

## Addressing the Goals

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4b Year 1, Overall Goal #4: *In what ways have we enhanced assessment of student learning? How can we apply that to the curriculum?*

The nature of my course, as defined in the description in the syllabus, was to investigate the multiculturalism that has influenced English identity over the past two thousand years. We began our study with the imperialism of the Roman Empire and continued our explorations through the invasions of the Anglo-Saxons, the Danes, and the Normans. Charting through medieval England and the influences of the Italian Renaissance, we then examined the implications of British imperialism in the nineteenth-century and ended our queries with the international influences of the Commonwealth.

We were based in London, but we also visited cities such as Canterbury, Brighton, and Oxford in order to widen our scope of regional understanding. Throughout our journey, questions were asked about how other cultures continue to influence England. Specifically, because of the award that was granted to me, students were able to understand that national identity is never static nor is it unsullied by foreign influence—such intercultural revelations are increasingly important in the wake of September 11.

- Diversity  
This study abroad course was rooted in cultural difference because it promoted an awareness of history and conquest. Students gained an understanding of how different cultures combined to form contemporary England, be those cultures Italian (Roman), German (Anglo-Saxon), Danish (Viking), French (Norman), Irish, Indian, Pakistani, or Egyptian.
- Globalism  
Aside from learning how to travel internationally, students gained a greater understanding of imperialism and how, for example, English wealth was predicated upon colonial expansion across the globe.
- Regionalism  
Aside from being sensitive to conquest and imperialism, students also saw how the south of England (specifically Westminster, Kent, Sussex, Hertfordshire, and Oxfordshire) has transformed over the past 2000 years.
- Internationalism  
By being aboard students gained a unique perspective on America. More precisely, we examined the following: how the United Kingdom operates within the European Union, and the influence of the Diaspora of emigrants from the Commonwealth nations.

The Bush Grant 4b award therefore allowed me to create a course on-site in England over two weeks in June 2004. This course was then offered over Spring Break 2005 and was based in London with excursions to Canterbury, Brighton, and Oxford. The course examined English cultural heritage with an eye towards the various immigrants/conquerors that have settled in England over the past two-thousand years. For our interests in "Addressing the Goals," this project related to goal number four of the Faculty Development Grant— *In what ways have we enhanced assessment of student learning? How can we apply that to the curriculum?*

One outcome of this grant-funding project has been my ability to consider modes of assessment with greater clarity. By considering what, specifically, I wanted my students to learn while studying abroad in London over ten days, I had to hone my expectations. Thus, instead of concentrating solely upon English history, I wanted them also to consider profound moments of cultural influence. These were the goals of the course, as outlined in my Interim Report:

The major educational goals that students on this course will master include being able to:

- Describe major cultural and historical shifts in English identity
- Understand the basic sociological ramifications of colonialism, post-colonialism, and post-imperialism
- Confidently discuss questions of English identity, nationalism, and the Diaspora
- View American identity and policy from a foreign perspective

Assessment of these educational goals was accomplished through: Preliminary Papers, Reflective Academic Journals, Exams, and Analysis Papers (see Interim Report pages six through eight for greater detail).

As for the second question, *How can we apply that to the curriculum?*, I'm not sure that I would want to assess all of my classes via such rubrics because it might mean teaching towards a test, which is counterproductive for the exploration of literature and creative writing (literature by its very nature encourages disparate readings and, good readings, involve opening the text up rather than shutting it down). I fear that strict assessment criteria such as I have employed for this particular study abroad course could limit metaphysical queries and the critical thinking that literature generally fosters. For my study abroad course in England, however, we are dealing with specific moments of

cultural influence and- since this course serves largely as an introductory " primer" to the complexities of national identity and international travel- a tight rubric grooms my expectations and also enhances student learning.