2020 RESULTS UPDATE

Since 2017, Gazelle International has been working with community colleges to establish comprehensive international education initiatives. To share the fruits of our work, let’s take a look at responses and feedback from nearly 400 students and 29 teachers across Connecticut, Wisconsin, France, Mexico, and the Netherlands in years 2017-2020. Teachers may find this information particularly useful as they consider adding virtual exchange to their repertoire. College deans and presidents, instructional design and faculty development teams can find ideas for developing and ensuring a smooth experience with virtual exchange on their campus.

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Virtual exchange is the fulcrum of Gazelle International’s mission. We help connect college classrooms in the US and abroad while consulting with key stakeholders to build lasting partnerships, train faculty and explore all options to fund and advance further internationalization. The goal is to create a smooth entry ramp to sustainable and scalable strategy with strong pedagogy foundations. Here we share results from our “CLICK” program for virtual exchange: Collaborative Learning for International Capabilities and Knowledge.
Study Abroad vs VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

We aspire to provide outcomes equivalent to or better than a good collegiate study abroad program at a fraction of the cost. Research in the US and in Europe shows that study abroad has a positive impact on retention, recruitment and employment prospects of college students. Yet only 11% of all US college graduates do a study abroad of 2 weeks or more. Among community colleges, the number falls to just 1%. With COVID-19 travel bans, virtual exchange proved that we can do better.

Measuring OUTCOMES

Gazelle International focuses on moving from a vision to measurable results for international higher education. We assess outcomes for faculty and students, but we primarily focus on student results. Student success is a priority and key to driving any institution’s internationalization strategy. Gazelle focuses on three key outcomes for assessing students’ results with pre- and post- surveys and qualitative tools:

1. Greater intercultural maturity and awareness of the wider world
2. Increased confidence in finding future success in the global workforce
3. Increased ability to deploy 21st Century skills (technology and teamwork)

As part of our commitment to measuring results in order to create timely and relevant programming, we review specific lessons learned about CLICK during the COVID-19 global pandemic, issues of access and equity in global education, and the teacher perspective of designing and implementing CLICK projects over the years.
Our Growth

CLICK BY THE NUMBERS

It’s an exciting time to CLICK. The CLICK program’s rapid growth is apparent. More teachers join the program each year to receive training, run a module, and repeat modules in the future. The number of institutions involved and CLICK modules designed and run is also increasing quickly. The number of students we serve across the United States, France, Mexico, and the Netherlands is also rapidly growing. And we did not stop there. In Fall 2020, we were excited to bring a new partner on board, Waukesha County Technical College.
Gazelle International began its work in 2017 with the Connecticut Community College System, specifically the Connecticut College of Technology (CT COT), and its partners in France. The French Instituts Universitaires de Technologie (IUTs), which are similar to the US community colleges, partnered with CT COT to bring virtual exchange to their faculty and students. The first project developed under this partnership united classes in IUT Lannion and Asnuntuck Community College. These partnership have continued to grow with renewed efforts from University of Lorraine and University of Paris Saclay in France. In the beginning stages of Connecticut's CT CLICKs program (their adaptation of our CLICK services), there were also two virtual exchange modules between Middlesex Community College in Connecticut and University of La Salle in Mexico. The Connecticut College of Technology's CLICK program has been funded by grants from the National Science Foundation and the Regional Center for Next Generation Manufacturing, along with grants from the French Embassy in the US, and campus and system support.
CLICK Network Growth
Gazelle International’s CLICK Network has continued to grow over the past 4 years. In addition to the previous partnership with the Connecticut College of Technology, we now have partnerships with Waukesha County Technical College in Wisconsin, USA, Prepa UDEM, University of Monterrey in Monterrey, Mexico, ROC Midden Nederland in the Netherlands, Sunderland University in Sunderland, UK, and individual teachers across the globe. Additionally, for the 2021-2022 academic year, we have added eight IUTs from the University of Lorraine and three IUTs from the University of Paris Saclay, both in France.

The CLICK Network Feeds and Reflects Assessment Results
Our rigorous assessments, gathered from students and teachers who complete virtual exchange modules following our teacher training, inform the report we share with you. We demonstrate lessons we have derived from our experience from Fall 2017 through Fall 2020. The results help us adapt our training workshops to better serve students and faculty alike. For this year’s annual report, we have chosen to especially focus on the differences in responses to survey questions before and during the COVID-19 global pandemic. We also share the results of a couple new questions that help us consider the equity implications of virtual exchange. Lastly, we report on what teachers think about CLICK virtual exchange. All of the information comes from pre- and post-CLICK student surveys as well as post-CLICK faculty surveys.
LESSON 1
CLICK's Positive Student Outcomes During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed higher education, as teaching and learning went entirely virtual. But CLICK and Gazelle International have had a head start on virtual learning. CLICK projects have always been online and are now aided by many more robust technology options. Our student results from assessments in Spring and Fall 2020 showed more positive responses to nearly all of our questions. From qualitative responses and personal feedback, it was clear that social relationships involved in CLICK were more important than ever to teachers and students. The teachers who had not previously taught online felt prepared when their whole class was forced to go remote. Students prized the extra peer connections during the lockdown periods. Student responses were also more positive, especially in the value of intercultural knowledge and collaboration as seen in responses to two questions illustrated below (overall in bars, averages in circles).
A core indicator of student success is personal preparation, including students’ sense of their ability to work with technology in collaborative group projects. CLICK’s virtual and collaborative environments proved to be even more vital for students during COVID-19. We’ve seen issues of accessibility around technology being ameliorated due to the pandemic. Students doing a CLICK project during the COVID-19 pandemic reported higher comfort and familiarity with tech, an increase in the potential to network and collaborate, as well as changes in delivery of instruction. In open-ended questions, many students found tech and teamwork to be both their major challenge and their greatest source of pride in the end when they were able to manage the project and overcome the difficulties. These qualitative findings help provide nuance to the close-ended questions we share below.
LESSON 2
CLICK Access and Equity - Preliminary Thoughts

First-generation Students
First-generation college students, or students whose parents have not earned a four year degree, face unique challenges. Roughly one-third of students at community colleges are first-generation, and few community college students overall (less than 1%) have the opportunity to study abroad. Starting in Fall 2020, we asked students to indicate their parents’ highest level of education. Our data set is currently very small (out of 41 students in the fall, only 30 answered this question), and we only tracked their results in one semester of post-CCLICK surveys so far. Even with this smaller sample size, we can still start the preliminary work of understanding how CCLICK serves first-generation students in particular.

The questions below have to do with worldview and broad attitudes. We also turn to our workforce question, perhaps an aspect of virtual exchange particularly important for first-generation students. Compared to continuing-generation students, first-generation students who responded to the CCLICK survey more strongly agreed that learning to collaborate cross-culturally prepared them for the global workforce, and that the course changed their perception of another country or culture.
First-generation Students
A recent report indicates that “One year after earning a bachelor’s degree in academic year 2015–16, 80% of both first-generation and continuing-generation graduates were employed, but fewer first-generation graduates had a job that requires a bachelor’s degree” (NASPA Association for Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education). Virtual exchange could add more skills to first-generation college graduates’ resumes and perhaps expand career options for them. First-generation college students on average also participated in less extracurricular activities during their undergraduate education. Although built into a home course, CLICK virtual exchange adds a unique opportunity for students to collaborate, build relationships, and try something new, much like an extracurricular activity could.

Lastly, first-generation students are less likely than continuing-generation students to hold a (paid) internship during their undergraduate education. We believe CLICK could be a beneficial way to fill this gap and provide all students who participate with skills that are easily transferrable to the workforce. In fact, we share resources with CLICK students and teachers to help them articulate their project-based, collaborative, technology-enabled experience on their resumes. Again, doing these activities within the classroom structure allows students to prepare for the workforce by gaining important transferrable skills without the additional burden of a formal internship - whether paid or unpaid - that is not possible for all community college students of varied backgrounds and circumstances.

These are promising initial findings, and we hope to build on this foundation as we begin to track this first-generation data.
Since 2018, we’ve asked students in their surveys to indicate whether or not they have a passport, inspired by the University of Toledo’s community college internationalization protocol. Since then, we’ve received 511 responses (pre and post-CCLICK). This is an important number to track, given that in our first year, only 4 out of 70 U.S. students had passports. In the years since, the passport numbers have evened out. We’ve noticed for questions pertaining to worldview, students without passports show a larger change in global and cultural awareness through the CCLICK module. The first year data also caught leadership attention pointing to a very low degree of passports among US students and underscoring the global gap. There are limitations with isolating passport data: both the U.S. and France have a large immigrant and refugee population, and we are not able to distinguish between students who were immigrants versus nationals. As we accumulate more data, we will parse out the correlations between passport holders and first-generation students. Students who are not passport holders nor continuing-generation students are less likely to study abroad, and therefore the intercultural gains from virtual exchange can be especially important.
For four years, we’ve tracked faculty feedback on CLICK through end of semester surveys. What did our faculty think of CLICK? And what did teachers gain from their CLICK experience? Across all four years of data, faculty by and large agreed that CLICK introduced them to new knowledge and skills related to globalization and teaching in a global classroom. We have adapted the training and mentoring over the years and see the results in the projects and in the feedback. In the first chart, notice how teachers in Year 4 more emphatically agreed about the transferable skills they learned through CLICK. As we gathered the data and listened to the feedback from the teachers, we were able to provide better training experiences for both teachers and, ultimately, for their students, too.

CLICK provided a sustainable approach to cross-cultural exchange and learning by creating a global classroom environment without the travel. Despite the difficulties with the forced mass shift to online learning, CLICK enabled teachers to make connections with institutional partners they otherwise wouldn’t have been able to meet: “I really enjoyed this experience, especially in a COVID environment. I really enjoyed meeting global partners.”
In working with community and technical colleges, Gazelle International strives to back up our vision for student success with solid information on results, both good and bad. We use these data-driven metrics to keep teacher training and support up-to-date and responsive to the challenges and opportunities of virtual exchange. After sharing these three lessons from our work with our teaching partners, we also look forward to building on them as we enter the next stage of developing robust internationalization strategies at the institutional level.

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