyes-Escudero, 2017). And when examining if cultural competency (in a form of culturally competent professionals) is in harmony with human rights, Mathiesen (2016) answers a conditional yes.<sup>3</sup>

The framework’s KSAs abound within LIS practice-based literature, including in critical practice, though not always recognized as such by the authors. For example, Mathiesen

(2016) reminds the privileged from dominant cultures to “[l]isten to others’ points of view. Particularly those from non-dominant groups” and employs the powerful phrase of the Native American writer Deloria, “We talk, you listen” (p. 281). Gonzales-Smith (Swanson et al., 2015) explained, “... we also have the opportunity to truly listen when we are being called out, being humbled by the experience, and learning from it. At a personal level, this one thing we can and must all do—listen” (“Where do we go from here?” section). Such listening with humility corresponds to the framework’s skill of listening and attitude of humility. The work of personal self-knowledge and reflexivity is upheld by some scholars. Blackburn explores cultural competency, whiteness, and intersectionality, recognizing that self-awareness can lead to awareness of the privilege inherent in dominant culture (Blackburn, 2015). Honma (Swanson et al., 2015), in context of library hiring and retention practices, places reflexivity alongside a critical lens in order to locate (harmful) status quo and create change: “This requires all of us to take a critical, self-reflexive look at our complicity in maintaining the status quo and our roles in facilitating the goals of social change” (“Where do we go from here?” section). I suggest critical theory and global competency are compatible, in that the latter is supportive of the former and offers a place of practice and action in support of theory. In identifying, dismantling, or restructuring systems as called for in critical librarianship, skills (e.g., listening and communicating), attitudes (humility and tolerance for ambiguity), and knowledge (of lived realities and experiences with harmful systems) are necessary. In considering the framework’s domains, I previously placed awareness of systemic inequity within the environmental domain (Engseth, 2018). Blackburn (2019) demonstrated that this domain is the “place” where race and power structures are identified, understood, and engaged (p. 12). As example, Garrison (2013) situated library patrons’ issues with transportation and physical security within the environmental domain.

## Foundations and connections in LIS

### Equity, diversity, and inclusion

Above, I present international mindedness in the form of global competence as EDI work expanded with global perspective. This intersection of EDI with the global is occasionally or indirectly recognized in LIS. For example, while the *ACRL Diversity Standards: Cultural Competency for Academic Libraries* (2012) state that “[d]iversity is ... a global necessity” and “[a]s visionary leaders open to change, new ideas, and global perspectives, ACRL is committed to diversity of people and ideas,” (“Purpose and goals of the standard” section) the standards do not articulate the global scope of LIS workplaces, information ecosystems, and patrons and community. *IFLA/UNESCO’s Multicultural Library Manifesto* (2018) is inherently internationally minded, and encourages many globally competent actions, though it does not name global competency as it acknowledges the reality of library work. It begins:

All people live in an increasingly heterogeneous society. There are more than 6,000 different languages in the world. The international migration rate is growing every year resulting in an increasing number of people with complex identities. Globalization, increased migration, faster communication, ease of transportation and other 21<sup>st</sup> century forces have

increased cultural diversity in many nations where it might not have previously existed or has augmented the existing multicultural makeup. (first paragraph)

Librarians on staff exchanges worked to develop collective cultural competency to the point of feeling *at home in the world*, clearly connecting cultural competency in librarianship to global interconnectivity (Somerville, Cooper, Torhell, & Hashert, 2015). In their book on cultural competency, Montiel-Overall, Nunez, and Reyes-Escudero (2017) point to the deep cross-border realities of library patrons, and the global connections within local patron communities. Ndumu's (2020) scholarship underscores the transnationalism of many in the United States. Across professions, global rather than national perspective is employed to generate new ways of thinking and working. A global intentionality in LIS can positively position the global within our equity and inclusion efforts. It also responds to the global realities with which we work, as does international librarianship.

### International librarianship

Other areas in LIS and higher education that provide further foundation for global competency include international librarianship. In an extensive study of international and comparative librarianship (the two have close and blurring identities), Lor (2019) affirmed it "very much alive" (p. 732). Lor reminds us that libraries are border-crossing, and by their purpose, they work with recorded knowledge from around the world. There is a history and continuum to this work; the current "de rigueur" use of the term *global* in LIS does not signify meaningful departure from heavier past uses of the term *internationalism* (p. 96). While Lor's book briefly notes cultural/intercultural competency as method to counter ethnocentrism, and as relevant and useful to those in the United States, Lor does not connect international librarianship to the capabilities and attitudes that comprise the global competency framework. Yet there are connections to be made. Lor names the "attitude" of internationalism in librarianship as one that is inclined toward international cooperation and motivated by international understanding (p. 57). And resembling the global competency framework, Lor presents "internationally-minded" as an orientation, here creating scholarly exchange, international cooperation, and international education.

### Study abroad as part of internationalization in HE

Study abroad is another place of connection between LIS education and global competency. HE literature affirms study abroad as one route to building global competency among students.<sup>4</sup> *Study abroad* is a common phrase used in the United States for experiences wherein a student crosses national jurisdictional borders for educational purposes (Abdullahi, Kajberg, & Virkus, 2007). Descriptive articles regarding study abroad certainly exist in the LIS literature, and these may also include rationale or pedagogical analysis. Yet as Chancellor (2018) pointed out, they rarely connect to global competency or aspects therein. Context is often internationalization of LIS education and in HE, and appropriately so. Internationalization in LIS education was present at the 19<sup>th</sup> century international library conferences, where the still-discussed<sup>5</sup> issues of structure and certification of educational programs were considered. Also at that time, programs in New York began to enroll international students,



beginning a “solid and long-established tradition of having international students in the [North American] classrooms” (Abdullahi & Kajberg, 2004, p. 353); 150 foreign students studied in the United States within the first 50 years of formal LIS education (Davis, 1987). Broader LIS international activity such as associations and training exchanges strengthened and formalized in the 20th century. The International Federation of Library Associations was established in Edinburgh, Scotland in 1927; the International Council on Archives began in 1948. International formal educational networks continue in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, for example with the iSchool movement and its member institutions located around the world.

Study abroad as it is defined above developed in LIS educational programs in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century. A 1970 feasibility study on incorporating a yearlong study abroad within LIS education discussed study abroad as a method toward international education, and also to eliminating cultural bias in the profession. The author of this study additionally called for a change from national to international library schools and stated that faculty to support such change were “necessities now” (Laverne Carroll, 1970, p. 22). In the 1960s and 1970s, U.S. library schools were hosting 1,000 students from other countries annually, though an estimate of outbound U.S. students was not provided (Davis, 1987). The joint yearly session between the University of Pittsburgh and College of Librarianship Wales was well established as of 1985 (Boaz, 1986). LIS study abroad programs grew in number and strength throughout the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, reflecting similar growth in HE. A 2004 study found that 35% of LIS programs in the United States and Canada (and 61% percent of those in Europe) offered study abroad options (Abdullahi & Kajberg). Chancellor’s (2018) review of 60 North American programs’ websites found approximately one-third offer a study abroad or global study course. The benefits of study abroad are well established in HE literature, and when viewed from the lens of global competency, these opportunities build knowledges and skills and encourage attitudes such as self-reflection, listening closely to in-country experts, observing systems and learning of systemic successes or inequities, cross-cultural communication, and being comfortable with not knowing (ambiguity). However, there are systemic barriers to wide participation in study abroad. McElroy and Bridges (2017) report students of color, for example, participate at much lower rates than White students. These barriers must be removed or replaced with alternatives if LIS is to offer truly accessible internationally-minded professional education. Due to the fact that study abroad excludes many, global competency must be designed into a variety of teaching and learning experiences, including local and domestic.

### Teaching global competency and international mindedness as EDI

In addition to building KSAs within students, courses developing global competency will alleviate the persistent and recognized problem that many LIS students do not have opportunity to learn in EDI-centered courses. As summarized by Cooke (2017), “[t]he field of LIS has been making slow progress toward diversifying the profession; however, the curricula in graduate programs have been even slower to reflect issues of diversity and social justice” (p. 87). The problem is repeatedly demonstrated by studies and observations. Mestre’s (2010) survey of graduates revealed that training regarding diversity was “almost nonexistent” (p. 482). Students and practitioners of many types unanimously affirmed the



importance of intercultural skills, and confirmed that “solid grounding in intercultural issues was lacking” (Qayyum & Ryan, 2012, p. 227). A student of Dali and Caidi’s (2017) asked, “If every librarian or information professional inevitably finds him- or herself working in a diverse environment, why are courses on diversity not part of the LIS core curriculum?” (p. 90) More recently, a study of LIS curriculum in programs accredited by the American Library Association (ALA) concluded while many LIS programs list multicultural and diversity courses, few of these courses might be offered or required (Villagran & Hawamdeh, 2020). Park Dahlen (2017) recognized that students, upon entering their class, often had no formal training or coursework in EDI-related areas. The problem is connected to programs and curricula: “few LIS students have the opportunity to rely on their program of study to become prepared to be culturally competent library professionals” (Subramaniam & Jaeger, 2011, p. 3). This scarcity is exacerbated when considering international intersection; in the Subramaniam and Jaeger study (2011), only two of 66 diversity courses at iSchools that offer ALA-accredited programs clearly dealt with the international, ranking this diversity-related element last of those identified in the study. Hughes-Hassell and Vance in 2017 summarized the sober reality:

Although the 2008 American Library Association’s “Standards for Accreditation of Master’s Programs in Library and Information Studies” requires that program objectives reflect “the role of the library and information services in a diverse, [sic] global society, including the role of serving the needs of underserved groups,” research shows that students graduating from LIS programs have taken few, if any, classes related to diversity. (p. 109)<sup>6</sup>

Curriculum, competencies, and LIS programs evolve with changes in wider culture and society. In LIS, there is expansion in practice and theory from the specific to the general, from the exclusive to the inclusive, from the traditional disciplinary to the inter- and extra-disciplinary. This growth includes ethical and social elements. In a recent survey of practitioners and teaching faculty, knowledge of professional ethics, cultural competence, and reflective practice grounded in diversity and inclusion comprised three of the four general skills and content areas ranked as core by at least half of survey respondents (Saunders, 2019). There is a “rethinking of professional identity” which is transforming LIS. “Modern LIS is participatory because it includes an exchange with communities based on conversation in which the concepts of digital inclusion, social inclusion, and lifelong learning are central” (Tammaro, Manfredi, Berloco, De Castro, & Distilo, 2020, p. 340). The literature affirms instructors and curricula must support changing competencies. Advocating for faculty development and change, Wheeler (2005) emphasized the role of instructors:

library education programs must accept responsibility for populating the profession with a new generation of culturally competent librarians. That task falls squarely on the shoulders of faculty and their success will be determined by how well their teaching reflects the evolution of both society and the profession. (p. 184)

Overall (2009) recognized the need for formal LIS course development of cultural competency. Mestre (2010) affirmed that to move the field forward, “all librarians need to come into the profession with at least a foundational knowledge of what it means to be

culturally competent” (p. 479). Kumasi and Hill (2011) argued that “faculty and students would benefit from having a more deliberate and stream-lined set of cultural competence curriculum standards so that student learning outcomes can improve and be measured more concretely” (p. 260). Jaeger, Bertot, and Subramaniam (2013) wrote a few years later:

To meet the information needs of this increasingly diverse society, all of our graduates need to be culturally competent from the moment they graduate ... The curriculum of LIS education has to adapt and evolve much faster than it has so far to ensure that our graduates are ready to serve every member of their communities. (p. 244)

Many LIS instructors are meeting this need with curricula that centers EDI, and occasionally its intersection with the global. Cooke’s (2017) text for graduate students, *Information Services to Diverse Populations: Developing Culturally Competent Library Professionals*, provides context and readings to support such coursework, and highlights the related concept of cultural humility, connections to social justice work, and more. Courses are designed around cultural competency, multiculturalism, race, and many other aspects of EDI (Ndumu & Betts-Green, 2018); in example, San Jose State University’s School of Information offers “Cultural Competency for Information Professionals” (M. Villagran, personal communication, July 11, 2020). A number of the rationales for teaching equity and inclusion among surveyed faculty include global considerations:

responsiveness to the changing interactions in a global networked information environment in the contemporary age; ... accurately reflect the diversity experienced in people’s lived realities; ... lead to diversity of ideas and growth of knowledge to provide best solutions to world problems; educate and provide a global perspective to parochial and narrow-minded cultural viewpoints; amongst others. (Mehra, Olson, & Ahmad, 2011, p. 42)

There are examples of instructors or programs teaching knowledges, skills, and attitudes of global competency. Bossaller (2017) asked, “Are schools of library and/or information science globalizing their programs?” (p. 222) and developed a social justice-oriented course which resulted in transformational self-knowledge of bias and values; viewed from the lens of the framework, bias awareness is a key element within the knowledge area. When teaching a comparative study course abroad, I assign self-reflection journaling to students, fostering the reflexivity which is a core quality in global competency. Our class considers information systems and structures of both home and host locations, learning that can be placed in the framework’s environmental domain and the knowledge area. San Jose State University (SJSU) focused on global perspectives in the curriculum (Hirsh et al., 2015), and this program thus connects competencies to the global realities of information professionals. A SJSU core competency or outcome of the Master’s degree is to “[u]nderstand global perspectives on effective information practices that are supportive of cultural, economic, educational, or social well-being” (n.d.-a, “Statement of Core Competencies” section). This maps to the school’s strategic direction to promote internationalization. While this competency does not explicitly use the phrase global competency, the student outcomes are compatible:

Demonstrate the ability to consider issues from a global perspective.

Show the ability to apply international standards and practices within the discipline or professional area.

Demonstrate an appreciation of the relationship between the chosen field of study and professional traditions elsewhere.

Demonstrate appreciation of the diversity of language and culture. ([San Jose State University \[SJSU\], n.d.-b](#), first section)

Internationally-minded learning can be local as well as cross-border, formal or informal, in-person or virtual, synchronous or asynchronous, creating accessibility to all. The SJSU program allows students to meet global requirements through “real” or “virtual mobility” learning experiences ([n.d.-b](#), first section). Viable alternatives to resource-heavy study abroad in the form of local teaching with international mindedness will undoubtedly increase as innovative teaching and learning meet the twin demands of dismantling systemic inequities related to study abroad, and travel alternatives stemming from global crises such as the Coronavirus pandemic. As stated by nursing educator [Amerson \(2020\)](#) in response to this pandemic, “students still require the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to provide health care for diverse cultures and across geographical boundaries more than ever as we grapple with this global health crisis” (p. 1). Fortunately, Internationalism at Home practice, which is domestic learning activity based in the reality that local community often reflects global community, was found by Soria and Troisi to develop global competencies “just as effectively as—if not more effectively than—formal study abroad” ([Soria & Troisi, 2014](#), p. 274). Examples from outside of LIS of teaching locally with international mindedness include a learning program for high school students who had not yet traveled beyond four blocks within Chicago. [Sobré-Denton and colleagues \(2014\)](#) conclude these students “productively engage[d] difference in a manner that affirms and transforms self and other” (p. 142) and the program provided students “opportunities to increase their global competency and to spark greater interest in learning more about the rest of the world” (p. 149). Nursing educators affirm global competencies are developed *in community* or abroad, and that the local environment often mirrors global culture, due to many local people from various realities, countries, and backgrounds ([Esterhuizen & Kirkpatrick, 2015](#)). Thus, current practice of relying on study abroad as a core method of building global experience and skills is unsettled by domestic diversity, travel restriction, and resistance to systemic injustice.

Scholars in other fields have established that global competency can be taught, and assessed in students and in instructors ([Deardorff, 2006](#); [Jooste & Heleta, 2017](#)). Li’s (2013) literature survey found that “[n]early all existing studies have acknowledged global competence as one of the most important learning outcomes in higher education” (p. 127), and Li’s own study concluded that global competence “is a teachable attribute that can be effectively cultivated by providing students with well-integrated learning opportunities” (p. 129). A globally competent learner was defined by the American Council on International Intercul-

tural Education as one who is “able to understand the interconnectedness of peoples and systems, to have a general knowledge of history and world events, to accept and cope with the existence of different cultural values and attitudes and, indeed, to celebrate the richness and benefits of this diversity” (as cited in [Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006](#), p. 274). The globally competent teacher is defined by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) as one who develops global competence in themselves while instilling it in students ([n.d.-a](#)). This association for K-12 educators provided a continuum to use as a self-reflective tool for guiding and assessing such teaching. The continuum helps locate a teacher’s own global competency within a range. For example, the Knowledge articulated as “Understanding of the ways that the world is interconnected” ranges from the nascent level as “I have not yet considered the interconnectedness of the world,” to the advanced level of “I can critically analyze ways that global interconnectedness contributes to inequities within and between nations. I can explain how actions I take at the local, national, or international level address inequities related to our interconnected world” ([n.d.-b](#), Teacher Knowledge #4). This tool can be easily adapted to LIS and to higher education. For example, a Disposition (or attitude) of “Commitment to promoting equity worldwide” would develop from the nascent level “I have not yet considered local and global inequities” to a proficient level of “I engage in opportunities that address particular issues of local and/or global inequity (e.g., poverty and discrimination as they relate to information). I take responsibility for helping my information students to recognize inequities” (author’s adaptation) (ASCD, [n.d.-b](#), Teacher Disposition #2).

## Conclusion

In this article, I have explored global competency and LIS education within the areas of EDI, international librarianship, and international education, a few among many of the possible locations. Additional external influencers upon LIS include demands for racial and social justice, globalization, internationalization in higher education, and migration. These encourage internationally-minded education. LIS professional education that includes global perspective and international dimension provides additional strategy for educating toward an equitable, diverse, and inclusive profession. Global competency provides additional conceptual framework for meeting the much-needed next generation of EDI work within LIS.

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## Notes

1. On this debate, see [Danso, 2016](#); [Deardorff, 2015](#); [Hunter, White, & Godbey, 2006](#); [Li, 2013](#).
2. See [Todd Honma \(2005\)](#) and others on longstanding and widespread omission or erasure of race in the LIS field.

3. The question Mathiesen explored is whether culturally competent professionals can at the same time be advocates for human rights. Their answer is “yes, but only if LIS professionals recognize certain key principles of how human rights can apply cross-culturally” (Mathiesen, 2016, p. 276).
4. In my personal experience, it also builds global competency in participating teachers.
5. See International Federation of Library Associations [IFLA], BSLISE Working Group, 2018.
6. The ALA language remains in the current document, revised in 2015 and 2019 (American Library Association [ALA], 2019).

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