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>> STEPHANIE: You are listening to Making Global Learning Universal, conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaboration, and complex problem solving in higher education, on campus, online, in local communities, and abroad. I'm your host, Stephanie Doscher, Director of Global Learning Initiatives at Florida International University and coauthor of Making Global Learning Universal, Promoting Inclusion and Success for All.

>> ANNA: I just want to say there is no timeline for awareness. Sometimes one can see that a person almost on the facial expression or something that they say or a question that they ask that one then says Wow, this is the moment where it's part awareness. So I don't think that awareness can be on a timeline or completely disconnected from perspective.

>> STEPHANIE: Anna Bernardo Bricker is a Senior Instructor in FIU's Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. I love working with Anna because she thinks so deeply about global learning course design, and that deep thought is really well expressed in the interview you're about to hear. She's constantly asking critical questions that are applicable to any course and in any discipline. Like how much time should be devoted to global learning? Should global learning be a module or sprinkled throughout the course? Should a global learning course be at the beginning of a program or as a capstone? How do you balance global learning with accreditation standards? As an engineer, she's especially grappling with whether she should start by teaching students technical skills and then ask them to apply them to complex problems or start with a problem and drill down to the skills. Anna shares her answers to these questions, but there's really the greatest benefit in the questions themselves. Here's my conversation with Anna.

So today we're going to kind of explore the engineering course that you teach, that you developed. Tell us a little bit about the title of the course and your global learning approach to it.

>> ANNA: So the title of the course is Engineering for Global Sustainability and Environmental Protection. So as the years went by, I mean naturally the very first time, I already reflected quite a bit of what it meant and the differences between global sustainability and environmental protection. And so that's how I started, if you will, to develop the thrust for the curriculum itself in between that difference, important difference between global sustainability and environmental protection.

>> STEPHANIE: And what are the differences between --

>> ANNA: So specifically and historically speaking because also global learning in the sense of our earth and multicultural, multi-countries, policies, politics, states, all of that, languages, as well as a global vision, a little bit of a bigger perspective in that we are going to look at something not only necessarily and exclusively from the engineering point of view but also from the older points of view, particularly the social, economic, political. A little bit of that. Some of the younger students feel very uncomfortable or not so comfortable with that, so I try to do as best as I can.

One part, one specific module or learning objective, is that we get straight laws of environmental protection in the United States and how do they fit in the historical timeline, right? So I place myself from geological times. I typically use the board for that. If the Earth would have been created on this side of the board, we only appeared at the end, edge of the board, and that's our last 200 years of "civilization." That's where civil engineering comes into play.

And so in that perspective, then one sees that the old will bring in the industrial evolution. So the oldest laws in that sense. The environmental protection would be the British laws. And then they might have spread through Europe, and then we have ours in the United States. So this is what you are going to learn.

We have these environmental protection laws which were derived from, let's say the oldest one in terms of federal law, goes back to the '50s, really. And so then we go to the other laws. So we do have a framework for environmental protection. I get a little bit of their, I guess, age level or what they can understand and what does that entail, for example, in thinking of where does the shirt that you're wearing comes from. We are going into the concept of life cycle assessment. Just basically we have environmental protection laws.

>> STEPHANIE: Got it.

>> ANNA: So how is that different from global sustainability?

>> STEPHANIE: Right. So how do you approach that balance? What are some of the teaching and learning strategies that you use to enhance your students' global awareness and perspective and especially their engagement in engineering?

>> ANNA: That's actually very difficult, super difficult, because in terms of let's say engineering programs, they really only have a value if they are ABET accredited. So in order to meet both criteria, it has been very challenging, and that remains a challenging part of it.

And I will say maybe this is not a good way to start, but I must say that since I feel inadequate about it in the sense that I have seen that in other, specifically in biomedical and electrical engineering, the global learning course is the senior design. So sometimes I have thought to myself, would that be the best place for it. And I'm actually not sure. Because again I'm very proud of what I do in my class, but there is that very real challenge of how much time even, in terms of time, should it be to one or the other.

For example, the other global learning course that I had the opportunity to teach as a substitute, if you will, last semester, I didn't firsthand know how difficult it would be to prove or to have the metrics to say students have reached level awareness just by this little task or this little thing. So not really very realistic.

So in sum, in the global sustainability course, what I do is that one thing that is really technical is life cycle assessment. And even that, if one were to focus just on that, which I have thought about doing and will reflect on that now during the summer, then that's really the technical part, right? The part in which there are either -- at the moment instead of being calculations is more like analyzing data from high quality peer review articles that use life cycle assessment, methodologies or software packages to analyze a very specific engineering situation and make conclusions about it.

>> STEPHANIE: Right. So when I think about engineering, and remember, I am a kindergartner when it comes to this. I know next to nothing about your field. I once was married to a gentleman who has a mechanical engineering degree. But I'm really a complete neophyte.

So when I think about engineering, I think calculations. I think drawing boundaries around problems. Figuring out how to actually take out variables so that you can focus on just a very few variables in order to make something stand up, like a bridge or build a building. So how do we kind of make things less complex, if you will, simplify so we can solve the problem.

But that's not what global learning is all about. Global learning is about bringing in as many variables, as you said, from the top. Really putting things in a much more complex perspective. So how do we --

>> ANNA: It is important that it should be made from the very beginning, and that's why I find it difficult in this way.

So to summarize a little bit the opportunity that I have of viewing global learning as a module of a course versus as a course. So as a module of a course, the focus was on the equations and on the principles. So there is mass balance. We need to learn this and to learn that. We need to drill, and we need to practice many times. We need to look at the equation itself, see how the equation applies under a specific given and how to even units, because this is a 3000 level course. It's a completely different, very narrowly focused perspective. And it must be that way because students must learn those concepts. Most understand them and most apply them and most learn to do that cycle of learning, understanding and applying in a very systematic way.

So when one is thinking in that way, then it becomes a little bit of an oddball. All of a sudden there is this assignment asking me to look at this or that or to watch the movie. I think that they learn. I think that every experience can be taken as a learning experience, but I was left with as to the level of learning when a rubric is applied, which I do use rubrics a lot. I have actually learned to use them for almost every class.

>> STEPHANIE: Oh, we are definitely going to talk about the rubrics piece. So if I hear you correctly, what you're saying is if we think about global learning as simply one module in the course, just we're going to do mostly drill and practice, it's going to be very technically oriented. And just at one moment we're going to take a more open look or a contextually based look at some of these problems. You weren't convinced that students were really leaving with the kinds of outcomes or the systemic view that you wanted them to get. But then when you thought about the whole course as a global learning experience, that was a different, that was a different perspective on course design for you.

>> ANNA: That's a good paraphrasing of what I said. Right. I really, I wasn't sure by just -- it could have been that I did awareness in you, but I'm not completely sure because it's even difficult to "measure that" if you're just doing let's say global, developing a course from the global learning perspective. But from the technical perspective it was difficult. It was like one more module. Whereas in this case, again from the perspective of global learning is first, how did these environmental problems became a thing on the map. That's why I became in love with the title. How did environmental protection became an item. And then what is developing for global sustainability.

>> STEPHANIE: So how do you sprinkle global learning throughout your course rather than just having it in one module?

>> ANNA: So that's it. The course is developed as a global learning course. And what is difficult is to -- there is the reverse, right? It's how to find the niche for the technical portion without it becoming a struggle either, because in technical courses already one of the problems that we have is that students may be at all different level levels. So even if I give you an equation and all the givens have units and all you have to do is put the numbers in the equation and get a number, do the calculations, even there not all students are in the same place. This is a technical oriented class. It takes a while to get there.

So imagine now on a course that might require like complex calculations, if we spent weeks on that or different days on that, it's not going to work out. So like I said, the way that I have found so far the balance is that concepts are important for me, and I emphasize that a lot. So we start with -- and in that way I will say the textbook has been somewhat valuable and helping frame that. So we start with consistent services. That's a concept -- that is a concept. It's a very fundamental concept in sustainable development. So we start with consistent services, and we view the resources that nature has to offer, not only as resources but as services that the eco-system can lend if we leave the eco-system working intact. We start with consistent services. Then we go into one specific service that nature offers, and that is of resources. And then we go into the categorization of resources according to their renewability. How long does it take nature to renew specific resources, and even one resource, how it can be complex to determine whether it is renewable or nonrenewable as, for example, we have water which we tend to think of on the global cycle as fully renewable, but then we also have, we also have ground water which we call fossil ground water. It's understood to have been formed on a geological time which means that if it is withdrawn at a rate which is much larger than the low rate in which in some parts of those aquifers the water replenishes, then we will run out of that resource as well.

So again, eco-system services as nature providing not only resources that we harvest but also a whole series of supporting services, regulating services. For example, the interaction between the water and the atmosphere is a regulating service. So if one messes up the equilibrium in one, that interferes with the other in ways that we don't fully understand. So viewing nature as a system.

Then resources. That's the second material. Resources and materials. Then when we get to materials, also getting -- priming students' minds into them viewing waste as part of the material that needs to be managed.

>> STEPHANIE: Okay. So I am a neophyte, as I said before.

>> ANNA: Sorry.

>> STEPHANIE: No. I think I really get this. I think you're explaining this in terms of how you think about it as a teacher. So we talked about the fact that your students have specific technical skills. They need to understand how to do those formulas and get the right number in the end.

>> ANNA: They do.

>> STEPHANIE: Right. But you're starting by embedding those formulas within a complex and systemic view of nature, of the globe. So you begin by thinking about all of the different types of resources and services, if I hear you correctly, and then you drill down, if you will, into a more specific one resource. But you also enable the students to start thinking about complexity even within that one specific resource. So they are seeing complexity within the simplicity and also

starting to think about secondary impacts and other connections and interactions, and it seems to me that that's directly applicable to when the students start to drill down into the specific formulas.

>> ANNA: I hope so.

>> STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>> ANNA: And because unfortunately in this particular course there cannot really be specific formulas. So the numerical part comes more into analyzing the data. What do the numbers mean. So after materials, we're moving to energy, sources of energy, their impact on the environment, by environmental protection.

And then after that, life cycle assessment. So the life cycle assessment. By that time though, it is about half of the semester in priming the mind, and hopefully the students made the correlations that you have made. Again, I want to start from the ground more or less because those are the fundamentals. So by the time we get to life cycle assessment, that is a complex mathematical tool that allows to assess and weigh the environmental impact on several stages of production.

From the mining of the materials from earth to a modification of those materials from earth into something that can be used to prime material to manufacture something, to then manufacture it to the global trade, and how we use airplanes, trucks, trailers, vessels, and share pollution on a global basis to transport and move around the goods.

And then the end is what we call the end of life of the product and what's going to happen to it. The one thing that the students can do is assess in weight on a holistic manner in something that is called streamline life cycle assessment. That is an exercise that actually students over the last two or three years have liked a lot. And that is actually semi-quantitative. It's just a matrix of the stages versus the environmental impact on material, energy, and then air, water, and soil, toxicity. So that's life cycle.

And then after that it comes sort of -- one important one is the lead certification as well as other certifications, the more recent one (indiscernible) certification, which sort of takes these principles of sustainable engineering, engineering for sustainability, takes the core principles that we're developing in 2003 and most people in the profession accept, and how are they then applied and packaged, if you will, into a lead accreditation.

>> STEPHANIE: Right.

>> ANNA: So certification actually of buildings. So that's a topic as well.

>> STEPHANIE: But you don't just leave it as a topic on the page. You actually take your students into a LEED certified building when you can.

>> ANNA: Yes. Correct. And that has been enriching for the students. Right. And the best way is to take them to the buildings that we have on campus and how that represents also our commitment to sustainability, to invest in those buildings and to learn from them, to learn from those.

>> STEPHANIE: Right. Our students, they can't necessarily get in a car or a bus or a train to go across town. You make use of the resources that we have here on campus.

>> ANNA: Correct. That's very important to me. Yeah.

>> STEPHANIE: So then how do you have students kind of tie all of this up together at the end of the course? Yeah.

>> ANNA: Actually, sometimes it's difficult to see. There are specified assessments so I don't go crazy, right? Through which I make sure awareness and perspective and engagement, but there is also a blurred line. So there is no time, how should I say? There is no timeline for awareness. Sometimes one can see on a person the facial expression or something that they say or a question that they ask that one then says wow, this is the moment where it's part awareness. I don't think awareness can be on a timeline or completely disconnected from perspective. But in the end -- so basically I have relied -- I think it was, let's see, two years, so this is the third time that I used what I call collaborative writing. I would like to learn myself more in terms of professional development more about that myself because I have done it in a very rudimentary way. Honestly, I don't even know exactly where the idea -- would you believe it?

>> STEPHANIE: That's beautiful. That's global learning right there.

>> ANNA: Yeah. In fact, one time -- I have only unfortunately attended or been able to attend two professional development global learning. One of them was the mandatory one at the beginning, and then another one was one -- I think it was two years ago. I can't believe it's been that long. Over by the library. And there I brought up in our sharing the fact that in this collaborative writing adventure that I went into, I was trying different groups every time, and I think some of the comments were whether that could be throwing off because students will not have the time to become teams.

Now I also teach a laboratory course. So in the laboratory course the groups, some of the groups do become teams and others not. Groups and teams are very different things. But I actually learned from our sharing in that professional development that you can meet a group of people now. We all prepare or read a certain thing and then we share. So it doesn't need to be the same people every single time. Just a different experience.

So long story short, this semester I actually did try to have the same writing groups meeting, and we are on our sixth writing assignment. And I actually think that both myself and the students like it better when the group wasn't necessarily the same. Yeah. Every single time. So anyway I do collaborative writing.

>> STEPHANIE: And what does that look like? Collaborative versus --

>> ANNA: Yeah. Exactly. What's interesting is that the students actually like it, even though I think that they are concerned about their individual grade. But I keep reassuring them that I keep the global perspective on it. So each of these assignments always start with an individual accountability, and that is a quiz on the specific preparation material. So there's a quiz and the quiz individual. So I more or less keep track of who in the group was really well prepared for the collaboration.

And then the writing has writing prompts, and so far I have not been able -- I feel unfortunate about that too -- have calculations. So it's more about logical reasoning, verbal reasoning. It could be classification, categorization or discussion and then reflection, collaborative, one only reflection. And interestingly, students actually again, they like it.

>> STEPHANIE: Could you describe, if you will, just one prompt? What kind of prompt elicits that kind of collaboration?

>> ANNA: So even myself, I'm surprised how well it can work because it can be difficult. So let's take for example the systems thinking. So before I go -- or this particular semester it was right after a system services. I spoke to them. I spoke to the students about systems thinking, what that entails. I had a prompt about the NOVA documentary, and it was over Martin Luther King. So they just watched it and had some questions to think about in preparation for the class collaborative writing. So that one was a warmup, I will say, and the prompt was to describe in a diagram and with words both, diagram and with words, two specific cycles and interconnections.

So in terms of systems thinking, I had a lecture before and one after the assignment. And then subsequently I also had another assignment about systems thinking per se and how could they apply to one of two systems that I proposed. And so in that second assignment the prompts were to pick either a water distribution system or a transportation of goods system and to describe it. Again, to create a diagram and to describe the input, output and interconnections for that particular prompt.

>> STEPHANIE: Beautiful.

>> ANNA: Yeah.

>> STEPHANIE: So you have students in these groups. About how big are the groups?

>> ANNA: Three or four. No more than that.

>> STEPHANIE: So we have three or four, and they are doing this within the confines of the class.

>> ANNA: Correct.

>> STEPHANIE: They're developing the -- and I would imagine that some groups might start with the words and then move to a diagram, and some groups might start with a diagram and then move to the words?

>> ANNA: That is correct. And what I find fascinating about the systems thinking, one, was that I think that some of them comprehended the difference between a flow chart diagram and a diagram that represents systems thinking.

>> STEPHANIE: Beautiful.

>> ANNA: Yeah. I don't think that they comprehended neither what I said that there was a difference between these two things nor when they were not encountered with the prompt and having to think about okay, first, we put it in little boxes and in sequences of processes from beginning to end, and then we see what are the connections between the boxes and between the processes. And that was actually very illuminating, I thought, for a couple of groups that chose the option of what are the distribution systems.

Some of them, because the students in the course still persist different, some of them are juniors, some of them are seniors, some of them are in civil and environmental engineering, and have taken this prerequisite or not. All different levels, right? Even some of them who were used to seeing a flowchart diagram. They understood. I could tell by what they asked by the

looks or expressions in their faces how they had not considered interactions between certain parts of that flowchart as well as interaction with other systems.

>> STEPHANIE: Okay. So there are a couple of things that I am hearing that I think are really interesting. One is the course is about resources and services. And what you have done, if I hear you correctly, is taken the fact that you have all of these students coming from different levels and coming from different perspectives in terms of their engineering perspective, and you're making that a resource.

>> ANNA: Apparently I am. Yeah.

>> STEPHANIE: And then another thing that I find very interesting, especially coming from an engineer, is that you're giving power and legitimacy and validity to assessing students. The evidence being that aha moment and the way it shows up on their face or a question that they ask or just the energy in the room. It doesn't necessarily just have to be about a score on a test or a score on a rubric, although you do use rubric.

>> ANNA: Oh, I do use rubrics for writing assignments.

>> STEPHANIE: You use multiple sources of evidence as resources to gather how students are bringing these very complex ideas together and also the global context with the specific skills and knowledge base that they need to master as engineers.

>> ANNA: Exactly.

>> STEPHANIE: So if you would, share a little bit more about how you use rubrics. So you have talked a little bit about how you're looking for these aha moments in students' faces and the kinds of questions that they ask. But how do you balance that with rubrics, which in themselves they are making qualitative evidence into quantitative evidence?

>> ANNA: I know. Yeah. That's a challenge. It actually takes quite a bit of time to refine a rubric specific to the assignment so that just by reading the rubric the students can see what can they do in a realistic manner.

>> STEPHANIE: Right. That's absolutely best practices for using rubrics.

>> ANNA: Yeah. Exactly. So important that way. To describe exactly what will an A or a B or a C look like. An excellent or good or proficient will look like for that specific assignment. What elements should it contain.

So, for example, for both the assignment that was associated to the NOVA documentary as well as for the assignment that was associated to systems thinking, for those assignments there were requirements of having both a diagram that showed certain complexity as well as descriptive words with some explanation on the NOVA documentary, the systems thinking, which was more like descriptive.

So those words are utilized, and they are also -- I explained to the students even further, although I go through a great length to use specified language and words that will convey to them, to pick a level and then maybe build up from there, depending on how they use their own resources in the group to be.

>> STEPHANIE: Yeah. Right. So you're asking students to think about their peers as resources.

>> ANNA: Yes, I think so. I think that's what I actually try to elicit that they do.

>> STEPHANIE: Fantastic. So this NOVA documentary, you referred to it a couple of times. What is it about this particular film? Because I know that you are very thoughtful about whether or not you use films in the classroom or students work with them outside of the classroom, and you're very thoughtful about which films you choose as resources for the class. Kind of unpack your thought process around that.

>> ANNA: So in class per se, I do not use videos. Just clips that are at most one to three minutes in length. Never more than twice. I think in class they must hear from me if anything or explaining or clarifying something about the assignments that they do and things like that.

So this particular NOVA documentary came out in 2013. It's two hours long. And because I began to teach the course the first time in 2014 and I was looking for sort of a focal point, I saw it myself first, and then I said, I think this could really be a good starter piece, a good opener, because the course is in the spring and it coincides with Martin Luther King. I said that would be a good thing to watch. Martin Luther King.

So this documentary focuses on the space program and on the value that that space program has brought in understanding the interconnection, the man, the earth, the systems. About the hydrosphere, the lithosphere, the atmosphere. And particularly between the atmosphere and the hydrosphere.

>> STEPHANIE: So this is a big blue marble that we have.

>> ANNA: Correct. Exactly. But it shows -- so it is centered a lot on weather, but it ends up in the last portion how it emphasizes that interaction between the water, between the oceans and the atmosphere creates a balance of temperature in the atmosphere. But again there are interactions both ways. The ocean waters as well as -- the ocean interacting with the atmosphere, and the atmosphere interacting with the ocean.

So it brings up the topic of climate change, but it is not the center topic of it. So it allows the students to see the interconnections and interactions among the earth systems in somewhat unaltered ways.

The centerpiece of the documentary is the earth, not so much the human impact, and that's what I wanted them to see first. How the earth systems are interconnected in ways that we do not fully understand.

>> STEPHANIE: I have to ask you, when do you show that in your course? Because there's a big debate -- I don't know if it's a debate so much. But there's a conversation in different disciplines and in global education and education at large about how do we pace a course. How do we developmentally lead a student toward complex thinking. Do we begin with a complex picture and then throughout the course drill down and analyze it or begin with this complex picture that becomes a cognitive framework, if you will, for students to take in the more specific information or do we begin with the most basic components and then end with a film like that? Or is there another way? How do you pace that within your course?

>> ANNA: Interestingly, in this particular case it was because of the holiday and the fact that I'm mindful that to present such a long video, the best time would be at the beginning. So, if you will, I picked it for logistical reasons. If you ask students at this time in the semester for example to do something like that --

>> STEPHANIE: Forget about it. Too much work.

>> ANNA: This would be like what we discovered about communication and body language and words. The words might get lost in the body language. So here the essence of the movie would be lost on the complete stress. It would not work.

So in that sense, I don't bring in, as I explained with using the board as a physical time, historical timeline, and showing the end of the board where we come into the picture as civilization. The same way with a movie. So start with the big, but then we dissect it, as I said, into eco-system services and then materials. Focus on the materials, energy, and then life cycle assessment, which goes back to our current reality or current object and think or link back to where it came from.

>> STEPHANIE: So you said you fell in love with this course. What was that like to start off kind of struggling with what is the meaning of this course, how am I going to approach it, and then to fall in love with it? What was that like for you? I think that might be an interesting thing to explore as a person and a professional.

>> ANNA: Probably. Yeah. Most likely. I need some time actually.

>> STEPHANIE: That's okay.

>> ANNA: It's been transforming, and you have actually helped, I appreciate that, to listen to me a few times over the phone when I have had questions for you. Including clarifying what is awareness and how to differentiate them clearly and how you agreed with me that sometimes it is not necessarily clear cut, how one perfects the other. And the realization that awareness is awareness of self first and of one's position in the world.

When it comes to sustainability and sustainable development, that also means sustainability and sustainable development, but the best formal engagement probably comes, and that is one that one can never be sure, whose heart has really awoken, right? Sustainability. If you become a human being who really leads frugally and promotes that voice at whatever level you may be proficient at, then I think that you have really become aware in the sense of being awake and then maybe one could really incite some change in others.

So the first thing then is to become aware of self and how to teach that to others is a challenge. It is a continuous challenge.

>> STEPHANIE: But it is a challenge that you have really bravely and courageously and vulnerably and openly embraced.

>> ANNA: I think that I have embraced it. I must be quite candid in saying that this collaborative writing, I am nervous every time that we are going to have one. But what you mention about the energy in the room is sensible, and I wish that I had a helper maybe, but I don't. So I get my way around, and I listen to what they are doing, and I clarify so they are actually immersed in the work. There is no talk about any other thing. They are really

concentrated, and out of that being concentrated in what they are doing, a good product comes out, a good to excellent product comes out.

>> STEPHANIE: Fantastic. Thank you so much for sharing how you have developed this course, especially in engineering because it is such a challenge to balance the requirements of the technical knowledge in engineering, the accreditation standards, but also what you know is best for students and best for the earth.

>> ANNA: Thanks again.

>> STEPHANIE: Thanks for listening to this episode of Making Global Learning Universal. This podcast is brought to you by FIU's Office of Global Learning Initiatives, Media Technology Services, and our Disability Resource Center. You can find all our episodes, show notes, transcripts and discussion guides on our webpage, globallearningpodcast.fiu.edu. And if this episode was meaningful to you, please share it with colleagues, friends and students. You can even give it a rating on iTunes. Thanks again for tuning in and for all you do to make global learning universal.

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The podcast is hosted by Stephanie Doscher, Director of Global Learning Initiatives at Florida International University and co-author of *Making Global Learning Universal: Promoting Inclusion and Success for All.*

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