



GLOBAL PARTNERS
IN EDUCATION

ASSESSMENT REPORT

ALL COUNTRIES

Global Understanding Survey Results

Presented at GPE XVIII

May 19-21, 2025
Université de Tours
Tours, France



www.thegpe.org

SPRING 2024 & FALL 2024

III

Overview

This report summarizes the findings from pre- and post-course surveys completed by students in the Global Understanding (GU) and Global BEEHIVE programs during the Spring 2024 and Fall 2024 Semesters. The analysis includes students from GPE member institutions around the world who participated in virtual exchange courses designed to promote global awareness and build intercultural skills. Each year, the survey includes measure of intercultural skills and related concepts, questions about international friendships, and course satisfaction measures.

This year we used the publicly available and validated Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) (Wang, et al., 2003) to assess both empathy and perspective taking. Empathy is typically described as having both a cognitive or intellectual component (which we are categorizing as perspective taking), and an emotional component (which is categorizes as empathy). The SEE scale has two subscales for each aspect.

This year we once again used a retrospective pretest and compared it to the standard pretest-posttest design (see Little et al., 2020). A retrospective pretest is given at the end of the course along with the posttest, and it asks students to think back to the beginning of the course and to answer the questions as they felt back then. Since the retrospective pretest and the posttest are taken at the same time, frame of reference should be the same reducing potential validity concerns.

Results show participation in GU and BEEHIVE courses significantly enhances students' empathy and perspective-taking abilities, especially when students report forming friendships with their partners. Results also show students are generally satisfied with their experience and identify expanding worldview, improving communication skills, and personal growth as key benefits of taking the course.



Student Characteristics

1,343 students took some portion of the survey.

- 570 (42%) only took the Pre
- 270 (20%) only took the Post
- 503 (38%) took both the Pre and Post

Students ranged in age from 16 to 47 with 90% being between the ages of 18 to 26.

64% of program participants were women.

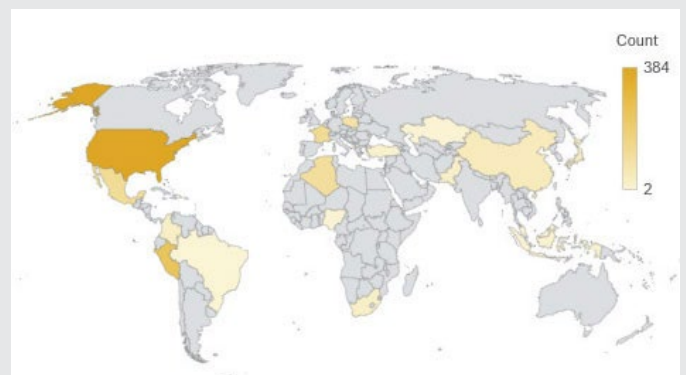


Academic Year

Participating students were distributed across academic years

- 28% first year students
- 16% second year students
- 26% third year students
- 18% fourth year students
- 12% of students were in their fifth year or higher

Students from 34 Universities in 21 Countries Participated in the Survey



Prior Experience

- For 88% of participants this was their first GPE course
- 19% of respondents had previously studied abroad.



Empathy & Perspective Taking

Empathy and Perspective taking are skills regularly identified as important for career readiness in an interconnected world. They are two of the eight skills/characteristics in GPE's ASPIRE TO assessment framework. The Scale of Ethnocultural Empathy (SEE) (Wang, et al., 2003) was used to evaluate the impact of GU and BEEHIVE courses on these two traits. The SEE scale was designed as a self-report instrument that measures both empathy and perspective taking toward people from backgrounds different from one's own. There are four subscales in the SEE scale. Empathic feeling and Expression (EFE) and Acceptance of Cultural Difference (ACD) map to Empathy, while Empathic Perspective Taking (EPT) and Empathic Awareness (EA) map to Perspective Taking.



Overall, students showed significant improvement in SEE scores, particularly using the retrospective pre-post method.

KEY INSIGHTS

- #01** GU and BEEHIVE course participation improves both empathy and perspective taking. Perspective taking gains were particularly robust, indicating students are better able to understand and engage with diverse perspectives after these experiences.
- #02** **Empathy (EFE+ACD)** did not show significant improvement using the traditional pre-post design, but had strong and statistically significant gains when using the retrospective pre-post approach. **Perspective Taking (EPT+EA)** showed significant gains using both the pre-post and retrospective pre-post methods.
- #03** Retrospective comparisons consistently show larger and more statistically robust gains than traditional pre-post measures, potentially suggesting students tend to overestimate their initial empathy and perspective taking capabilities and have a better awareness of their capabilities in these areas only after faced with challenges where using these skills are necessary.

SEE SUBSCALES

- **Empathic feeling and expression (EFE):** Both communicating about discrimination or prejudiced attitudes and emotional responses to the experiences of people from racial or ethnic groups different from your own group
- **Empathic perspective taking (EPT):** Effort to understand the experiences and emotions of people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds by trying to take their point of view
- **Acceptance of cultural differences (ACD):** Understanding, accepting, and valuing cultural traditions and customs of people from backgrounds different than your own
- **Empathic awareness (EA):** Awareness or knowledge about the experiences of people from racial or ethnic groups different from your own group, especially related to experiences of discrimination or unequal treatment

Subscale	Pre-post	Retro pre-post
EFE	Modest gain (p=.0259)	Modest gain (p<.001)
EPT	Strong gain (p<.0001)	Strong gain (p<.0001)
ACD	Small gain (p=.0016)	Large gain (p<.0001)
EA	No difference	Modest gain (p<.0001)
OVERALL SEE	Modest gain (p=.045)	Large gain (p<.0001)

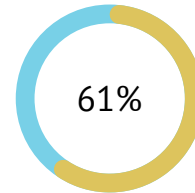


Friendship & Experience

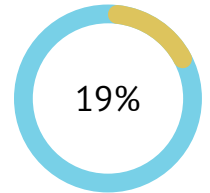


We have long observed across many different measures, that the benefits of GPE programming are stronger when students report they have developed a friendship with at least one of their international partners. Another standard observation is that students with prior international experience start at a higher baseline.

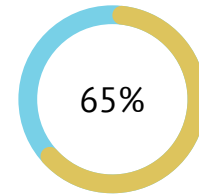
The largest SEE gains were observed among students who began with no international friendships but formed new ones during the program. This pattern held consistently across all subscales.



Prior International Friendships



Previously Studied Abroad



Made a New Friend

Key Insights

#01

Making new friends during the program was the strongest and most consistent predictor of growth in empathy and perspective taking.

#02

Prior international experience in the forms of already having international friends or having studied abroad was linked to higher baseline scores, but did not result in greater gains. Gains were comparable to other students without these experiences.

#03

These findings highlight the importance of fostering and promoting the development of friendship through mechanisms like break-out rooms, interacting on GPE Connect, and encouraging continued communication outside of class time.

Additional Measures

In addition to the SEE Scale, other questions were asked on the post-course survey to assess students' motivations and perceptions regarding cultural learning and intercultural communication. Overall, after participating in GPE programming, students reported being more interested in international experiences, more knowledgeable about other cultures, and more comfortable and capable in international settings.

After participating in this program:

93%

Perspectives

Agreed the program helped them understand different perspectives.

94%

Learning

Agreed they learned a great deal about other countries and cultures.



77%

International News

Reported being more interested in international news.

77%

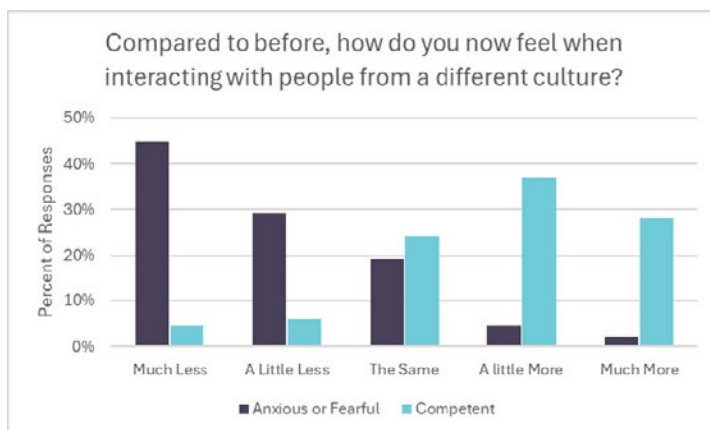
International Travel

Reported being more interested in traveling abroad.

66%

Study Abroad

Reported being more interested in studying abroad.



Intercultural Capability

After participating in GPE programming, students indicated they were both less fearful and felt more competent when interacting with people from different cultures.

SHOULD STUDENTS TAKE A GU COURSE?

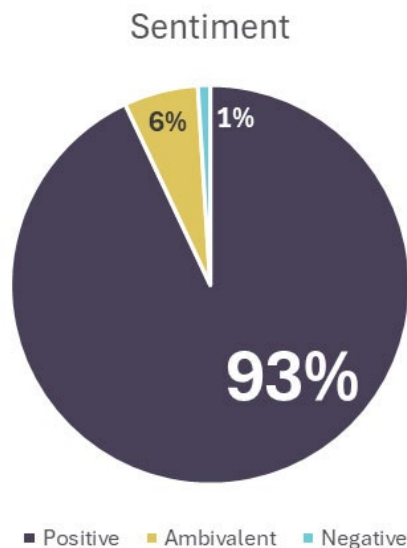
A sentiment analysis was conducted on the 547 responses to the above question on the postcourse survey.

93% POSITIVE

Responses were overwhelmingly positive. 93% clearly endorsed the program. Responses often described personal growth, cultural learning, communication skills, etc.

6% AMBIVALENT

Ambivalence is nuanced. These responses showed thoughtful reflection, often praising certain aspects but noting some of the challenges as well.



1% NEGATIVE

The relatively few negative responses expressed things like poor partner engagement and logistical challenges as reasons for not recommending the course.

Sentiment Analysis

Overwhelmingly, students responded positively to the course. 93% of students recommended the course, highlighting its impact on cultural understanding, communication skills, personal growth, and building international friendships. 6% shared ambivalent views, appreciating the cultural exposure but noting that success depended heavily on partner engagement. Only 1% of the students gave negative feedback, mainly citing challenges such as scheduling conflicts and partner responsiveness.

Thematic Analysis

Through further thematic analysis, a number of themes as represented in the boxes to the right and below emerged (Positive = Purple; Ambivalent = Gold; Negative = Blue). They make clear that the Global Understanding course is more than an academic exercise—it’s a window into the world, a mirror for self-reflection, and a bridge connecting students across cultures. Students describe it as broadening perspectives, improving communication, and promoting personal growth. When partnerships succeed, the impact is profound; when they falter, students still recognize the course’s value while acknowledging logistical challenges. Overall, the qualitative data points to GU being an effective platform for intercultural learning and global connection.



Expansion of
Worldview



Improved
Communication
Skills



Personal
Growth and
Confidence



Making New
Friends



Valued
Experience,
Frustrated by
Challenges



Career and
Academic
Benefits



Fun /
Interesting
Experience



Dependent
on Partner
Quality and / or
Responsiveness



Frustration
with Partner
Responsiveness



Challenges with
Time Zones and
Schedules



Mismatch
with Personal
Expectations

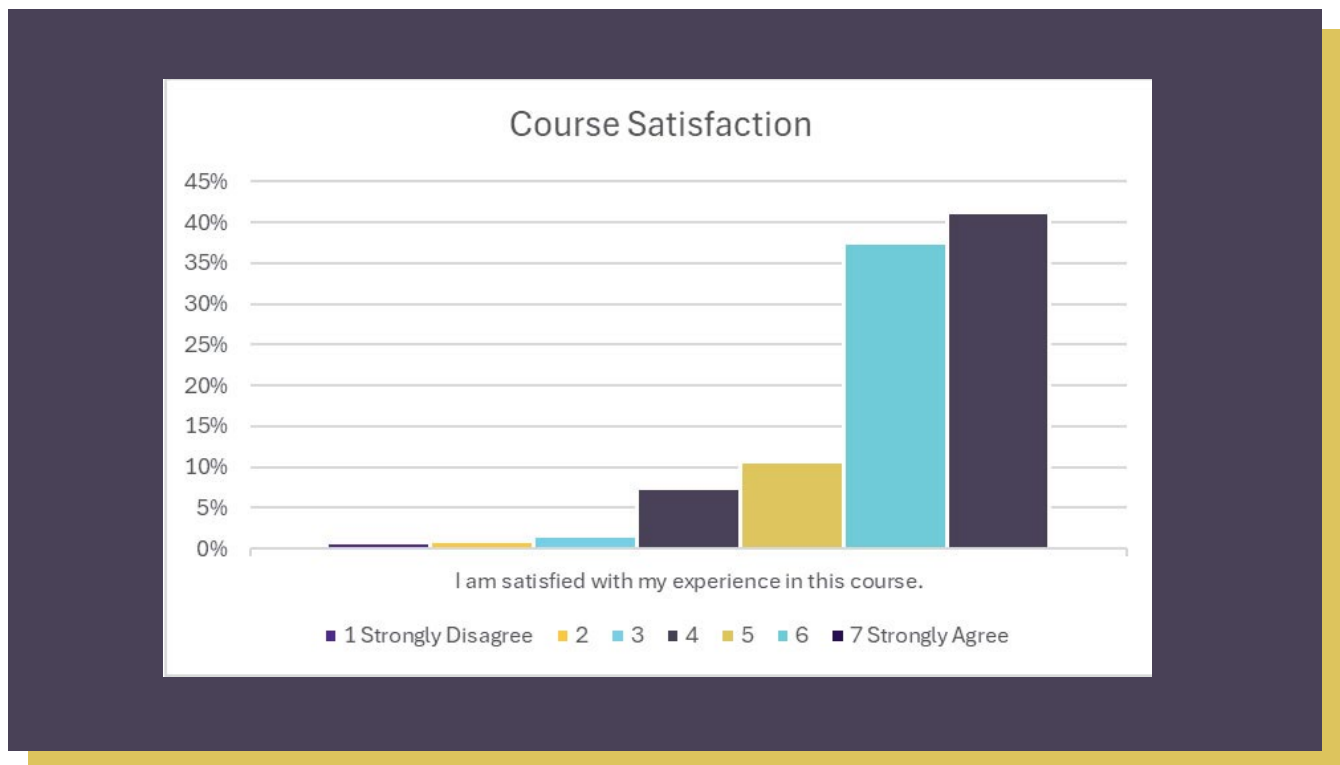
Prevalence of Theme
by Sentiment

	Positive	Ambivalent	Negative	Overall
Worldview	97%	3%	0%	61%
Communication	41%	3%	0%	26%
Personal Growth	25%	0%	0%	15%
Friendship	27%	2%	0%	17%
Career	20%	6%	0%	13%
Fun	20%	7%	0%	13%
Challenges	1%	78%	0%	2%
Partners	0%	89%	0%	2%
Responsiveness	1%	67%	11%	2%
Logistics	0%	67%	0%	1%
Expectations	1%	65%	18%	3%

Satisfaction

The vast majority of students were satisfied with their GPE Course

Overall students were highly satisfied with the course (78% agreed or strongly agreed). Additionally, students were mostly satisfied with the quality of interactions (79% agreed or strongly agreed). A weaker point remains the amount of interaction with their international partners outside of class time (59% agreed or strongly agreed). Students' interest in taking future courses with this type of format and recommending the course to friends reflect their overall satisfaction as well.



85% WOULD TAKE A COURSE WITH A SIMILAR FORMAT AGAIN.

83% RECOMMENDED THE COURSE TO A FRIEND.

4th Year Student
Universidad Continental, Peru

I have recommended the course to many friends because I think it's an incredible opportunity to get to know other cultures up close and learn different perspectives on very interesting topics. It's an enriching experience that broadens our horizons and allows us to grow both academically and personally.



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Taking this course equips students with the skills and knowledge for navigating the interconnected world. By fostering cultural awareness, critical thinking, and effective communication, such courses empower students to become informed global citizens capable of addressing complex challenges collaboratively. Moreover, the experience promotes personal growth and opens doors to diverse career opportunities, all while contributing to a more peaceful and understanding global community. (4th year student, Modern University for Business and Science, Lebanon)

“

It opens your perspective of how to see the world and teaches you how to interact with people from different cultures. (1st year student, Universidad Regiomontana, Mexico)

“

It is very helpful to improve your English and also build confidence. It is very difficult to communicate with students from other countries, but in this course I learned a lot. (3rd year student, Fatima Jinnah Women University, Pakistan)

“

It is a lot of fun and you get to meet and talk with many students in multiple countries. It's stressful at times, but our professor helped us have the difficult conversations we wanted to have. It has allowed me to learn so much more than I knew before. (1st year student, East Carolina University, USA)

References

Little, T. D., Chang, R., Gorrall, B. K., Waggenspack, L., Fukuda, E., Allen, P. J., & Noam, G. G. (2020). The retrospective pretest–posttest design redux: On its validity as an alternative to traditional pretest–posttest measurement. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 44(2), 175-183. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025419877973>

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