



Becoming a global citizen without foreign language education?: A micro-level study about the foreign language skills of Hamline CLA students in comparison to the Hamline Plan

Julia Harrer

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Seminar paper from the year 2009 in the subject Cultural Studies - Empiric Cultural Studies, grade: 1, - (Hamline University - International Journalism), course: Senior Research Seminar, language: English, abstract: Do Hamline students get an education to become global citizens? According to its mission statement in the Hamline Plan, the College of Liberal Arts at Hamline University (Saint Paul, MN) is dedicated to preparing its students to "compassionate citizens of the world by helping them maximize their intellectual, creative, and leadership potential". The main research question of this paper investigates if the school realizes its goal by analyzing the second language skills Hamline students can gain or are supposed to gain to become a global citizen.

Globalization and the "shrinking of the world" lead to the necessity to speak foreign languages since the peoples come closer. Even with the global dominance of English, a global citizen needs to be prepared to face language barriers gaining more knowledge than just knowing the English language. Second language is considered as a window for citizens to learn about the outside world and is hence a window to see different cultures.

This micro-level study explores the exposure of students in private liberal arts colleges in the Midwest in the U.S. utilizing Hamline University as an example. The students of the Certificate in International Journalism and Global Studies majors are the only students required to study abroad to strengthen their second language skills. However, they are a small group of students at Hamline University which probably achieve the goal to become "a citizen of the world" because they acquire the skills to communicate in a foreign culture and make connections in the world. Based on surveys about the language skills of Hamline CLA students at Hamline University combined with the content of the mission, I argue that Hamline University does not prepare adequately its students to become global citizens because they do not require them to advance their language skills, which ultimately leads to a lack of ability to communicate in the world.

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