Redesigning the “International Agricultural Development” Course

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Introduction
Higher education must enable students to acquire global awareness, be sensitive to and understand culture and diversity, effectively adapt, work, and communicate with the international community, and achieve global competence in their career fields. “Designated” international courses are a definitive starting point for students who have never studied abroad. They also aid students to acquire a theoretical basis and analytical perspective without which mobility opportunities might not be well processed, understood, and taken advantage of. In addition, in professional schools, these courses help the students understand better why global issues and international perspectives are important for them, not just as individuals, but also as professionals.

Purpose of the poster
The purpose of the poster is to present graphically the content, structure, and dynamics of the “International Agricultural Development” course, discuss the instructor’s experience, expose the conclusions of a review based on peer and student evaluations, and examine how and why the course has been changing throughout the years.

Major points or information to be shared
The “International agricultural development” course explores critical issues in international and global agricultural development. International development programs are described and studied with an interdisciplinary focus, with emphasis on the analysis of factors affecting success in leadership roles for international cooperation, technology transfer, agricultural extension and education, and human resource development. Case studies concentrate on the developing world. Course dynamics integrate the subject matter with activities that empower students to develop a global understanding and the leadership and communication skills so needed and valued in today's global workplace. Lectures are strongly supported by case studies that are reviewed and addressed in group and class discussions, projects, student reports, and presentations.

The most significant changes throughout the years respond to adapting the content to current events and concerns, transforming dynamics to increase time spent in “case-based” and group activities, and increasing the number of “directed” reading assignments. Student evaluations also indicate the need to divide the course in two: “Introduction to international agricultural development,” and “Analysis of international development programs.”

Conclusions
“Designated” international courses are just one piece of the internationalization puzzle. These courses may be addressed differently by various people, from institution to institution, year to year, but being able to use and learn from the experience of others will help improve and enhance future endeavors.

Educational importance
The poster provides information and tools that may aid in the development and updating of other “designated” international courses. It may also serve as a tool for faculty working on the infusion of international contents into traditional programs, study abroad courses, and efforts to internationalize the campus environment (e.g., seminars, round-table discussions).