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# Developing Global Business Capabilities in MBA Students

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## Abstract

The need to develop global business capabilities in MBAs is clear and growing, and faculty must create efficient and effective processes for developing these capabilities. The author offers for consideration an approach that utilizes theory combined with practice to begin developing global business capabilities during a one-semester course. The five global mind-sets (reflective, analytical, worldly, collaborative, and action) offered by Mintzberg provide a useful framework for categorizing the desired learning. He demonstrates that by using a variety of complementary approaches, including case analyses in multicultural teams, local and foreign business-opportunity analyses, a business-venture proposal that bridges two countries, and a focused study tour, students can make real progress in learning the five mind-sets. Pre–post questionnaires and qualitative data support the conclusion that MBAs who participate in an organized and diverse learning experience can begin to develop global business capabilities in a concentrated period of time.

## Keywords

developing global business capabilities, international business education, global business opportunity analysis, global mindsets

The need to develop global business capabilities in MBA graduates has never been greater, and this need is intensifying, thus, challenging the ability of MBA programs to effectively prepare our students for the business environment into which they graduate. MBA programs must devote serious attention to global business issues if our graduates are to succeed in the complex, 21st century business environment (Egan & Bendick, 2008). Indeed, the rate of change in business complexity brought by globalization, technological change, and advancement in both developed and developing countries is accelerating (Friedman, 2005). To avoid becoming irrelevant, MBA programs must respond by providing experiences that develop global business capabilities (Javidan, Teagarden, & Bowen, 2010; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009). The international business model used by successful companies has moved from domestic to multidomestic to global to multinational and interdependent—what some authors are calling “transnational” (Bartlett & Ghoshal, 2008). This transnational environment demands that our MBAs possess a blend of global skills and capabilities that bridge the wide variety of complex demands they will encounter (Mintzberg, 2004).

Therefore, developing global business capabilities must be an essential part of any MBA program, even though providing the opportunities to learn these capabilities creates a daunting challenge for business schools around the world

(Mintzberg, 2004). We need to focus attention on education processes that can efficiently move students from little knowledge of global business capabilities through various stages of developing these proficiencies (Bennett, 2003; Blood, 2006). For sure, it would be desirable to devote significant amounts of time to this process of development, providing our students chances to learn the capabilities through a variety of international experiences. The truth of the matter, however, is that we cannot ask our students to devote large amounts of time and to travel extensively to develop the needed global business capabilities. What we must create are learning processes that are both effective and efficient for learning these skills. In this article, I will offer for consideration a process that I believe can begin the development of global business capabilities during a one-semester MBA course. The process for learning is a complex gestalt of complementary approaches, including case analyses in multicultural teams, local and foreign business-opportunity analyses, a business-venture proposal that bridges two countries, and a focused study-abroad trip. But, before we delve into the

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course design and evidence that it works, let us set the stage by exploring in more detail the challenge we face in teaching these capabilities.

### Exploring the Challenge of Teaching Global Capabilities

Since the late 1980s, business schools have been encouraged to prepare students for a global business environment (Cant, 2004; L. W. Porter & McKibben, 1988; Tung & Miller, 1990; Voris, 1997). In recent years, the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) has morphed into AACSB "International" and now clearly pushes schools that desire accreditation to prepare their students to work in a global environment (AACSB, 2007). Hence, we have witnessed a growing emphasis on the international elements of a business education, but the challenge of how to effectively and efficiently develop global business capabilities remains. In real-world managerial situations, global issues are an integral part of the functional elements of business. Thus, our challenge becomes how to teach functional topics like accounting, marketing, finance, economics, and information systems, and the less-quantitative topics of teamwork, diversity, communications, ethics, and leadership, while infusing them with a global business understanding. Long ago, Hofstede (1980) made us aware that we must help our students understand how the application of functional and leadership theories may vary when viewed within a global perspective. That need is, for sure, even more true today than it was in 1980. In short, the question is, can MBA programs become more relevant and effective in preparing students for the demands of the 21st century, global business environment (Pimpa, 2009; Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009; Tiratsoo, 2004)?

Indeed, one of the related challenges that MBA programs face is navigating the gap that has developed over time between theory and practice (Spender, 2007). As Spender notes, there are possibly many causes that practice and theory have parted ways, but there is a need to close the gap if MBA students are to become successful managers. The gap between theory and practice creates a tension that is rooted in the need to develop student learning from both theory-based and practical methods (March & Augier, 2007). Theory and rigor are important in the education of MBAs, but so too is relevancy (Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009; Zell, 2005). Closing the gap between theory and practice—that is using both theory and practice to educate MBAs—is an essential part of developing the global business capabilities of our students. Students need to not only understand global business issues from a theoretical perspective but also need to have experiences that help them develop the skills to work effectively in a global business context.

Thus, an essential question that MBA programs (and the courses in them) face is whether it is possible to develop

synergistic pedagogies that allow students to learn needed global business skills using a combination of theory and practice (Patriotta & Starkey, 2008). If student learning is based primarily on theory, then their leadership practices in global work settings may suffer because of application problems, but if their learning is based on too much practice and too little theory, they may wander from one anecdotal story to another looking for ways to deal with the challenges they will encounter in the global business world. Successful managers can definitely benefit by drawing on theory and research-based approaches to managerial practice, but they must also be capable of utilizing intuition, common sense, and practical experience to inform their decision making (Grant, 2008). As Mintzberg (2004) argues, management education needs to blend craft (experience) with art (insight) and science (analysis). The framework of experiential learning offered by Kolb, Rubin, and Osland (1991) is a well-known model for integrating theory with practice, and it has the potential to make global business theories come alive for students and to challenge and alter the biases and stereotypes that students bring into the learning situation.

Let us briefly look at some of the ways MBA programs address the challenge of teaching global business capabilities, and then we will explore a pedagogical method that, I believe, has the potential to be of value in MBA programs for efficiently teaching these capabilities. Some MBA programs have addressed the development of global business skills by providing only one or two courses and a cursory treatment of the challenge of conducting business in the global marketplace. Some programs integrate international cases into the functional courses and add an overview course on international business. A growing number of programs include some form of a study-abroad tour in an attempt to teach the capabilities needed in the global marketplace through real-world experiences (Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2004; Porth, 1997).

Alternatively, a limited number of schools have created innovative programs designed to address the functional, non-quantitative, and global capabilities in the holistic fashion that some authors have suggested is needed (Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009; White & Griffith, 1998). One such program has been developed by a consortium of schools in Canada, England, France, India, Japan, and Korea. It is called the International Masters in Practicing Management—IMPM (Mintzberg & Gosling, 2002). The program is demanding in terms of time and travel commitments and is designed for students who already have managerial experience. It follows an extensive, multiphase design that runs in five on-site modules of 2 weeks, each spread over 16 months and five countries, with assignments between each of the modules. The IMPM program addresses five global mind-sets proposed by Mintzberg and Gosling in a building block fashion as follows: (a) reflection, (b) analysis, (c) worldliness, (d) collaboration, and (e) action (Mintzberg, 2004; Mintzberg &

Gosling, 2002). Essentially, the program is sandwiched between teaching the reflective and action mind-sets because, according to Mintzberg, effective managers must function at the interface between reflective thinking and practical doing (Mintzberg, 2004, p. 283). The other three mind-sets focus attention on what must be done (analysis), in what context it is done (worldliness), and how it gets done with others (collaboration). The methodology of learning incorporates a wide variety of approaches, including reflective sessions, content sessions, case studies, company visits, competency sharing, and field studies.

The first 2-week module in the IMPM program is spent at Lancaster University in England focusing on the *reflective mind-set*. It is a time for intense reflection and self-introspection for the students. In the second 2-week module, the students are at McGill University in Canada where the focus is on the *analytical mind-set*. The students learn the capabilities of analysis as applied to business decisions. The third 2-week module is spent at the Indian Institute of Management in India, and the focus is on the *worldly mind-set*. This module is an immersion course in a developing country that is as different as can be from the Western world in terms of culture and business practices. The fourth 2-week module is spent in Japan and Korea and is sponsored by a number of local universities and institutes. In this module, students learn about the *collaborative mind-set* that is so prevalent in work settings in Japan and Korea, and so important in today's global business ventures. The final 2-week module is spent at INSEAD in France, and the focus is on the *action mind-set*. The focus is on change and on experiencing it firsthand. Overall, this program is a well-designed and comprehensive learning experience. As Barnett (2005) comments, the IMPM program "is a great way to further develop experienced managers" (p. 223), but it requires an extensive time commitment. Of course, one could argue that the program focuses too much on large, multinational companies from developed countries and too little on small and medium companies from developing countries (Medeni & Umemoto, 2008). One could also argue that more time than five 2-week experiences is needed to develop global business capabilities, and certainly more time would allow for more depth of development (Bennett, 2003).

However, the issue for most MBA faculties is that extensive amounts of time for developing the global capabilities are not available. Most MBA students do not have the luxury of participating in long, comprehensive, multinational program designs, even though *all* students need to develop global business capabilities to be successful. Thus, the challenge for MBA programs shifts from developing global capabilities in expansive, time-abundant international program designs to finding ways to provide a profound impact in a short period of time.

In this article, I focus on a course design that I believe can facilitate the development of global business capabilities in a

single one-semester course. In the course, I have chosen to use the five mind-sets proposed by Mintzberg (2004) as the capabilities for students to learn. In the next section, I will clarify the desired learning for the MBA students by further defining the five global mind-sets. Following that, I will explain the coordinated set of experiences combining theory and practice, and including a short study-abroad experience that comprises the course design, which promotes the development of these mind-sets in one semester. Then, I will provide both quantitative and qualitative data to assess whether learning of the five global mind-sets occurs with this course design. Finally, I will conclude with some thoughts that summarize what I have learned and how others may be able to create their own global learning experiences for MBAs.

## Defining the Five Global Mind-Sets

Although no theory of global business capabilities would be perfect, Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) have offered a useful framework (the five global mind-sets) for beginning the conversation about what MBA students need to learn to function in the global business environment. Their framework can provide a theoretical base on which practice can be used to enhance learning. For certain, much has been written about their approach—some critical and some favorable—(see Chia, 2005; Donaldson, 2005; Medeni & Umemoto, 2008; Pfeffer, 2005a, 2005b) but on balance, my conclusion is that the five mind-sets offer a useful framework for helping students understand at least some of the global business capabilities they need to develop. Though there is a Western bias in the model, there would be a bias in any alternative model that could be suggested; the point is to help our students respect the bias and then move forward from that point. Hence, I believe that, as professors, we can use this model to provide a meaningful way to help students explore what they need to learn to succeed in a global business context. Allow me to explain each of the five global mind-sets in more detail, drawing from the book by Mintzberg about the IMPM program that he and his colleagues created to develop the five mind-sets (Mintzberg, 2004). Table 1 provides a summary of the five mind-sets, the IMPM methods for their development, and anticipated outcomes. The material below expounds on the five mind-sets to provide a clear understanding of each one.

### The Reflective Mind-Set

As shown in Table 1, the reflective mind-set focuses the students on gaining an understanding of themselves from the perspective of their own world and life experiences. The focus is on how they think, act, manage, respond to stress, and how they have been shaped by their cultures. Students learn to appreciate the context of their lives and how that

**Table 1.** The Five Mind-Sets Defined by Mintzberg (2004)

Mind-set	Focus of mind-set	Methods used in IMPM <sup>a</sup> program	Outcomes
Reflective	Gaining an understanding of self in one's own context	Slow things down to help the students take time to think about how their life experiences have shaped them	Seeing self from a new perspective—this can be a life-changing experience
Analytical	Learning to analyze situations in a gestalt of functional disciplines	Engage in field studies and case studies to help students utilize functional theories in a manner that fuses them together	Learning to use a blend of analytic, artistic, and craft elements for managing and decision making
Worldly	Learning to understand different cultures and contexts from one's own	Live for a time in another national culture to encounter and appreciate cultural differences	Seeing that people around the world view things differently—no one is right, just different
Collaborative	Learning to manage a diverse set of people to accomplish complex tasks effectively	Engage in teamwork activities where there is no designated leader and learn from the study of cultures that are collaborative in nature	Learning to use the power of synergy that is built on appreciating and utilizing diversity of all types
Action	Developing the ability to manage change and develop action plans	Analyze students' change experiences and field studies of actual change initiatives	Learning some skills for managing change, which is an essential part of managing in the global environment

Note: IMPM = International Masters in Practicing Management.

<sup>a</sup>IMPM is a program developed by Mintzberg and his colleagues (see Mintzberg, 2004).

context has shaped them to interpret situations and diverse people they may encounter in the workplace. They get acquainted with themselves in a more in-depth way than is normal in the frenetic life in which managers and students typically find themselves. For many MBAs, this reflection can be life changing as they meet and understand themselves for the first time. The argument is that for managers to succeed in a global world, they need to understand their internal self so they can better relate to others, and other authors have supported this idea as related to executive education programs (De Déa Roglio & Light, 2009). Furthermore, managers must develop the ability to examine new life experiences that will unfold in the future and will help them to become more discerning of new and diverse people they will encounter in their world of work.

### *The Analytical Mind-Set*

As shown in Table 1, the analytical mind-set focuses on ensuring that students understand how to analyze situations using a gestalt of functional disciplines. Students in MBA programs learn many analytical capabilities to accompany each functional discipline. The challenge is for them to learn not only analysis and decomposition, but also synthesis and critical, holistic business-decision capabilities (Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009). Hence, the analytical mind-set focuses on developing the capabilities of problem definition, solution analysis, and decision for action, all within the context of an integrated world of functional business disciplines used to analyze global business situations and make critical business decisions. The students learn to use, in a fused manner, the

analytical frames from functional business theories to analyze the operation of real businesses. Field studies and cases are used to provide empirical opportunities to apply conceptual models for analysis (Bower, 2008). In addition, the case studies are cross-national in focus, thus, helping to infuse the application of functional discipline methodologies with an appreciation for global issues.

### *The Worldly Mind-Set*

Table 1 explains that the worldly mind-set focuses on students gaining an understanding and appreciation of different cultures. The issue is not to evaluate other cultures, but to learn to accept and value the differences. To develop this mind-set and the understanding that goes with it, participants are placed in a situation where they can live for a duration in a context that is different for them. In experiencing the world of others, including their habits and cultures, the students are taken past simple abstractions of cultural differences and led to encounter those differences in the streets, markets, restaurants, and businesses of another country. Students are provided models for understanding their own and different cultures, and by utilizing those models in real-world situations, they begin to learn how to manage diverse peoples from a wide variety of cultures (see Egan & Bendick, 2008; Walumba, Lawler, & Avolio, 2007). The mind-set also means developing the ability to be less judgmental and more appreciative of the benefits of cultural differences in the workplace. I often tell my students, "It is neither right nor wrong what people do in one country or another; it is just different." This mind-set allows managers to reflect and act within a context that informs

actions that have a better chance of success and allows reflection to take on a broader basis. The worldly mind-set helps students look outward from themselves to better see inward into themselves (Mintzberg, 2004).

### *The Collaborative Mind-Set*

As Table 1 shows, the collaborative mind-set focuses on developing the ability to manage a diverse, multicultural set of people in the effective completion of a complex project. The students are exposed to the idea that managing is less about controlling others and more about helping people collaborate—a strong bias among Japanese managers. We must acknowledge that this idea of collaboration can be hard for managers in some cultures to understand. For example, U.S. managers tend to see management more as leading others and less in terms of developing and facilitating teamwork, mentoring, and apprenticing. It needs to be our goal as professors to help students guard against this U.S. bias and instead to learn the power of collaboration as practiced in some, though not all cultures. Developing this mind-set helps managers learn to work effectively with a diverse mix of individuals, with varied groups of people, and across organizational boundaries. As some have argued, the ability to take a diverse set of people and create synergy of effort is becoming an increasingly important capability for today's managers (Humes & Reilly, 2008). Collaboration allows managers to capitalize, for example, on the diversity of a team, using all the different opinions, ideas, and experience to build a team effort that is far greater than the sum of its parts, and it is this collaboration capability that allows a manager to accomplish positive outcomes across cultural, organizational, and distance boundaries.

### *The Action Mind-Set*

Finally, Table 1 explains that the action mind-set focuses on developing the ability to manage change and develop action plans. The premise of this module is that the world needs managers who can lead and manage change—organizational and strategic change, innovation through projects and new ventures, and personal change. Effective managers must learn that change is a part of managing, for without action that leads to change an organization will atrophy into dysfunction and eventual failure as the complex, dynamic, and global world passes it by. This action capability helps managers learn how to manage organizational initiatives and their impact on people in the organization. It also helps them know, how to manage systems that must be modified to support both organizational and personal change. Finally, it helps them understand how to analyze the need for change in an organization and then to develop action plans for achieving desired business results (Mintzberg, 2004).

## **Guidelines for Developing the Five Global Mind-Sets**

As stated earlier, the five global mind-sets offer a useful framework for “what” MBA students need to learn to succeed in global business, but knowing what the mind-sets are and developing them in students are two very different things. Although an extensive and time-demanding program like the IMPM program may do a reasonably good job of developing these global mind-sets in students, we must ask whether they can be developed in the context of a course and in a shorter time frame. To address this question, it is important to be clear about a “process” for learning the mind-sets. Based on a study of 21 top U.S. graduate business programs and interviews with a number of internationally recognized experts, White and Griffith (1998) concluded that international business education must include certain process elements to successfully teach global business capabilities. They offer three guidelines for the creation of successful processes for developing global business skills that are clearly consistent with the approach utilized in the IMPM program, which can be used to guide the development of alternative learning processes:

1. Educational training must include real-world management issues,
2. Students must learn from experience to understand different cultural perspectives, and
3. International business learning must be relevant to the operations of business today.

The first guideline suggests that students need to have the opportunity to work with theoretical and conceptual issues in the context of real-world business problems. They must learn to be astute in using the technological tools that are so rapidly changing and will continue to change and impact the global business environment. International work experience is the best way for students to engage real-world global business issues because it provides the experiential element that is so vital to effective learning (Kolb et al., 1991; Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2004). International internships are also an excellent tool to employ, and short study tours can be used effectively when time is an issue, as it is in most MBA programs (Porth, 1997).

The second guideline suggests that students must move beyond their inherent biases and develop capabilities for understanding, accepting, and managing in different cultures (Bennett, 2003; Grant, 2008). They must learn to apply business models in cultures outside their own, learn how to work in varying cultures, and learn to use critical thinking and creative capabilities to go beyond mere analysis (Mintzberg, 2004; Richards, 1997). Learning to work with and live in new cultural settings is essential, and of course, an excellent

way to develop these capabilities is immersion in another culture coupled with language training. Certainly, it can also be beneficial to create a diverse learning community by attracting a variety of international students and faculty to participate in the MBA program (White & Griffith, 1998). In addition, study tours can augment cultural learning within a short period of time if students are well prepared to engage in the cultural experience that awaits them (Javidan et al., 2010; Porth, 1997).

The third guideline suggests that students must learn to understand the links between government and business in various contexts and be aware of the impact of international environments on all aspects of a business. MBA programs should integrate into the educational plan the development of functional business capabilities and issues and models of political science, language/culture, and regional studies (Rubin & Dierdorff, 2009; Tchaïcha & Davis, 2005). Without a cross-functional focus informed by global and cultural issues, students will not be successful managers of the future. Social, political, government, philosophical, and development issues need to be appreciated in a grand gestalt if students are to deal with the issues they will face as managers in the 21st century, and international exposure in other countries can help students gain a basic level of understanding of these issues.

### **A Process for Developing the Five Global Mind-Sets**

A number of years ago, I began working to develop a course based on the White and Griffith (1998) process guidelines, whereby our students could learn to understand and utilize the five global mind-sets without the extensive time commitment in the Mintzberg (2004) program. My premise was that the five mind-sets could be developed to a degree during a one-semester course, if the course integrated a number of theoretical and practical learning elements that would work together to create a powerful experiential learning opportunity (Knowles, 1990; Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2004). I worked to create a high-impact set of learning experiences that occur over a semester and that capitalize on four interconnected elements that support experiential, adult learning: (a) abstract conceptualization and theory, (b) active experimentation with ideas, (c) concrete, real-world experience, and (d) reflective observation (Kolb et al., 1991). It is clear that these four elements are readily apparent in the IMPM program developed by Mintzberg and his colleagues (Mintzberg, 2004, Figure 10.1, p. 278). The structure of that program is designed in a way that incorporates theory, experimentation, experience, and reflection.

The result of my efforts was an International Business Strategy course that is designed to create a gestalt of numerous learning opportunities that integrate theory and application related to the global mind-sets. Over the semester,

students are taken through a process built on the principles of Kolb et al. (1991), the guidelines of White and Griffith (1998), and learning opportunities that are similar to the ones in the IMPM program (Mintzberg, 2004). This highly integrative and focused set of learning experiences helps students move through the stages of developing cultural sensitivity outlined by Bennett (2003)—denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration and ultimately leads to meaningful development of the five global mind-sets of Mintzberg and Gosling (2002) explained earlier. In short, the course utilizes a wide variety of elements that blend theory and practice and that when taken together result in the desired learning. Below, I will describe in detail the design of the course and explain how it relates to the guiding principles referenced above. At the end of this section, I have used Table 2 to summarize the methods that are used to enhance learning for each of the five global mind-sets.

First, the course includes a number of cross-national business cases featuring companies from various countries around the world and taken from the textbook by Bartlett and Ghoshal (2008). The students analyze the cases individually and then discuss them in teams and engage in an overall class discussion, thus, engaging in the safe, first step in developing global skills—dealing with the *denial* and *defense* stages of developing intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 2003). Also, as we know, cases provide a rich, empirical method for developing concepts of managerial practice (Bower, 2008; Kolb et al., 1991). In addition, as students prepare, listen to team members, and problem solve the cases, they begin to learn powerful lessons about working with diversity and succeeding with teamwork. Second, my students also have the opportunity and expectation to spend several hours each week studying a foreign language using the Rosetta Stone online program (Rosetta Stone, 2009). Third, there is a highly focused study-tour component embedded in the course that is related to Part 2 of the analysis project described below, and for which there is a great deal of pretravel preparation and posttravel debriefing. Indeed, the first two elements described above are designed to prepare students to get involved quickly when they arrive in the other country, so that the students who are traveling have a base of preparedness and cultural readiness to learn from the short experience abroad (Javidan et al., 2010). The course is a powerful gestalt of a variety of means for developing the global mind-sets that relies on both theory and practice (Grant, 2008). At the heart of this synergistic learning experience is the three-part analysis project that intertwines theory and practice and involves the students in a multicountry, real-world analysis and creative exercise. Indeed, I believe that this three-part project and the related study-abroad experience are significant keys to the powerful, synergistic process that develops global business capabilities in my students in one semester. Allow me to explain how the project works.

In Part 1 of the project, students work together in teams to conduct a global business-opportunity analysis of the local U.S. market (the home market). They report on the history of the industries, current market conditions, key competitors in the industries, and industry strengths and weaknesses, and they analyze the industries using a theoretical model to guide their analysis (Kolb et al., 1991)—the Porter's diamond model (M. E. Porter, 1990). Although Porter's model has been criticized as promising more than it delivers (Davies & Ellis, 2000), it has also been found empirically to be useful for analysis across nations and in developing nations (Öz, 2002; Sledge, 2005). Hence, I have chosen to provide this theoretical framework for students to use in their analysis of industries in the U.S. market and later in another country. The four key aspects of Porter's model include the following: (a) *Factor conditions* that collectively give the region a competitive advantage in providing a product or service, (b) *Demand characteristics* from local customers that push the organizations to innovate, (c) *Related and supporting industries* that provide a critical mass of strength that provides advantages over other regions, and (d) *Firm strategy and structure* that define local competitive and strategic forces that hone the capabilities of the local industry for the global environment. From their analysis using this practice-based theory (Bower, 2008), the students determine which industries in the home market have international potential and the team prepares both written and oral presentations of their analysis.

In Part 2 of the project, the teams add to their local opportunity analysis by conducting a global business-opportunity analysis of a market outside the United States. This second part of the project deepens student understanding of Porter's model as they are now using it for a second time—this time to analyze industries in the foreign market. This part of the project also introduces the need to conduct a comparative cultural analysis of the United States and the other country. As the student teams compare and contrast the home culture with the culture of their chosen foreign country, they begin to learn how to understand different cultural perspectives (White & Griffith, 1998). Unfortunately, learning about a culture is a messy process that is best when guided by particular elements and/or a theoretical model (Phillips & Boyacigiller, 2003). Using theoretical models like the one developed by Hofstede (1997, 2001), the student teams analyze cultural differences and similarities between the United States and the other chosen country, as they move into the *minimization* stage of the development process of cultural sensitivity (Bennett, 2003). Hofstede (2001) reminds us that no one set of dimensions can represent all the students and managers need to know about culture, and it is highly unlikely that all members of a nation will share the same cultural attributes and that their values and behaviors are solely determined by their cultural background (Boyacigiller, Kleinberg, Phillips, & Sackmann, 2004; Williamson, 2002).

That said, the Hofstede model does provide a sound, theoretical starting point for students to begin understanding the differences and similarities between people from different countries and regions (Peterson, 2003). The key point for students is not the culture of a nation, but rather knowing the cultural elements that can help them understand people from different parts of the world. The elements of Hofstede's model that I encourage my students to use as their starting point are as follows: (a) *Individualism*—the degree to which a culture focuses on the individual or collectives of people, (b) *Uncertainty avoidance*—the degree to which a culture strives for clarity of assignments, (c) *Power distance*—the degree to which a culture views the manager as the one who should make decisions, (d) *Masculinity*—the degree to which a culture focuses on achievement rather than nurturing, and (e) *Time orientation*—the degree to which a culture has a long-term or short-term perspective on the timing of events. As in Part 1, the student teams prepare written and oral reports of their findings and analysis of the international business potential of the other country and their analysis of the cultural differences between countries, which may be said to begin moving them into the *acceptance* stage of developing cultural sensitivity (Bennett, 2003).

The preparation of this second part of the report has another important aspect to it. By working on the analysis of an industry in the other country and performing a cultural analysis comparing the United States to the other country, the students are preparing themselves to make the best use of the experiences they will have when they spend time abroad (Kolb et al., 1991; White & Griffith, 1998). Indeed, an important aspect of Part 2 of the project is the chance to visit the other country to collect firsthand data relative to the project during a focused, 10-day global experience that occurs near the middle of the semester course. My course is typically offered during the spring semester, and most of the time we have scheduled the trip during the week of spring break to avoid conflict with other classes the students may be taking, but sometimes this timing does not work out and students must obtain permission from their professors to miss other classes. The design of these trips expands the idea of a study-tour course by utilizing the dual local- and foreign-analysis assignments to make it truly substantive in terms of theory, business application, and real-world experience (Sarathy, 1990; Porth, 1997).

Although the advent of social-networking technologies may make it possible to create interaction opportunities for students from different countries, there is nothing quite like the power of being there and experiencing another culture with all five senses. During the trip abroad, my students attend lectures offered by professors at a local university and learn about such topics as economics of the country, cultural dimensions of the people, political aspects of the country, and business practices in the country. They have the chance to interact with students from the local university, and the

local university arranges visits to business development agencies and both U.S. and local businesses. These opportunities quickly immerse the students in the other culture and allow them to become quite involved in cultural elements of the other country in a very short period of time. This experience in another country also pushes my students to depend on each other as they often are not fluent in the language of the country and because some are more-experienced travelers than others. The students always seem to develop a strong bond of support for each other, and together they develop key insights into business models and practices in the foreign country, as they are afforded the chance to ask local business people, professors, and students, questions to gain additional insight relative to their foreign-opportunity analysis. This project focus that they have during their study tour creates a powerful motivation to make the most of the in-country experience, as this is the chance to get firsthand information to use in their opportunity and cultural analysis. Furthermore, the industry analysis forces the students to go beyond cultural analysis and to include economic, political, legal, and historical elements in their analysis.

In Part 3 of the project, the student teams must use what they have learned in analyzing the home market and the foreign market to develop a proposal for a business venture that links the two countries. This part of the project shifts the focus from data collection and analysis about the two countries to creative conceptualization of a viable business idea. Here, they are called on to be more conceptual and creative as they use capabilities of logic and synthesis to create a plan for a business venture that links the home and foreign markets (Kolb et al., 1991; White & Griffith, 1998). The student teams prepare written and oral reports that summarize their findings from Parts 1 and 2, but the main emphasis of this final report is on their creation and justification of a new global business venture.

The dual focus of analyzing both home and foreign markets, proposing a business venture that links two countries, coupled with case analyses and language study makes this three-part project a powerful enhancement for developing the five mind-sets (Paul & Mukhopadhyay, 2004). The gestalt of experiences in the course builds actionable knowledge through the focus on real practitioner issues and the utilization of real-world experiences (Blood, 2006; Kolb et al., 1991; White & Griffith, 1998). Indeed, working in the multicultural teams that we have at our university affords the opportunity to develop the capabilities of using diversity in a collaborative manner (Egan & Bendick, 2008; Schoell, 1991). For more details on the project aspects of the course, see my article in *Journal of College Teaching & Learning* (Randolph, 2008).

Below, in Table 2, at the risk of oversimplifying a description of the process described above, I provide a summary of the methods used in my course to develop the five global

mind-sets. The first three columns name each of the global mind-sets and explain the focus of the mind-set and the methods used to develop the mind-set. It is important to note that I believe that in the end, all the methods work together in a complex, holistic fashion to create the desired learning. Table 2 also shows in the fourth column, the qualitative indicators of learning that are described in the following section, where I also provide some quantitative indicators of learning of the five global mind-sets. It is to this focus on indicators of learning that I will now turn.

### Evidence of Development of the Five Global Mind-Sets

To date, my experience suggests that students can develop the five global mind-sets when provided a complementary set of learning opportunities that are theory based, diverse, and applied in scope. Furthermore, because of the opportunity to travel to another country, our International Business Strategy course has proven to be a powerful learning experience for students, many of whom had never or only seldom traveled abroad. During the trip, students are faced with encountering and functioning in a cultural setting that is new to them and that allows them to alter preconceived ideas and substitute new ideas based on experience—a very powerful learning method for enhancing development of the global mind-sets (Bennett, 2003). As one student who went to Germany explained, “The trip to Berlin was an eye-opening experience. Having never traveled to Europe, it was overwhelming at first, but the students, professors, and company representatives made me feel welcome.” Another student commented, “The trip to Peru opened my mind to new ideas about just how different yet how similar we all really are in the world. My experiences and memories are priceless and lifelong.” But what specific evidence can we provide that the five global mind-sets (reflective, analytical, worldly, collaborative, and action) are developed in my students?

One form of evidence comes from a self-report questionnaire that I developed and that includes two statements for each of the five global Mintzberg mind-sets and uses a 5-point scale from “*strongly disagree*” to “*strongly agree*” (see the first column in Table 3). The statements are written as though the person has the capability implied by the mind-set so that the results can be used as a pre-post gauge of development of the five mind-sets. Although not developed with empirical research as the goal, the questionnaire was tested for face validity by asking colleagues to read the statements and indicate which of the five mind-sets was reflected in each statement. These face-validation results were quite satisfactory, so I have used the questionnaire to conduct an exploratory pre- (beginning of the course) and postcomparison (at the end of the course) of student perceptions of their development relative to the five global mind-sets. It is

**Table 2.** Summary of a One-Semester Process for Developing the Five Mind-Sets

Mind-set	Focus of mind-set	Methods used	Qualitative indicators of learning
Reflective	Gaining an understanding of self in one's own context	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze cultural issues in cross-national cases</li> <li>Analyze possible problems and synergies due to cultural differences in home versus foreign markets</li> <li>Experience cultural differences during study tour and in multicultural teams in the course</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In reflection papers, students note the importance of understanding cultural differences and what they have learned</li> <li>In reflection papers, students report feeling their eyes have been opened into themselves</li> <li>Student's comments during the course and study tour focus on the value of learning to work with diverse cultures</li> <li>Student's comments and actions during the study tour demonstrate how they learn to adapt to another culture, thus, learning about themselves</li> </ol>
Analytical	Learning to analyze situations in a gestalt of functional disciplines	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analyze cross-national cases using functional knowledge</li> <li>Prepare opportunity analysis of home market using Porter diamond model</li> <li>Prepare opportunity analysis of foreign market using Porter diamond model</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grading rubric shows that students gradually improve in their ability to apply functional models to cross-national cases</li> <li>Grading rubric shows that the quality of application of the Porter diamond increases from the home-country analysis to the foreign-country analysis</li> <li>In reflection paper, students comment on having developed an ability to go into more depth in analyzing industries by using the Porter model</li> </ol>
Worldly	Learning to understand different cultures and contexts from one's own	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study a foreign language using Rosetta Stone online program</li> <li>Analyze cultural differences in home and foreign markets using Hofstede model</li> <li>Work on foreign-market opportunity-analysis project during a short study tour</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Grading rubric for other country opportunity analysis shows that students can discuss potential problems and synergies resulting from cultural differences between the home country and another country</li> <li>In foreign-country reports, students offer cautions for working in cross-national settings</li> <li>Comments heard during and after the study-tour experience support that students have learned to observe and be sensitive to cultural differences</li> <li>In reflection paper, students mention their learning from working in multicultural teams</li> <li>Comments heard during the study tour indicate that students have learned the importance of being open-minded and working hard to communicate with diverse people</li> </ol>
Collaborative	Learning to manage a diverse set of people to accomplish complex tasks effectively	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work in teams on cross-national cases in diverse teams</li> <li>Work in teams on home- and foreign-market opportunity analyses</li> <li>Work in teams with students from the school in the other country during the study tour</li> <li>Work in teams on two-country business-venture proposal</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Structured observations during case analyses suggest that students are learning to work together as a team</li> <li>Structured observations during the study tour support that the students can work effectively in newly formed multicultural teams</li> <li>Student's comments and observations during in-class reports on opportunity analyses and business-venture proposal demonstrate a steady progression in learning to work together in a team</li> </ol>
Action	Developing the ability to manage change and develop action plans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop proposed solutions in cross-national cases</li> <li>Develop an understanding of the foreign market from experiences during the study tour</li> <li>Develop a business-venture proposal between home and foreign markets</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reports and discussion of cross-national cases demonstrate that students' ability to offer useful solutions increases during the course</li> <li>Grading rubric for business-venture proposal shows that students have learned to develop creative and solidly based business proposals</li> <li>In reflection paper, students comment on how much they learn during the study tour from students from another country about industries in the other country and how they can apply this information to their business-venture proposal</li> </ol>

**Table 3.** The Five Mind-Sets Questionnaire and Pre–Post Results From One Course

Statement	Pre M	Post M	t-value
1. I can explain how the context of my life has shaped the way I think and interpret situations and diverse peoples in today's complex, dynamic, and global business world.	4.3	4.6	2.1*
2. I can reflect on and examine my life experiences as they unfold and thus become more and more discerning of people and situations that I will encounter as a manager.	4.0	4.6	4.5*
3. I can apply capabilities and concepts from marketing, finance, accounting, and information technology to multinational business situations.	3.4	4.4	7.9*
4. I can apply the functional disciplines of business education as an integrated framework for analyzing global business situations and making critical business decisions.	3.0	4.5	6.0*
5. I can compare and contrast the ways in which people are different across a variety of countries and cultures.	4.2	4.9	4.9*
6. I consider myself a worldly-wise person, which means that I could manage a diverse set of people from a wide variety of cultures and countries.	3.4	4.5	6.4*
7. I know how to create the conditions in which a diverse set of people can collaborate to complete a complex project on time, within budget, and with high quality.	3.1	4.2	6.4*
8. I can manage the diverse mix of people that make up a multicultural team so that synergy of effort achieves more than people might have thought possible.	3.4	4.5	6.6*
9. I can analyze ongoing dynamics in personal, group, and organizational change processes, and I can use that analysis to manage opportunities in a multinational company.	3.2	4.4	7.1*
10. I can analyze the need for change in a multinational company and then develop an action plan that will be successful in achieving desired business results.	3.0	4.3	9.4*

Note: This questionnaire is designed to assess your knowledge of the five mind-sets that form a conceptual framework for our course. For the following 10 questions, please use the scale below to respond to each statement: 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*. Questions 1 and 2 relate to the *reflective* mind-set; Questions 3 and 4 relate to the *analytical* mind-set; Questions 5 and 6 relate to the *worldly* mind-set; Questions 7 and 8 relate to the *collaborative* mind-set; and Questions 9 and 10 relate to the *action* mind-set.

\* $p < .05$ .

important to note that the five mind-sets are mentioned only briefly in one of the early class meetings, yet the results of the pre–post comparisons assessed in three offerings of the course consistently support the conclusion that significant learning of the five global mind-sets has occurred. Results from a recent course, that are typical, are shown in the last three columns of Table 3. All of the questions indicate that students perceive significant learning in terms of the five global mind-sets.

To provide further credence to the assertion based on self-report data, the same questionnaire was utilized pre- and postcourse in another MBA class with little international business focus. Although the prescores were quite similar for the two classes, the pre–post analysis in this case indicated no change in the responses, as would be predicted. The conclusion is that my focused international business course with cases, language development, the three-part analysis project, and the short study-abroad experience does lead to learning of the five global mind-sets—at least as perceived by the students engaged in the learning process. However, this is just one form of evidence I can offer. A complementary form of evidence can be offered by drawing on various types of qualitative information to lend additional support to the assertion that development of the five global mind-sets can occur during a one-semester course. In the following sections of the article, I will detail this qualitative information, including a

number of comments by the students about the types and degree of learning they experienced with regard to the five global mind-sets. The student comments included are typical of the many that I have heard and noted that attest to their learning of the global mind-sets.

### *Evidence for the Reflective Mind-Set*

Results from the pre–post mind-sets questionnaire consistently support the conclusion that students in the course do develop the reflective mind-set (see Table 3, Questions 1 and 2). But to gain further insight into this development, the students are each required to submit at the end of the semester a one to two page paper reflecting on what they have learned in the course, especially as related to their ability to understand people and situations in ways that will help them work effectively in a global context. In short, this paper can be used to assess their reflective mind-set capabilities as they relate to being a manager in the global business world. One of the most common conclusions in these papers is that cultural differences are critical to appreciate. Many students comment on the need to be careful of how our U.S. culture of “get it done now” can be off-putting to many people around the world; they conclude that we need to slow down a little and appreciate this difference, not try to change it. Another example came from a Brazilian student’s observation about

her trip to Germany. She noted that Germans tend to work and live by the rules, compared with the way U.S. citizens tend to bend the rules—and she concluded that both people can learn from these differences. Over and over again, the students commented on how the exposure to a different culture during the study tour had opened their eyes to a new level of reflective learning. They learned some things about other cultures, but in the process they learned things about themselves. For example, one student noted, “I have learned to increase my patience, use dialogue, and listening before reacting—all things I have not been good at in the past.”

A related reflective learning relates to working with diversity. One student commented, “In this global economy, diversity is not an advantage, rather it is a necessity to compete with other global corporations.” But this observation begs the question of how to use that diversity. Here, over and over again, students comment on the chance to work in diverse teams in class and on the study-tour trip. Almost all of the students commented on how much they have learned about how to benefit from diversity and to work together to turn that diversity into synergy. Indeed, one student went so far as to conclude that without diversity, you cannot have synergy—certainly a profound comment. Hence, reflective learning can be enhanced when students are exposed to people from diverse cultures and backgrounds and are required to take the time to reflect on what they are learning (Mintzberg, 2004). Personally, I believe that travel to other countries and working with people from other countries is one of the best ways to develop these expanded, reflective abilities. Over and over again, student comments and actions during the study-tour component demonstrate that they are learning how to adapt to another culture, and in turn this adaptation helps them learn more about themselves. As one Nigerian student commenting on the course put it, “My perspective on life has been broadened, and I am more confident about my abilities to participate in the global business environment.” Clearly, the quantitative and qualitative evidence support the conclusion that MBA students in my course do develop their reflective mind-set as related to being effective in a global business setting.

### *Evidence for the Analytical Mind-Set*

The early part of the course requires students to individually analyze and then discuss in teams and report out on their analysis of cross-national cases that deal with a variety of functional issues—from marketing to finance to operations. For the first several cases, the grading rubric shows that students do not fully understand how to use their functional knowledge in an interconnected manner that is infused with a global perspective. For example, they will analyze the cases through only a finance lens or only through a marketing lens, and with only a superficial understanding of global

factors. Gradually over the course, this ability to analyze the cases in an integrative manner that is infused with a global perspective clearly increases, as measured through the grading rubric. The later analyses include many more comments that link finance to marketing to human resources and that take into account the interplay of cultural issues of the particular country or countries in the case.

In addition, the first report on the home market requires the student teams to conduct detailed analyses of two industries that they feel have global potential. The second report focuses on a foreign market and requires the student teams to conduct a similar analysis of two industries in the market, which they feel have global potential. Working on these two reports provides an opportunity to develop the analytical mind-set, and results from the pre-post mind-sets questionnaire consistently show significant gains in the responses to the two questions that relate to the analytical mind-set (see Table 3, Questions 3 and 4). Further evidence is provided in the quality of application of the Porter’s diamond model in the first and second reports to analyses of the industries in the two countries. One of the primary course objectives is that students learn how to use this model for analysis of global potential, and a pre-post test of course objectives always shows that the level of knowledge of this model is quite low at the beginning of the course and significantly higher by the end of the course. In applying the rubric for grading of the reports, I find on the first report that student teams can conduct a thorough analysis of facts about the industries, but there are often problems with their Porter’s diamond analysis. For example, on the first report they often interpret demand conditions as quantity based rather than correctly focusing on the quality and character of the demand that exists in the local markets for the products or services of the industries. By the second report, the grading rubric indicates that their analyses are much more accurate in applying the Porter model.

In the final reflections paper focused on what they have learned overall in the course, students often mention that they now better understand how to use this valuable model. For example, one student said, “It is one thing to analyze industries on a surface level. However, to go into more depth using the Porter’s diamond model really helped me gain a better understanding of how to research and analyze global business opportunities.” Hence, both the quantitative and qualitative data suggest that students do develop the analytical mind-set as they work on the first two parts of the opportunity-analysis project.

### *Evidence for the Worldly Mind-Set*

The design of the course offers many opportunities for students to develop their worldly mind-set, and results from the pre-post mind-set questionnaire consistently show significant improvements (see Table 3, Questions 5 and 6). Adding

credence to the development of a worldly mind-set is the cultural analysis that the student teams are required to do in the second opportunity-analysis report that focuses on another country than the home country. In this report, the teams have to analyze the culture of the home country and the culture of the foreign country using the Hofstede framework described earlier and other cultural information to enhance their analysis. Application of the grading rubric for this part of the second report indicates that the students do learn to utilize the Hofstede model to develop an understanding of the home country's culture and the culture of the other country. Furthermore, they must demonstrate an understanding of issues that may arise when people from these two cultures must interact in any type of joint business activity. The grading rubric assesses their ability to identify potential problems and synergies when people from the two cultures must interact. The depth of this understanding is demonstrated to be even greater when the students prepare their final integrated report where they propose a new business venture across the two countries. The quantitative and qualitative evidence is clear that my MBA students learn to analyze cultural differences and demonstrate knowledge of how to work with people from other cultures—a clear indication that they are getting to the *acceptance* stage of developing cultural sensitivity proposed by Bennett (2003).

One example of the comments made by the students in their final integrated reports reflects their learned sensitivity to cultural differences: "Business people from our local market should be very careful when negotiating business possibilities with Dubai, since the cultural differences are quite high. Knowing and tolerating these differences will be keys to successful business relationships." Another example points out the students' better understanding of how to build synergy out of differences as follows: "The synergies that might arise from the differences are that Irish collectivism will foster better cohesion with coworkers. America's higher Power Distance will result in strong leadership, vision, and management." On the surface, it would appear that this diversity between Irish and American managers might easily lead to cultural clash making things more difficult. But, if the American manager uses cultural understanding to shift his or her thinking, the strong leadership can be focused on fostering better cohesion among colleagues. Likewise, the Irish workers might better understand that the American manager is trying to lead them toward improved cohesion. So, although it is not easy when there are significant cultural differences, what I believe is that better cultural understanding can lead to synergy of ideas that is born out of diversity and potential conflict.

But, perhaps the most profound comments come from students based on their travel to another country as part of their work on the other country analysis. For example, students who went to Germany on a recent trip and had the chance to work with students in a German MBA program concluded, "Germans

tend to analyze projects in-depth. Germans must be convinced with logic, data, and consistency; hence, Americans must be well prepared and willing to discuss seemingly insignificant details." Another group reported, "German people are relatively quiet. For example, when riding on the U-Bahn (underground commuter train) they keep to themselves by reading books and newspapers. However, they can be very friendly if approached and asked for help." Such observations support the conclusion that these students have learned important sensitivities to culture and tools for cultural analysis that will serve them well in global settings.

Further evidence of developing a worldly mind-set is provided in the final paper reflecting on learning in the course. Each semester, numerous students mention various aspects of learning about cultures. One element that always draws attention is the fact that our International Business Strategy course typically involves students from a variety of countries. In a recent course of 29 students, we had students from Nigeria, Czech Republic, Thailand, Venezuela, Brazil, Lithuania, Iran, Belgium, Kenya, Morocco, and India, as well as U.S. students. This diversity allows for some very interesting case discussions in class as well as great opportunities for learning when these diverse groups must work together as a team on the analysis reports of the local and foreign countries. For example, one student noted,

We had six members each from a different country. This posed a real challenge for me since people were expressing themselves in different ways. Through extensive discussions, we rose above this challenge and learned to work together toward the best solution for our project.

Another student put it this way,

Our IB class was a class within a class. Since the students were so international, learning to work with them was almost an international course in itself, on top of the projects we had to complete.

Another student insightfully concluded,

I am able to verify that working with people from different backgrounds and experiences brings much better synergy than working only with people from one cultural background. This observation was reinforced both in our class and during our trip abroad, where we encountered a group of students equally as diverse as our own.

Finally, one student commented on how to work effectively with people from other cultures as follows:

I have learned the importance of communication, being open-minded to different people, cultures, and situations,

and essentially the necessity of being able and willing to adapt to those differences. As our professor said many times, even though things are done differently in various cultures, it does not mean that one culture is better or worse than another, it's just different.

I could report many other comments to support the learning of the worldly mind-set, but suffice it to say that students learn from working with a diverse set of classmates on cases and analysis projects, and when they travel to another country, that learning is taken to a higher level of sophistication in the development of the worldly mind-set.

### *Evidence for the Collaborative Mind-Set*

As with the previous mind-sets discussed, the results from the pre-post mind-set questionnaire have consistently shown significant increases in the questions related to the collaborative mind-set (see Table 3, Questions 7 and 8). It is important to note that the statements in the questionnaire specifically relate to collaboration in a diverse, multicultural team that is working on a project with specific demands and a deadline for completion, as is the case for the three-part project in my course. Furthermore, in assessing this mind-set, I have utilized structured observation of the students working in their teams to verify learning of the collaborative mind-set. As mentioned before, our MBA classes tend to be populated by students from a wide variety of countries. Thus, as the students worked together in class on case analyses and on their analysis project, I have been able to use an observation guide that I developed for use in observing the students and recording observations on a number of dimensions of collaboration, including their ability to (a) communicate effectively with each other, (b) resolve conflicts, (c) exercise appropriate leadership in decision making, and (d) solve problems together. The observations that I made in class while the students worked in their teams verified a gradual development of the ability to collaborate effectively. The students learned to discuss differing opinions, listen carefully to each other, develop processes for finding a consensus decision, and ensure that all members were engaged in the process.

But, even more to the point of collaboration in diverse, multicultural teams, I was able to use this structured observation format to assess in-team collaboration during one of the recent study-tour trips to Berlin. During the visit, our MBAs worked with students in the MBA program at the Berlin School of Economics. One of the early activities was to create five teams, mixing my students with the Berlin MBA students to work on the preparation of case analyses. It is important to note that these were newly created teams of five to six students, and the students represented a variety of countries, including African countries, Asian countries, European countries, Latin American countries, and the United States.

During a 3-hr period, these teams discussed and analyzed cases provided by the Berlin professor, and they prepared a presentation to give to the other students in the combined classes. During this process, I used the structured observation form to make notes on the four aspects of team collaboration mentioned above: (a) communication in the team, (b) leadership and decision making, (c) conflict resolution over different ideas, and (d) team problem solving.

The observations across the five teams that were created revealed in my students a learned ability to work well with a new set of people representing a wide variety of cultural backgrounds. Typically, the communication in the teams reflected an appreciation of the need to listen intently and to be respectful of differing opinions. The students demonstrated a clear desire to involve everyone on the team in a give-and-take of opinions and ideas. When someone was quiet for too long, another member would typically ask that person a question, and everyone seemed to demonstrate a real ability to self-monitor so that they did not dominate. As one student put it related to resolving conflicts, "Our group members argued over ideas but we listened with a focus on making a good decision—not just my idea but really ours." Another interesting observation was how everyone stayed focused on the task at hand, and there was a sharing of leadership that is most desirable in diverse teams dealing with complicated issues such as in the cases they analyzed. Equally important was the observation that in most groups, one or more people led the group to focus on a *process* for their work, not just on the *content* of the case. They made sure that there was a clear understanding of what had to be done to complete the analysis, to prepare a report for the entire class, and to get this done in a limited amount of time. The collaboration in these teams was most impressive, especially given the fact that the people from the two classes had never met before.

Finally, I can call attention to the evidence of collaboration provided as the teams work through the three-part project. Much of this work is done outside the class meetings, but there is always some time allowed in class, which provides me the chance to observe the teams in action. During their work on Part 1 of the project—analyzing the home market and preparing a written and oral presentation of their analysis—there are always some indicators that the efforts of team members are a little uneven as they are learning to work together. I usually get more questions and sometimes have to facilitate improving teamwork. By the second opportunity-analysis report on another country, they typically appear to be able to work together more effectively in their analysis and in preparing their presentation. By the third part of the project that focuses on creating a business-venture proposal connecting the two countries, I observe that the teams can collaborate very effectively—they discuss ideas openly, deal with disagreements, and make consensus

decisions about their proposed venture. The totality of the quantitative and qualitative evidence clearly supports a conclusion that my students do learn how to use the collaborative mind-set in a multicultural team with an assigned task and a deadline.

### *Evidence for the Action Mind-Set*

As reported for the other mind-sets, students consistently report significant changes in the action mind-set items on the pre–post mind-sets questionnaire (see Table 3, Questions 9 and 10). The questions relate to managing opportunities and developing actionable plans for global business opportunities. In addition, their analyses of the cross-national cases begin to demonstrate their ability to develop well thought-out solutions to the problems in the cases. Also, the third report for the project requires students to think less analytically and more creatively and conceptually in proposing a new global business venture involving industries in the home country and the other country—a clear test of the development of their action mind-set. As noted earlier, the first two reports are analyses of the home market and a foreign market, respectively, utilizing a Porter's diamond analysis of industries that have potential for global opportunities. The third report asks the students to draw from their analyses of the home and foreign markets to propose a business idea. Although the report must summarize the Porter analyses for the home market and the foreign market as well as the cultural analysis drawn from the second report, the critical and the most important focus of this final report is the focus on proposing and supporting a business-venture idea. Over the years, I have found that this task is often demanding for students who are excellent at using the Internet to find information and report on it, but they often have difficulty in creating actionable plans for business ventures. Hence, it is vital to note that we can provide evidence that the action mind-set is developed in this course.

The grading rubric for the final reports provides this evidence of development of the action mind-set. Student teams are required to spell out their recommendation for a potential business opportunity that links the home country with the other country. They must define potential payoffs, articulate risks, define the business model to be used, and clarify how to leverage strategic capabilities in the two countries. Clearly, this final report calls for different skills than the first two reports, as argued to be essential for global managers (Mintzberg, 2004; White & Griffith, 1998). Typically, the business ideas proposed by my MBA students are creative, solidly based, and well presented, and I believe there is a connection between this result and the chance to learn from experiencing other cultures and business settings.

For example, one final report proposed a very realistic and well thought-out business venture linking the use of fuel cells from Germany with the defense industry of the U.S. market.

The defense industry is constantly looking for lighter, more efficient ways to power equipment, and Germany is the world leader in many green industries, including fuel cells. These students argued convincingly that fuel cells are lighter, more reliable, and more environment friendly compared with the heavy batteries used today in the defense industry, and as such they offer a unique business opportunity for German firms in the United States. Another final report focused on a specific company in Germany that they learned about, during one of the German MBA student presentations coupled with a specific U.S. company. The two companies are quite complementary in the roles they play in solar energy as an alternative to traditional forms of energy. The German company produces photovoltaic cells and is looking to expand internationally, whereas the U.S. company installs these cells but does not produce them. Given the U.S. focus on greener industries and sustainable environments and Germany being a world leader in knowledge and application in these industries, the proposed business venture demonstrates a clear ability to think beyond data and make a viable proposal, thus, demonstrating the development of the action mind-set.

In previous classes, projects have been proposed that also reflect an ability to think conceptually and creatively. Some examples include the development of a "Little Ireland" in the U.S. market, where an area of a city could be developed that would sell Irish food and drinks and draw on the local Irish community and appeal of Irish culture to many U.S. citizens. Another example would be a trans-Atlantic cruise for golfers to Ireland, sponsored by a U.S.-based sports apparel company. This project links the appeal of golf and fun in Ireland with the right attire for golf in a country where rain is a common occurrence. I could go on, but the point is that students demonstrate time and again that they can operate with an action mind-set after completing this course and the three-part project analysis. They can think beyond data and create workable business-venture proposals that link two countries.

From the reflection papers at the end of the course, there are other comments that relate to learning the action mind-set. As one student who went to Peru noted, "I believe that people learn more during trips abroad in just 1 week than they can learn in a class throughout a full semester." Another student who went to Berlin noted,

It is one thing to read about a place and see photographs, but seeing it in person is more intense and meaningful. The importance of Berlin to the economy of Germany and the European Union is evident when you visit there and have the chance to talk with students, professors, and business leaders.

Another student commented on how much she had learned in Berlin listening to the presentations by the Berlin School

of Economics students. She noted, “The Berlin students presented their group projects on local businesses that I was not at all familiar with before the class.” This expansion of knowledge and the chance to hear presentations by students from the European program clearly had an impact on the final reports prepared by my students and helped them develop their action mind-set.

## Conclusion

There is clearly a need to develop global business capabilities in any student who graduates from an MBA program today. Among a variety of global business capabilities, the development of the five global mind-sets of Mintzberg (2004) will be useful in helping MBAs compete in the global marketplace. In this article, I have described a one-semester course that involves MBA students in a concentrated, focused, and eclectic set of experiences that can effectively move MBA students forward in the development of these mind-sets. The course includes a blend of theory and practice that makes for powerful experiential learning (Kolb et al., 1991), and a focused study-tour component midway during the course adds to the power of the learning experiences (Porth, 1997). Taken as a whole, the variety of learning experiences I have described would appear to have value in developing the global mind-set capabilities of our MBAs.

I have provided both quantitative and qualitative evidence that students in an MBA class who participate in my course can begin developing the five global mind-sets (Mintzberg, 2004). Although evidence of learning is always difficult, the self-report data from the pre–post surveys of the students do provide a form of evidence that learning has occurred, especially when the administration of the same surveys in a non-global course showed no change in pre–post responses. When these analyses are complemented by the qualitative data for learning that is drawn from the grading rubrics of the three reports prepared by student teams, the reflective papers written by individual students, typical comments made by students about their experiences, and observations of teams in action both at my university and abroad, the conclusion becomes even clearer. Students can begin to develop the five global mind-sets by participating in a one-semester course that is organized around a diverse set of learning experiences, including a short, focused study tour. Many students made comments that support the conclusion of meaningful learning in the course. As one Turkish student who went to Peru commented, “This course gave me the chance to look at myself and my way of thinking from outside the box.” Another U.S. student who went to Poland noted, “This class was a great opportunity for us to improve our global business capabilities and learn more about the real business world from on-site experiences and analyses.”

I will conclude by offering six thoughts that capture the essence and power of the course that I have used to teach the five global mind-sets. The hope is that these concluding thoughts and the material in this article may inspire and assist others in designing effective and efficient learning processes for developing global business capabilities in MBAs. My six thoughts are as follows:

1. Development of global business capabilities is enhanced by providing a learning process that is a gestalt of both theory and practice in a well-designed, holistic set of experiential learning components—the learning challenge is too complex for simple approaches. By developing a set of experiences that engage students in learning global business capabilities both in the home country and abroad, a powerful mechanism for developing the capabilities is created that leads to noticeable development in a one-semester course. Developing global capabilities is a complex challenge, and therefore, it takes a complex, gestalt of learning experiences, such as the one I have described, to succeed, especially in a short period of time.
2. Students can learn a great deal about themselves and others from the introspection that comes from working with people from other cultures and by working on a focused project in another country (even for a brief period of time). Such experiences create both a lens into people in other cultures and a mirror for self-understanding by requiring students to employ cultural models and reflective techniques to better understand others and themselves. Although it may be possible for students to learn about cultural differences using social-networking tools (Javidan et al., 2010), I believe there is no substitute for being in another country where all five senses can be engaged in the learning experience. Hence, I strongly encourage faculty members to find ways to provide study-abroad experiences for students, even if the time abroad is short, as in the case of the course I have developed. And, although longer is better for study-abroad experiences, to allow more in-depth learning, I have found that meaningful learning of global capabilities can occur with only a 10-day experience, especially if that experience is enhanced by a variety of learning opportunities both prior to and after the trip abroad. Just how short an experience can be remains an open question, but I believe 10 days may be approaching that limit.
3. By working on a three-part opportunity-analysis project, students can develop capabilities for conducting global business analyses that respect and integrate the interdependence of a host of global

business issues that will impact any effort to do business on a global scale. Indeed, analysis of global business opportunities is a complex challenge that requires utilization of a number of analytical tools in a gestalt of analysis models that also infuses a global perspective. One could also argue that the preparation for the study-tour experience and the active focus on their project while abroad helps students engage the new culture more quickly—they can speed up some of the typical early stages of cultural adjustment as they become immersed in a new culture but with a defined task and focus. Indeed, I believe that the three-part project is a powerful learning tool at the heart of the process I have developed for learning the global mind-sets. It provides building blocks for learning and a focus that makes the study-abroad trip much more effective.

4. Students can learn to see their home country from an external perspective and to appreciate how others around the world may see their home country when they must work together in a multicultural environment to create written and oral reports with specific deadlines and requirements. Such a perspective is essential to global business leaders—we may see things differently from others around the world, but we must not fall into the trap of trying to decide which viewpoint is more correct—they are just different. I have learned that working with a host university, where my students can interact with local students and professors helps to avoid them being in a protected bubble while in another country. The exposure to and interaction with local people definitely makes for a dynamic and meaningful cultural experience. During the study-abroad experience, students learn to appreciate and understand how their home country is seen by others. The result is that their eyes are opened as they experience a profound learning opportunity—about themselves and others around the world. For some students, they report that their viewpoint is changed forever after this experience.
5. Students can develop important global “team” capabilities by working on real-world projects involving a diverse and multicultural set of students. They can learn how to collaborate in diverse teams and how to complete their tasks by a specified deadline, even when approaches to tasks vary significantly due to cultural differences. Indeed, they can learn how to use these differences to result in better outcomes for their tasks. They can learn to create synergy of ideas from the diversity of the team members, and this skill can be quite valuable in today’s complicated global business environment.

From the ability to understand and work with diversity comes the real synergy of superior ideas that can result in more innovative and creative solutions to global business challenges. Indeed, as one of my students noted, you cannot have synergy without first having diversity.

6. When called on to analyze opportunities and then develop a business-venture idea, students can learn to effectively use a gestalt of global models for analysis of industries and cultures, and they can develop creative capabilities that go beyond pure analytical abilities. This combination of quantitative and creative skills is essential to the success of managers in a global business context, if opportunities are to be realized. Indeed, I believe that it may be this combination of diverse skills in a complex fashion that will allow our students to truly succeed as transnational managers, and I believe my course design helps students in developing these abilities.

In conclusion, it is clear that managing in the increasingly complex, global 21st century will not be easy for business leaders. Hence, MBA courses and programs must focus on creating processes for developing the global skills our graduates will need to succeed, and the processes must be efficient. In this article, I have described and demonstrated the effectiveness of one example of how to develop during a one-semester course the global mind-sets our students will need as future managers. Although the learning process for being effective in global business settings is never complete, the set of experiences in my course do move students in the direction of development of critical global business capabilities. I believe it is imperative that we continue to create and refine the pedagogies we use to develop the global skills MBAs will need. Perhaps in some small way, the ideas in this article can play a role in addressing this challenge that we as faculty members face in preparing our MBA students.

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