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Preparing for Change: Challenges and Opportunities in a Global World

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Our world is becoming increasingly global. This may sound like a cliché, yet it is true nonetheless, and poses unprecedented challenges for graduate education. For the new generation of researchers, teachers and professionals to be successful they must be prepared in more than the content area of their chosen field. They must also acquire proficiency in global awareness, cultural literacy, multicultural teamwork and language facility. These global skill sets form the basis for effective multicultural collaboration and will become increasingly important even for those who do not intend to study or work abroad. Knowledge has become more portable in the internet age; large data bases and reports can be accessed in real time from various locations around the globe; information is exchanged in multifaceted knowledge networks; collaborative research takes place within and outside of the traditional venue of the research university in the private sector, research institutes, and associations; research networks span multiple disciplines as progress invariably occurs at the intersection of previously discrete fields of inquiry. Global collaboration thus is no longer dependent on the physical proximity of collaborators but can take place anywhere any time. This then requires yet another set of skills, namely the ability to adapt to change, exhibit flexibility and transfer skills to a range of contexts and applications. Effective graduate education must address these realities and expose students to learning opportunities that will enable them to acquire these much needed global skills sets.