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>>STEPHANIE DOSCHER: You are listening to Making Global Learning Universal- conversations about engaging diverse perspectives, collaboration and complex problem solving and 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*.

>>ALOK DEORAJ: There is no single day or I'll say even single hour goes by when there is no public health crisis in the world, so that's what you have to be aware that it's such a dynamic subject. There's nothing wrong. There's nothing right. Only thing is that you have to get engaged, find local sources, local resources to solve the problem to find a solution.

>>STEPHANIE: Professor Alok Deoraj has been teaching Health Without Borders, a course he developed specifically for FIU's Global Learning Initiative, since fall 2013. He fully embraces the fact that this general education course draws over 100 students per semester, many of whom have no intention of majoring in health-related disciplines. For some, it's the last course that they're taking in college. For others, it's the first. Yet semester after semester, Alok sends me student reflections that demonstrate his course's power to transform perspectives. Students leave truly feeling they've gained useful knowledge that they're going to be able to apply in their lives. And in this interview, Alok talks about how he prepares students with little or no background knowledge to actively engage with the course material in class and in the community. global public health is incredibly complex, but again, Alok embraces this. He gives students many ways in, opportunities to personally connect to public health challenges and to identify ways they can work to mitigate these challenges. This is me talking with Alok.

So Alok, you created your course Health Without Borders, specifically for the Global Learning Initiative.

>>ALOK: Correct.

>>STEPHANIE: Why? [laughter] Tell us, tell us the story of what moved you to create, to go to all the trouble of creating a brand-new course and, and how you decide what your original course design was.

>>ALOK: I have been fascinated with the public health. The reason is that if you ask me, I do not have a vertical expertise. I have a latitude of experience and expertise starting from working with the variety of models and a cancer model, as a you know a predictive technology model. And then also I come from, I have, because my background is in biology and immunology and neuroendocrinology and all that. So I worked in the industry, I work in the university, but I consider that I did not go vertical. I went on a latitude of experience and when I came here at FIU, I joined the College of Public Health and in the Department of Environmental Health Science. So I felt home in a way that, Ooh, I can actually put all the expertise and experience together for the public good and how to connect things. So that was one of the driving forces to bring this global public health course for the undergraduate student. Because I like to connect

different knowledge, different perspective, different awareness. Because if you become too focused into one direction, sometimes the bigger picture you lose. And that's what I also want to impart with my students going forward. That was my driving force to develop this course.

>>STEPHANIE: Fantastic. So would you tell us a little bit about what students are studying in the Health Without Borders course? Are you exposing students to topics or are they more engaging with questions or different types of problems? How do you organize that course?

>>ALOK: As you, I mean, you know it very well that we have three elements of the global learning class. It's the global awareness, the global perspective, and the global engagement. I took that as a really a kind of a framework to design this course in order to develop this course Health Without Borders, which is essentially a global public health course. So what it is, is first of all to such a fascinating subject because it is everything. It is chemistry, biology, mathematics, engineering, politics, governance, culture, you name it. And there is no one expertise can come together to solve the problem. It has to combine together to solve any problem. It has to have a teamwork. So that was one of the driving forces to develop this course. So what I have done here is that you have to have a common language. So I have divided my course into three modules. The first module, essentially it talks about how to describe the public health or the global public health units and indices of the global public health. Otherwise, if you say something, people wouldn't understand. There has to be uniform language such as birth rate, infant mortality rate, maternal mortality ratio, demographic transition or the epidemiological transition. So those are some of the basic terms and terminology. They have to be aware of. Then only they can describe what the global public health entails. So that's the first module is primarily based on to the units in indices of global public health to describe the issues related to global public health. Then we move into a second module where we talk about the crises, what we have at the moment at the global scale, which affects our health. Even like you know, what is happening locally, how it affects your health, if it is happening in America, it is affecting the people in Australia. If it is happening in Congo, it is affecting the people in Poland. If it is happening in Russia, it is also affecting the people into Mexico. So it's such an interconnected world and this is where the crisis, what all over the world we are facing. There are determinants, environmental determinants, cultural determinants, the health determinants, biological determinants, ratios, sex -- everything comes together and what crisis we are facing. For example, I can tell you the, first of all, as you know, the environmental health issues pollution, whether it's China, India, even in US, our ground water pollution or air pollution or you know, radiation, everything that's one of the crises we have. And all of them-- what we call the human made issues, which has, is causing problems. Then climate change is another one. The differences in the beliefs, the cultural determinants. Like some places people wouldn't like to vaccinate their children, how that is causing the problem to the other people or not. And they have such a strong belief that this is not going to help them. And then also we talk about where we were earlier when our longevity was very small. Like and now our longevity has increased. How that is changing the social dynamics. So those kinds of things we talk into the crisis or the issues, what is related to, for example now given the technologies we have available, there was a time issue. If we utilize everything we can live for 142 years today in today's term all the technology you can have me or hip replacement, knee replacement, heart replacement, everything and you can actually live 142 years. But whether it's ethical, moral and how it is going to affect overall the health who can afford the accessibility, availability, those kinds of things. We talk into the second module. The third module is again, is kind of related. Third module is, and this is where I think becomes very important, the global engagement part where the students have to be aware of the technology and tools, what is available to address some of these situations or the crisis, you can call it. For example, even from our learning processes, we know that there are, even if it's a hurricane or earthquake or fire, there is a

pattern of things when it happens, who gets injured, who, what kind of disease issues or health issues comes after these disasters. So there is a pattern. If you understand that pattern, you can prepare yourself. For example, there is no other place in the world who can be better prepared for hurricane than Florida. For example, California or Japan is the best prepared for the earthquake. But sometimes the nature plays its role. Like you know, the tsunami and the nuclear disaster and all those things, earthquake -all three coming together in Japan it's never heard of. But that can happen too. But we are prepared to minimize, to mitigate the health risks. So even those things happen, you have like, you know, you minimized the casualties whether it's a tornado, whether it's an earthquake. And so we are learning as we go along. We're learning through the process. The technology part we have whether it's a digital technology, whether it's a transportation technology. Whether it's a bio technology, whether it's a vaccine development, the medicine development, all these things, the genetics, the genomes, the microbiomes, all those things coming together to address the issues. What we talk into the module two. And there I have my student to go around the campus and they are engaged into cocurricular activities because we asked them, I asked them to go and attend the seminars on the campus or even outside where, and they have to link it to the course. So we will talk about it much more detail I believe in, [indiscernible]

>>STEPHANIE: Yes. You know, that I'm fascinated by this course because there's, it's so complex. It is such a huge topic. There is so much to explore. So many disciplines all coming together during this, the single semester. Sometimes your semester, I mean, you teach the course I think even in the mini-mester.

>>ALOK: Yes.

>>STEPHANIE: If I'm not mistaken, which is just a few weeks long.

>>ALOK: Three weeks.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah, three weeks long. So this is a massive amount of information, which means that you as a teacher have to really refine the methods that you use to help students carry multiple ideas in their minds at the same time and reconcile and make connections. So there are few things that I've heard you talk about in the past. The first one I want to ask you about is your approach regarding problems. It really does seem like just this huge sea of problems that are facing us, but you don't really take a problem focus perspective. You take kind of the opposite perspective. Don't you? Talk a little bit about how you-- you look at patterns. Yeah.

>>ALOK: I tell them in the beginning itself that look, each topic in itself is a course.

>>STEPHANIE: Yeah.

>>ALOK: So it is just an introduction to all these facets and all these different issues and now you have to find your call, which one or what do you want to tackle. Now what I guide them is by also imparting this thing is that you cannot solve it all by yourself. Even like I have the assessments or the assignments, what they do for example, like you know, I give them a problem, let's say for example adolescent health. That becomes one topic. But then I make the groups adolescent health in Europe, adolescent health in America and also in Asia. And then to prepare the poster, the global burden or the burden of diseases in adolescent health what had been the trend and all that and the discuss their poster and that brings home the variety of

perspectives into, and they love it. They, in fact their feedback has been very, very positive. In addition, the cocurricular activities we just mentioned earlier, they can do anything. They can do, go and join American do fundraising, attend the seminars and the campus or cancer or their brain deficits or even political situation, the governance and everything. One other thing which I just asked them that, how do you think it is going to affect your health? So that's where you have to bring it home or connect that information. Other things as that deliberately I make the group where is the diversity of the students, which goes in there. For example, in the group they will have from freshmen to the senior years. I also try to put it, let's say some, I make the groups, so I will try to make sure that the student are from the biology background, this one from business background, this one from-- because all the students have to take this course. So I have this luxury to mix and match and that's what I tried to do that I put them in from freshmen to senior and tried to diversify their pool so that they bring different perspective and they're discussing and all that, oh, I didn't understand this thing, how this thing happened? Sometimes some groups they like it, but some don't. But at the same time, because they are, they're also learning a flavor of how to work in a team. So that is there the cocurricular activities and so far I had been teaching this course since spring 2013 and it has been a fascinating journey and their feedback has even helped me to refine it going forward. They sometimes they didn't like one assessment. I have changed, I have modified it going forward. So that's how I have been keeping up with it. And as we know that there is no single day or I would save in single hour goes by when there is no public health crisis in the world. So that's what you have to be aware that there's such a dynamic subject. There is nothing wrong, there is nothing, right. Only thing that you have to get engaged, find local sources, local resources to solve the problem and to find a solution. So in my class students watch the video, they have to even write the short essay on that and all those kinds of things are there. And I have some structure that even when they're watching the video, when they write the short essay, they have to use some of the epidemiological terms-- not to recount the story, but they had to deflect onto the essay how it is helpful or not helpful and to the topic what we are discussing.

>>STEPHANIE: So what I think I hear is that you fully embrace the fact that this is a huge course with so many disciplines and so many different issues and you find multiple ways throughout the course to have students make connections. So they're connecting personally to a particular issue. When they're in a group, they are connecting with people who have perhaps very different academic backgrounds than they do, or maybe at a different point in their undergraduate career. You have students connecting what's happening in the classroom with what's happening outside of the classroom. So in a way, it sounds to me like the through line of the course is the connection making itself even more than it is the content of the course.

>>ALOK: You are absolutely right. And this is introduction of the topics, introduction of the content. Now if they're interested, they can go further into detail of trying to understand or to specialize into those things. So that is there. So here my intention is to how do you connect your knowledge? And how can you go from there? Because even in my class and we have a session on the library, how to conduct search, how to prepare a poster, how to develop a talk or write an essay including these terms and terminology. Even if you don't go deep, but at least you have introduction of this topics going further understanding because they can from here they can go into their masters or other program where they can even go further, deep into the topic. So, but this gives them a well-rounded idea that what actually the global health means. Not only that, I teach, let's say I give them the topics or look at these are the crisis time. But in addition to that, even their poster topics are even much more wider. For example, they will be talking with zoonotic diseases. They will be talking emerging infectious diseases. They will be talking about the water issues in Africa. They will be talking about maternal mortality, child and maternal health in eastern Europe. So all these different topics. And in the group they do the research

and then they present, and I have a template where they have to the background, they have to have a hypothesis, they have to have a method, all these things are put on the poster. And then I select them and they come and present to in the class, not all of them as possible to make them [indiscernible] but at least they have a chance to see all of them online. They are able to see that. And that is quite fascinating because that even opens their eyes even much more.

>>STEPHANIE: Talk a little bit about who takes this course, Alok. It's an introductory course but it's in the general education curriculum sequence, right? So any student can take this course.

>>ALOK: Yes. This is a university core curriculum course, the foundational course. So every student, I think there are more than 20 or 30 courses which are available for the foundation courses. And this comes into the identity, social identity group and every student has to select I believe, four courses and then this is one of them. And this course is one of them. So they select that. But I have to tell you that since I am teaching this course, it has been always full hundred students, more or less, every time I have offered this course as a hundred students in that class.

>>STEPHANIE: So okay, you have a hundred students that may or may not have chosen majors. Some of these students, this may be the first course they're taking in college.

>>ALOK: Absolutely.

>>STEPHANIE: For some of them it could be one of the last.

>>ALOK: Yes, absolutely.

>>STEPHANIE: And you engage all of them. So let's talk a little bit more about more deeply about how you do that. Because especially with the cocurricular activity, I hear a lot of faculty say, you know, activities outside of the classroom. That's really not my responsibility. I have so many students. How do I grade this activity? I don't know how to tell students what to do. There isn't anything happening on my campus that's associated with my topic. So how do you meet the needs of such a wide variety of students and actually have this activity outside of your classroom become what it has been, which is probably the most successful component of the course. I mean, I do read the reflections of your students and to a person, they say that that is the activity that coalesces the meaning of the course. It catalyzes what they're learning. Dig Deeper into what are the specific directions you give your students when you're giving them this assignment to engage in a cocurricular activity.

>>ALOK: That is, as you know, the global learning course that has the requirement of one of the components of when you are developing the course of activities. So the cocurricular activity is, which I have designed there. I had designed in two competencies is there, one, is that the watch one documentary or movie in the classroom and then they have to not to recount this story, but they have to reflect on to that topic. For example, last semester they watched a documentary, The Vaccine War. So like, you know how people have different opinions about The Vaccine War. And the interesting thing is that after the, after the documentary they were able to discuss and there were some students who are very strong that token, they don't want to vaccinate their children and some of them, majority of themselves they will vaccinate. But then so that's the kind of, it makes it much more fun. But sometimes it also becomes little okay, how to, you know, take them into different direction. And then they also write the short essay about 500 words. But they're—essentially yes, it is challenged. Like assessing hundred students become a challenge.

But at the same time, I'm not assessing them that they have gone in too deep, but whether there have been able to reflect onto that, what the vaccine is, how they have used some I've asked them, okay, you highlight the epidemiological terms, what is, what you can use into this. So that way you can quickly go through and at least you can get a sense that yes, I mean they have tried to understand they have done something of that sort. I'm not there to correct their English so I am there just to see whether they're able to connect things. So that is the one component. Second component is that I have a template already I have developed where they have to attend three events, three events. They have to go to. Two, they have to go physically. Whether you volunteer in a church, whether you run a marathon or whether you go and attend a workshop or a seminar, whatever you want to do. You can do even for example, in one case there was a student who had gone from the belly dancing for the cancer awareness fundraising. But the point here is what I'm trying to ask is there the three events, the two of them are, they have to be physically present there. And the third event, I asked them to watch up to 40 to 60 minutes of TED Talks related to the global public health. And then I have a set of questions they have to answer based on to whatever they have done. Like where did you go? How long the event was, how, what did you find new information you found and how do you connect it to the course? So that's the kind of the do and they're write this thing and then they submit it. And then I looked through it and that's how and they like it because not only that they go out of the classroom, but they say—oh, there is an interconnected thing and that opens their eyes and they become much more eager to engage. They much, in fact, many students, after going through this class in the cocurricular I'm ready to do some more things. I want to get engaged into some of these activities and do more things into that. So that's how, you know. So that's, that's what it is.

>>STEPHANIE: Yes. And, and in the reflections that I read and that you read as well, students will say, well, I was hesitant at first, or it might have been difficult for me to find something that I was interested in going to. But then it became the single most powerful opportunity for me to connect what was happening in the classroom in terms of our discussions, what I'm reading, what my professor is lecturing about and my personal life. So I've also noticed that a number of students say in the reflections that they knew very little about public health prior to the course, but we're planning on pursuing a degree in it.

>>ALOK: Absolutely. Absolutely. Many of them after this course, they want to pursue the public health discipline, nor the public health profession and, which is a testament to this course, I have to say.

>>STEPHANIE: It is testimony to the power of the course. And so, so I have a question for you. How has teaching this course developing and the teaching in teaching the course? How has it impacted you?

>>ALOK: Actually, it has energized me further. That's what I can tell. Because not only that, I see the willingness, in fact, I get very excited about when the students get excited and they're willingness to-- that actually brings me hope that yes, like, you know, things can be done in a positive way. And I am ready to help whatever may-- like they want me to help them in going on as much in my power. I would like to help them to do whatever they want to do. And that is in fact, it has made me even much more humble and in fact much more interested in this topic as well because it's such a complex topic as such. In fact, I have another course which is the advanced level of the same, I teach into the master's level. And they do case studies and they do like, you know and analyze much more data oriented and those kinds of things they do. So that's an advanced level of this course. But here is just the introduction and kind of things-- what

happens is such a dynamic thing that anything I talk about this relates to you on your daily life, whether it's water, whether it's your health, whether it's the Zika virus, whether it's Ebola, whether it's the cancer, whether it's cardiovascular disease, diabetes, you name it. And also I feel is that, you know, our university is a blessed for the diversity. And I have kind of seen that in a given semester up to 20 to 25 countries. Not saying the first generation, even like descendants of 25 to 30 countries are represented in every class. So that even brings a different mindset and that those are the things which even excites me much more like a, they are like, you know, they're the first generation or second-generation people are from all over the planet. So yeah. So that's,

>>STEPHANIE: And how do you know that they are, do you do a survey or is that some information that you get in your class roster? I mean, how do you know that students are—

>>ALOK: You can consider that? You can consider that as the icebreaker. [laughter]

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. Tell us about that...

>>ALOK: In the beginning they have all of them have to introduce themselves. Online they have to introduce and I have a set of questions that you know, or where are you from in the sense that even the first generation, second generation and, and I-- not every time, but sometimes like this semester again I did. And I had about 20 countries represented. So and there you can now we have tool, you can just plot it on the map. It's so all of that looks pretty awesome.

>>STEPHANIE: Oh, that's fantastic.

>>ALOK: Yeah. So they, they provide like, you know, your name, you're like, you know, your semester, where you are, what is your major and anything you'd like to share with your friends and or your class. So if you want you can even post your photo, but that's not mandatory. That's optional. But I have seen majority of them they do. And then in your favorite websites, so these are all, I have a set of questions on my website of the course. So they do that.

>>STEPHANIE: And do you use that to compose your teams later on?

>>ALOK: That is pretty simple actually because you know on the PantherSoft you can download the names and that's where it tells you that which background they're coming, whether they are senior with their sophomore, whether they're junior, we just download it and then you can sort it on the Excel and then you can make that whether they are from biology, from the marketing, from business that is there on the PantherSoft.

>>STEPHANIE: PantherSoft being—that's the information that you get for your class roster.

>>ALOK: Correct.

>>STEPHANIE: So when you get your class roster and you start to divide the students into teams that there'll be in for the course, they're going to be in those teams for creating their projects and doing the projects. And you tend to diversify them in terms of their discipline and their ...

>>ALOK: Year like, and whether their sophomore, junior, or senior or freshman. So it's, I'm not dividing them based on their country of origin or something of that sort. It's just the, where they stand into freshmen, sophomore, junior, senior year. And then also tried to diversify their discipline.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. So let's talk a little about why you compose your teams that way. I think it has to do with the project you were talking earlier about the poster project that they engage in. Tell us a little bit more about the details of that project.

>>ALOK: So it's to kind of instill the idea that there could be multiple different kinds of ways to see the issue, perspective you can get into different so it brings different disciplines together, whether it's like an even for example, if there is a water problem in Asia. So one could be the biological chemical issue-- how you can purify the water. Second could be, okay, can it be the engineering solution? Then could it be how you can distribute the water? So there are several aspects of all these things come together. So the idea of having the different disciplines coming together is to instill the idea that you need everybody together to solve the problem. It's not that okay if there's a biological solution to it. You have to have an engineering solution, you have to have a business solution. You have to have different kinds of solutions coming together to solve the issue. And you know, so you have a problem and you put together the different ideas to solve the problem.

>>STEPHANIE: As a team.

>>ALOK: As a team, as a team, yes.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. Now this is very interesting to me, Alok, because early on in the days of developing the global learning initiative, there was a big debate within the university regarding what we call the global learning foundations courses. So these are courses that either have a 1000 or 2000 level or courses of any number that also reside in the university's general education curriculum sequence. And one of the characteristics that's required of the foundations courses in addition to the one that you described earlier, which is that it's an integrative course, it needs to have some kind of co-curricular activity that ties the students' learning in the classroom with what they know and they engage in outside of the classroom. We also want to have interdisciplinary connections in those foundations courses. And there was a debate, frankly, that we had there was there were people on our establishing committees that said it's too early for students to be doing that in their career. So would you reflect on that a little bit? If you have freshmen and sophomores in your course that maybe have declared a major but haven't really gotten a footing in that major yet, how can they contribute in terms of disciplinary perspectives?

>>ALOK: Because that is more of a topic wise like you have already assigned a problem to them, right? So now they have to do their own research. It's not a perfect solution. It's just a flavor of how to work in a team? So it's not that, okay, this solution, where they're providing the prevention plan or the program evaluation and all that. It's not the perfect solution. It's not what they have done. But are they able to even generate a hypothesis? Are they able to even plan something? How to prevent something, whether it's just communication, how you can in a different culture who can communicate with the people about the Ebola or how can communicate into a different place about certain communication, these communicable diseases. So whether are you going to be and telling people or you will employ the local people who people will listen more? So those kinds of things. It's just a generation of that thought process.

That is my goal here. I'm not looking for a perfect solution. But then whether, let's say for example you have developed a pump to provide the clean water to a village somewhere, but maybe a business major would say, okay, how I can make it sustainable. So if you just leave it free of cost it will dilapidate very quickly. But even if you put a token money there possibly that might engage people and they will be more responsible. So whether that a student can bring that perspective or not, but that's what they are also engaged them to doing research. What are the solutions available in those areas? Because one of the also focus of my, this process or what this course is--- I tell them that we cannot transplant the solution from a different background to a new place. Your goals should be defined, the local resources, your goal should be to find the local knowledge, what it is. How much they do it, it doesn't matter. It's just that that thought process is important.

>>STEPHANIE: So you're basically lighting a fire underneath your students who may have come to you with just a couple of twigs and what you are doing in this course isn't so much a mastery of the content.

>>ALOK: Yeah, I'm not for the mastery of any of the subject. I'm just telling them, okay, this is how you must have a uniform language. These are the local, these are the current issues and crisis of the moment to reference. These are the technologies that we have available, how you can help these to solve this issue. And now if you want to go deep go get this to be effective. One other thing I also tell them is that in fact this was one of our graduate program goals where earlier like, you know, you have the intra intraprofessional goal inter, sorry, interpersonal goals as well as the cognitive goals you should have. So this is the one thing which I also tell them that, that you have to see where you want to be 10 years down the road. You have to project yourself there. Then you have to find a role model or identify a problem or something. What do you want to solve? That's where you have to have interpersonal skills. You have found something and then you tried to interpret how this person got there if you have a role model and then you tried to see-- it may not be the same path you'll be following, but at least it guides you to go there. Then you look for cognitive skills, cognitive skills that, okay, this needs the [indiscernible] statistics. This needs epidemiology. This needs the engineering, this new physics, chemistry of course how much they do it? I don't know, not everybody will follow it, but this will stick to some of them.

>>STEPHANIE: So talk a little bit now about this poster project that you have your students doing, this is the sort of thing that we generally will think about students doing in an upper level course to create a research poster and that they're going to display. But you have the students doing this in sometimes the very first course that they're taking in an undergraduate in their undergraduate career. So what are some of the specific directions that you gave in this assignment in terms of the roles perhaps that your students play on their team, what they must produce and then how they present it to their peers?

>>ALOK: Yeah, I mean it's, again, since I had been doing it from like, since 2013, I think this has worked out pretty well. Some of them hate it. But at the same time, the idea which I want to instill in them is that this is a teamwork. Like, you know, you have to put together, you have to come together to work on this project and they do the research and everything. And I have a template, I have a template on the, wherever the assignment they have to submit. They're like, you know, the already that the subheadings or something like the background hypothesis, methods, results, then you have a summary and conclusion. And then in majority of the cases, the summary and conclusion in something, okay, like this is the result of what I have found. This is what I see, that there is a trend that this disease is much more becoming prevalent or the new

incidents of the diseases coming. So what should we, the prevention plan or where would you take it from there? Whether you like to make the medicines available or whether you'd like to make people educated about it so that they wash their hand or so that they have the clean drinking water or whether there has to be policy change or are they should be provided with the primary health care. So they have to come up with the prevention plan and that is where I think is that the whole team comes together because even-- I don't assign them that. Okay, you will be doing the background, you'll be doing the result part you will be doing -- it is among them because from the very beginning I tell them, you decide who is going to do what because that is when the comradery or team building will come. Yes. I mean there will be some differ here and there. But I would say generally in my class I have 25 groups working and out of that out, I'd say one or two has some issues here and there. And then I asked them, okay, if your team member hasn't responded right to that person and copied to me as well. So certain tweaks here and there, which I have developed over the period of time. And that's how I go about it. And I think that this has been a very successful poster making endeavor for these students. And at the end of it, I used to have them present in two days of my class. But I stopped having them to print it out because then they should come who is going to pay for it and all that. That becomes an issue. So I changed that module. I changed that, that they will make the poster in the PowerPoint one slide two by three feet and then they will just post it onto the online and they will discuss it. They have to have like again, 25 is a lot for them. So I have like a minimum 10 posters you have to make a comment on that. And so they make a comment on that. And then that's how I like it grade them. They also have an opportunity to even grade their peers if they haven't contributed enough. So that is also an assignment or a small quiz. I have a worked with the person was flexible and whether the person contributed enough and then you grade them. I mean I give them the full marks but in majority of the cases, each one of them I have seen they give the full marks with their team members.

[laughter]

>>ALOK: In some cases, yes it's different. But yes, the majority of them they do. So that means no matter what the point here is of the team is functioning.

>>STEPHANIE: Okay. So, and you did mention that there are a few things that you do some tweaks to help the teams to function.

>>ALOK: For them to get along, yes.

>>STEPHANIE: I'm really glad that you mentioned that because our global engagement outcome is stated as the willingness to engage in problem solving. And sometimes our faculty will say, well, we can't solve these problems in our classes. These problems are way too big. We're not going to end them in the course of a semester or even these undergraduate students. We can't do that. So, but you're saying that there is value in attempting to do that in trying to do that. How do you know that there's value for students in doing that?

>>ALOK: Because until unless you attempt, how would you know what problems it will be if you want to actually solve the problem? If you do not attempt, if you're not willing to even engage into an issue, then you cannot even attempt to solve that problem. So similarly in their profession, in their journey of their life, they have to be adapting to the changes. That's the kind of thing I would like to instill into my students that if you're thinking that you can be a doctor in a hospital, maybe not, you may have to work as a disaster medicine, you may have to work as an emergency medicine. You may have to work into completely resource limited place because

yes, in my class also many of them they want to be the doctor, but I tell them that maybe you will be working the telemedicine. You are preparing yourself to be working in the hospital, maybe not. So you have to keep your eyes open and accept how things are coming. If you can change it, mitigate the effect. Sure. Go ahead.

>>STEPHANIE: So you're talking about change in terms of the topic that students are, are, are studying, but you've been teaching this course since 2013 and you talked a little bit about the changes that you have made. What changes do you see on the horizon in terms of this course?

>>ALOK: Well this is a new thing. I would say new thing. People really may have been thinking, but for the last six months or so, which I am, in fact, I have already started in my advanced level courses where I'm telling people, is that okay-- we know that there are problems. We know that the people get sick, people get like, you know, they have an issue with their health and all that kind of thing. They're more people who are healthy, who are still leading their life. They have a quality of life and all that. So is it possible we can go back and see what is happening in their lives or what kind of environment do they live in? How is that impacting their health? So maybe doing that kind of a research possibly will give us some clue and then maybe we can disseminate that information into different formats and is already happening. Like, you know, whether it's a nutrition, whether it's a yoga, whether it's a different, you know, health benefits of all, which is happening already in your case instead of looking at how people fall sick, rather you ask the question how people can be remain better.

>>STEPHANIE: So is there anything else that you'd like to share about your course that we haven't had a chance to explore yet?

>>ALOK: I think you have pretty much covered it and yeah, I kind of very optimistic about this course or maybe even modifying in some way which can even improve the student learning outcomes and not only in the learning outcomes. My idea would be how they can apply this into their lives, not just necessarily for passing the course is to how they can apply. And in fact that has happened many times. A student didn't know what to expect in the class. And then I asked him in the beginning itself that, you know, why are you taking this course? Many say—it's mandatory, that's why I take it, but at the end of it, oh, I learned so much. Okay, that's the thing which I want them to know that when they get out of this class, they should feel that they have learned something, which they can apply into their lives. So that's how I see this course going forward.

>>STEPHANIE: Fantastic. Thank you, Alok. I really appreciate it.

>>ALSO: I really enjoyed it.

>>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 web page, 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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