Virtual Exchange & Your Skills

Cal Poly San Louis Obispo
May 28, 2020

Stevens Initiative

www.stevensinitiative.org
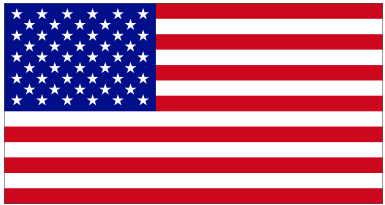
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Today's presentation:

- Intro to the Initiative & Virtual Exchange

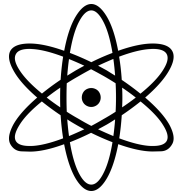- Discussion on skills gained through a VE and how to talk about it.

- Q&A/Discussion

The Stevens Initiative is a lasting tribute to Ambassador Christopher Stevens, who dedicated his career to building bridges between people in the United States and the MENA region

Students need global competence to tackle the 21st century's challenges and take advantage of the opportunities before them.

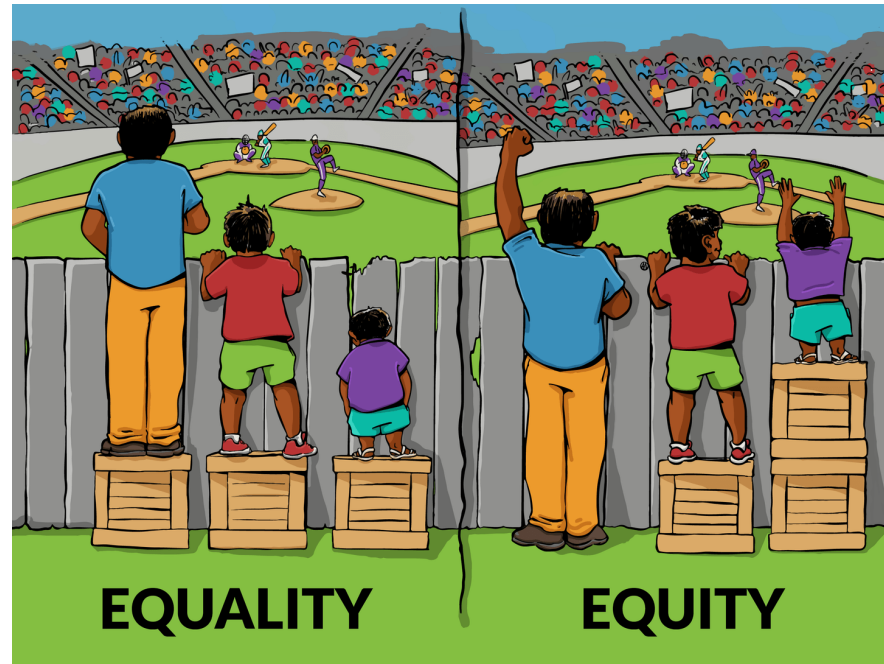# ... but the opportunities aren't always there.

What is virtual exchange?

Virtual Exchange is **Online,**

Sustained, | **Collaborative** | **Learning**

It involves enduring connections that take place over time – allowing for relationships to be built and for new mindsets and skills to be reinforced

Students work together on common projects and goals – it goes beyond dialogue to joint action

It's educational. Virtual exchanges are designed to achieve specific learning outcomes and curricular goals

- **Integrated** into curricula
- Increasing **global connectivity** between young people
- Enhancing **mutual understanding** and respect
- Can reach **almost every student**
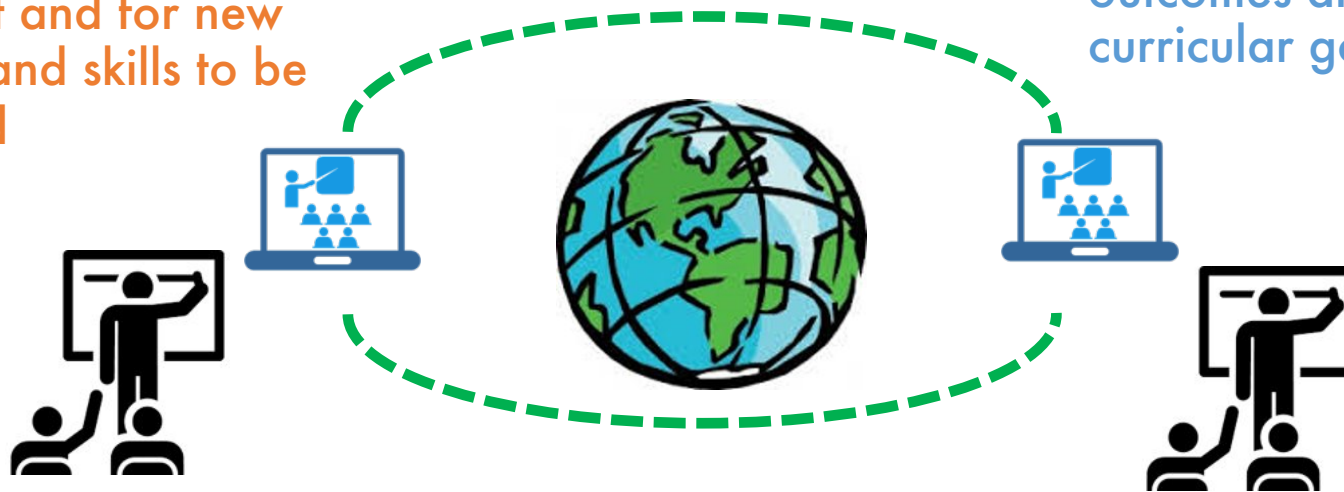
An example of synchronous virtual exchange

Virtual Exchange is Not

- MOOCs
- Virtual mobility
- Digital Penpals
- Distance learning courses
- Informal social media interactions
- Unmoderated, unsustained, unstructured communication
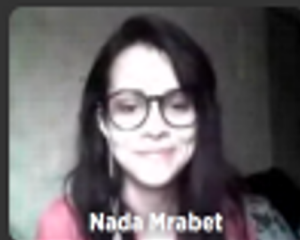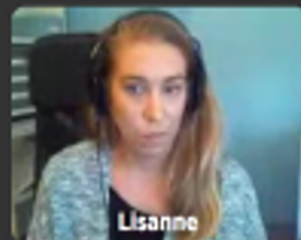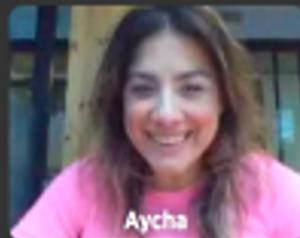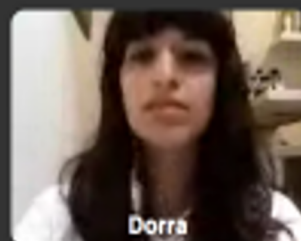
How the Stevens Initiative supports Virtual Exchange

- *Grant Competitions*
- *Targeted Investments*
- *Grantee Support*

Investments

Advocacy

Knowledge Hub

- *Raising Awareness*
- *Demand Generation*
- *Resource Mobilization*

- *Evaluation Data*
- *Toolkits*
- *Practitioner Resources*
- *Webinars, etc*

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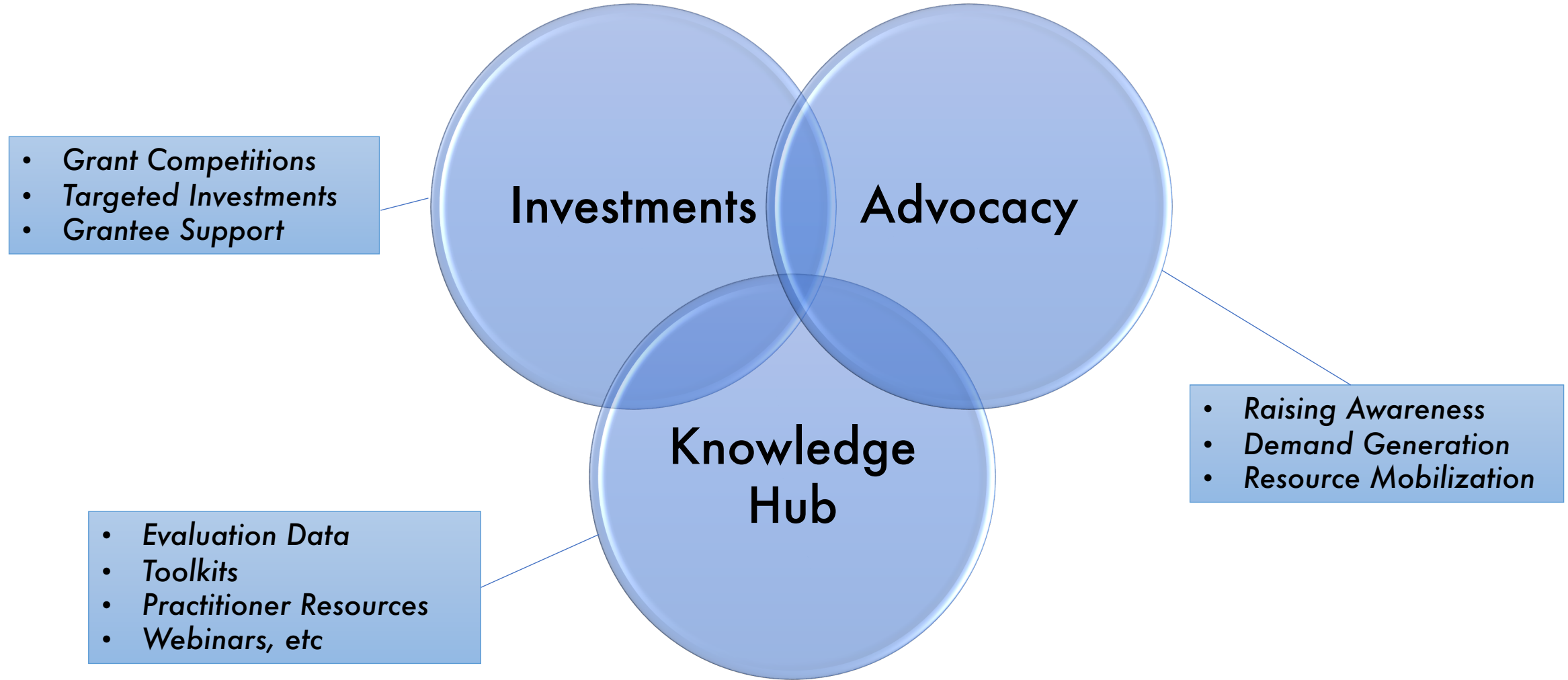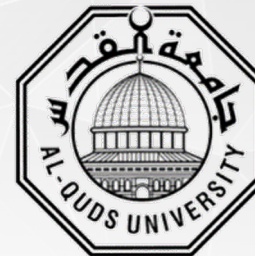
Our grantees

A few of our implementing partners

Subjects where our grantees have used virtual exchange
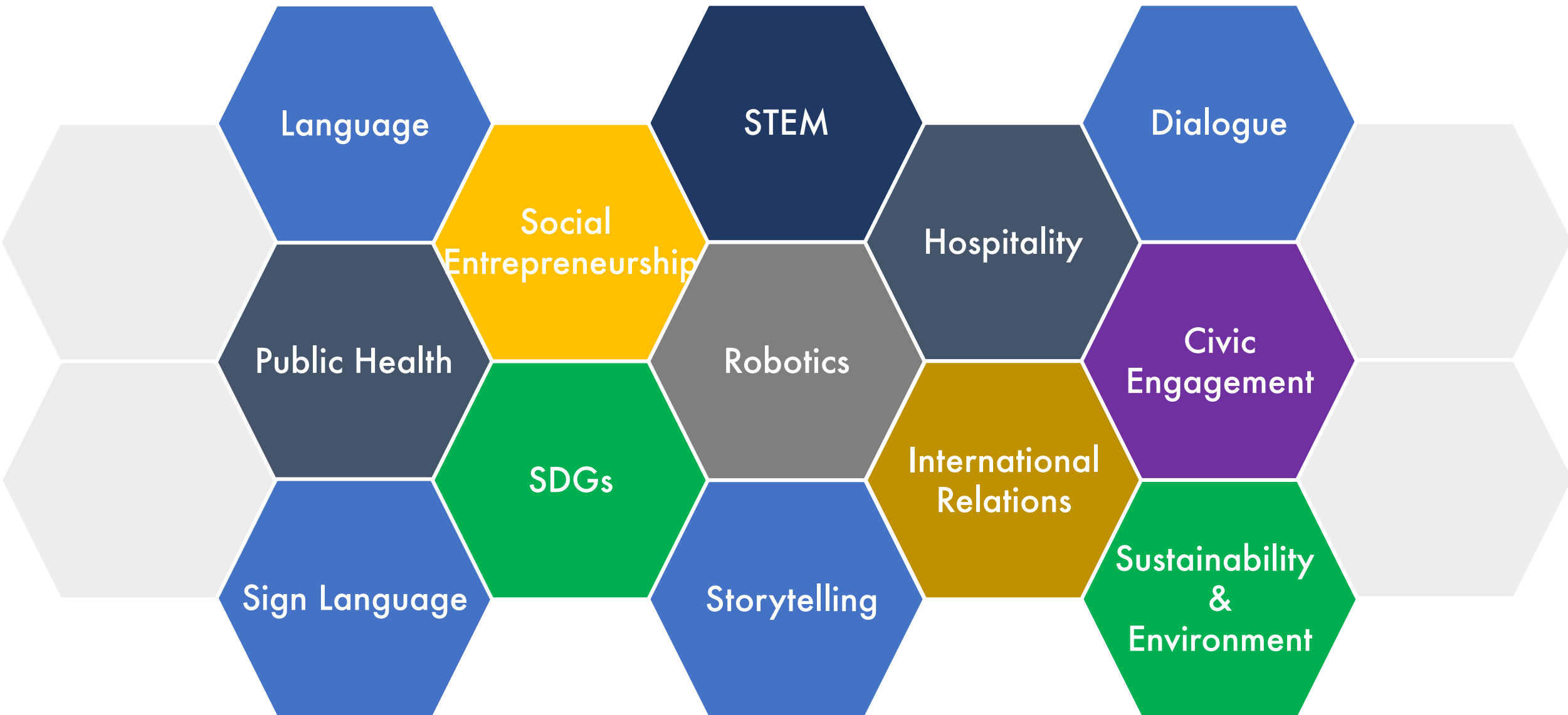
Language

Social Entrepreneurship

STEM

Hospitality

Dialogue

Public Health

Robotics

Civic Engagement

SDGs

International Relations

Sign Language

Storytelling

Sustainability & Environment
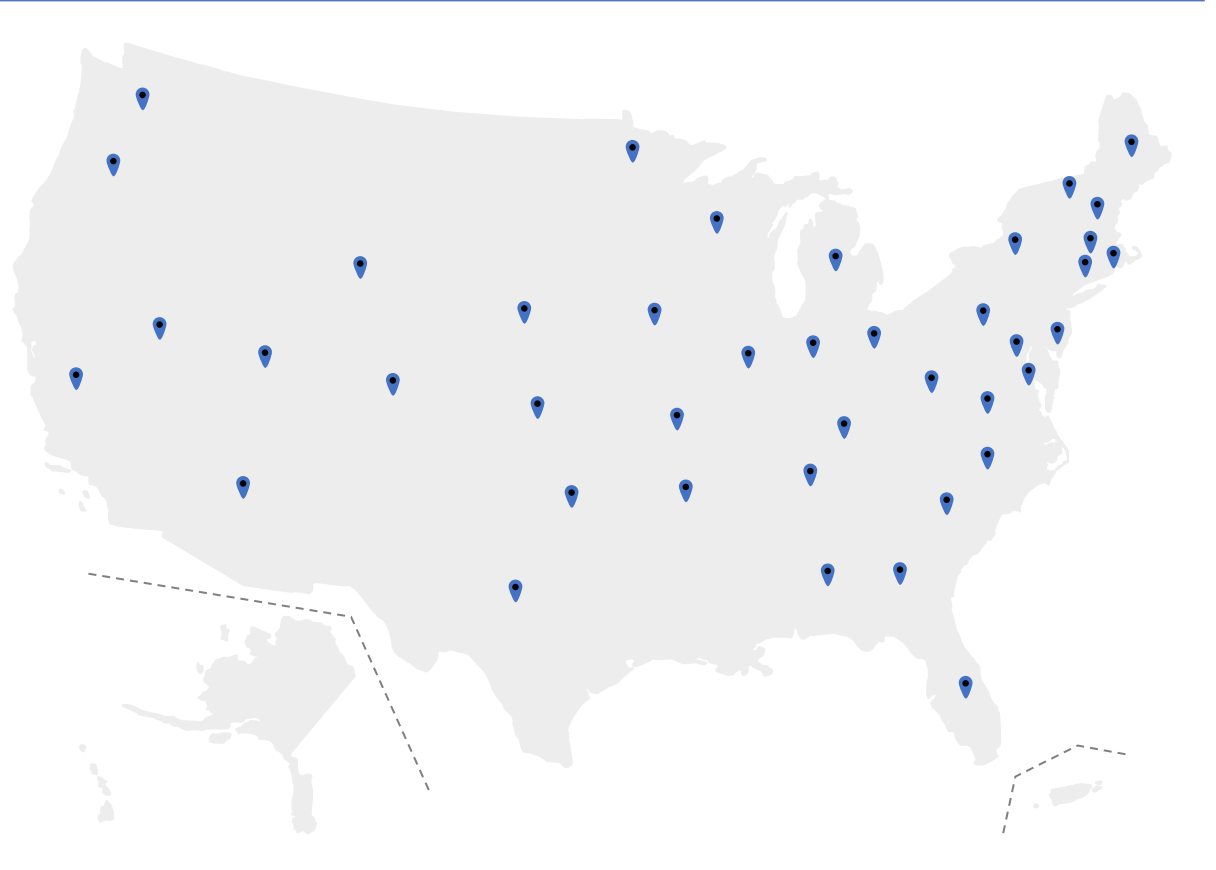
Cumulative Stevens Initiative award reach

Over **24,000** students reached

45 U.S. States

15 MENA countries, as well as refugees

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In April of 2019 we announced another round of grant awards reaching an additional 14,000 students.

Where does virtual exchange tie into discussions on skills?

Transferable Skills

- ## What are skills?

  - Skills are what employers are looking for during the job search process

  - Skills are why you get hired!

- ## What are transferable skills?

  - Skills that you learned in one experience, but will help you during the next experience

  - Examples: communication, problem solving, teamwork, and more!

Skills are your way to the next opportunity!

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Figure 1: Attributes Employers Seek on a Candidate's Resume

ATTRIBUTE	% OF RESPONDENTS
Communication skills (written)	82.0%
Problem-solving skills	80.9%
Ability to work in a team	78.7%
Initiative	74.2%
Analytical/quantitative skills	71.9%
Strong work ethic	70.8%
Communication skills (verbal)	67.4%
Leadership	67.4%
Detail-oriented	59.6%
Technical skills	59.6%
Flexibility/adaptability	58.4%
Computer skills	55.1%
Interpersonal skills (relates well to others)	52.8%

- Attributes = skills
- From NACE, National Association of Colleges and Employers

- www.naceweb.org/talent-acquisition/candidate-selection/employers-want-to-see-these-attributes-on-students-resumes/

Skills from your Virtual Exchange

- Cross-cultural Communication

- Teamwork

- Managing technology

- Problem Solving

- Global Competence

Cross-Cultural Communication Skills

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Definition:

- Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions.

- Demonstrates ability to articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms with those from different cultures.

When they're valuable:

- Speaking with a client from another culture/English is not their first language.

- Understanding non-verbal communication cues during a negotiation.

Teamwork Skills

Definition:

- Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers representing diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, religions, lifestyles, and viewpoints.

- Able to work within a team structure and can negotiate and manage conflict.

When they're valuable:

- Collaborating with teams in different locations – being mindful of customs, cultures, local issues.

- Effectively managing or working with people from different backgrounds to accomplish a task – like a team of engineers building a bridge.

Technology

Definition:

- Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

- Demonstrates effective adaptability to new and emerging technologies.

When they're valuable:

- It's very commonplace now to have teams with members in different parts of the country/world.

- It is likely that the pandemic's impact will continue – how will you show up and communicate in a digital only world? Will you be able to communicate effectively and accomplish your tasks?

Problem Solving Skills

Definition:

- Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.

- Able to obtain, interpret, and use knowledge, facts, and data in this process, and may demonstrate originality and inventiveness.

When they're valuable:

- A consultant is helping a company navigate a regulatory and cultural barrier to launch a product in a country – they have to understand the role of culture as well as have technical skills to determine the best strategy.

- A manager for an agriculture company has to get soybeans to customers overseas – but with a pandemic, logistics are disrupted – so a combination of data and global awareness will help navigate the issue.

Global Competence

Definition:

- Global competence is the capacity and disposition to understand and act on issues of global significance.

Why it's important:

- *Global competence is the toolkit a productive, involved citizenry uses to meet the problems and opportunities of the world.*

- *A new generation of students requires different skills from the generations that came before.*

- *More than ever before, individual actions reach around the globe.*

- *Global competence integrates knowledge of the world and the skill of application with the disposition to think and behave productively.*

- *Success in career and life will depend on global competence, because career and life will play out on the global stage.*

https://asiasociety.org/education/global-competence-outcomes-and-rubrics

Your Goals: Where do you want your skills to take you?

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College or Graduate School

- Think about what admissions officers are looking for.

- What about this experience might be important for an admissions officer reviewing your application?

- Was this experience related to your desired field of study?

Job or Career

- Think about what hiring managers are looking for.

- What about this experience might be important for an employer looking at your resume?

- Did you gain skills that are needed for your desired career?

- Articulate how you are able to "connect the dots".

Answering a question using STAR

Question: "Tell me about a time when you had to communicate and work on a team."

Situation: I participated in a virtual exchange during my junior spring semester. In this program, students formed international teams to identify social challenges and create entrepreneurial solutions.

Task: Our main focus was communicating with our international virtual team and accomplishing multiple tasks towards achieving our goal. I contributed as my team's US leader.

Action: I tried to get to know my international partners as well as I could. I asked questions, shared information about myself, tried to establish some communication norms and ways to work together. We had to make some adjustments for cultural differences, but in the end I was really proud of the project we put together.

Result: Not only did we complete our project, but I gained multiple skills including communicating with an international team, problem solving, and working with technology platforms.

Answering a question with STAR #2

Question: "Tell me about a problem or a challenge you had to overcome."

Situation: I recently participated in a virtual exchange program. In this program, students were asked to participate in global leadership and education course. In addition, we explored our international partners cultures through informal contact and virtual meetings.

Task: It was my responsibility to make a connection with my international partner and schedule multiple interactions with my virtual group members so I could learn about their daily life. The problem was I could not seem to get anyone to respond to my emails after our first meeting.

Action: At first I was frustrated, but I thought I should try to solve the problem on my own. I sent a follow up email and I messaged my contact using Whatsapp. I also let my program coordinator know, just so they could provide support if necessary.

Result: After I sent the Whatsapp message, my partner got back to me and we were able to schedule the follow up meeting. They hadn't received my emails! I learned that instead of just giving up, I should be persistent and look for multiple ways to solve my problem.

LEARN TOGETHER TODAY.
LEAD TOGETHER TOMORROW.

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