



Global Education: Bring on the New Frontier!

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How fantastic! A special issue of the *Athletic Training Education Journal* dedicated to global education within athletic training and therapy. Forgive the colloquialism, but “*who knew?*” The fact that our profession has grown to the point where this dialogue is necessary is exciting! Which is exactly what this special issue is intended to do, generate dialogue. Many of the ideas and comments submitted in this issue will challenge assumptions and introduce new ways of thinking about what athletic training and therapy are and where and how they can be learned. Globalization is propelling athletic training and therapy education into uncharted waters, and we need the collective wisdom of our experienced educators and clinicians, young professionals, and students to contribute to this dialogue. As you read this issue, allow it to become a catalyst for creative and innovative dialogue about athletic training and therapy education and clinical practice on a global scale.

Athletic training and therapy education has gone global. The reality is that the world has always been global, and globalism is a concept as old as the world itself. Its tenet is that people have always sought to get from point A to point B for the sake of proliferating ideas, customs, and goods; to do that they needed to invent roads, ships, and other mechanisms (such as trade routes) to accomplish those goals. Recent history, however, has introduced the phenomenon of globalization, which is distinct from globalism and is about the increasing speed and ease in which the exchange of ideas and products can occur. Globalization is a game changer for athletic training and therapy and has helped to put our profession and our profession's knowledge on the world's stage. Examples of how athletic trainers and therapists have leveraged globalization include cultural awareness campaigns; study abroad programs; global social media; expatriate athletic trainers; international speaker programs and exchanges; collaboration with international partners; Fulbright scholarships; injury infographics in different languages¹; and international fellowships, to name a few.

Thrilling! That is the word that comes to mind when I consider the implications of global education in athletic training and therapy. Even more thrilling is the possibility of

international athletic training and therapy education, and more specifically Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education–accredited education programs outside of the United States. Global education and internationally accredited athletic training and therapy programs are related but separate phenomena. On one hand, global education is a result of the unprecedented proliferation of athletic training and therapy's unique body of knowledge around the globe; and on the other hand, that proliferation is contributing to the recognition, in other countries, that athlete health care, and any requisite skill set needed to provide that health care, is unique and requires specialized and focused education. That specific type of education is the most valuable and useful when an athletic trainer or therapist delivers it and athletic training and therapy come from it.

Since 1995, when I began my athletic training career, I have been fortunate enough to use my athletic training education and research in several countries (China, Peru, Australia, Honduras, South Africa, Australia, Belize, Brazil, South Korea, and Rwanda, to name a few), but it has not always been that way. Ironically, not long ago, athletic training only occurred on the sidelines of selected sports and almost exclusively in America. Personally, I have intentionally been an ambassador for athletic trainers and athletic training when I travel abroad; my small, sometimes seemingly insignificant contribution is a small drop in the ocean compared with what many of our colleagues are doing to promote athletic training and therapy globally. The good news is that our combined effort is paying off! Other countries are beginning to realize they need athletic trainers and therapists too!

Interprofessional collaboration, emerging settings, and international recognition were things we only talked about as “someday far away” phenomena. In fact, it was only a decade or two ago that a dedicated athletic training study abroad course was virtually unheard of. Today, those are common realities, and students expect athletic training and therapy study abroad opportunities (and ask about them during campus visits as part of their university selection requirements). My, how things have changed for the better!

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As part of my role on the National Athletic Trainers' Association's International Committee, I spearhead, with National Athletic Trainers' Association's senior special projects coordinator Katie Scott, the International Ambassadors Program—a program that helps connect athletic trainers working abroad (for long-term assignments) with experienced athletic trainers who are very familiar with that country to help them assimilate, navigate, and integrate into their new geographical and cultural environment. Initiatives like this and others (eg, international speaker exchange programs, international school initiatives) will help keep athletic trainers and therapists engaged and out front on the global scene. Athletic training and therapy educators need to recognize and

embrace this new frontier and begin to prepare current and future athletic trainers for global practice as well to interact with colleagues who are educated to be an athletic trainer or therapist entirely outside of North America. Bring on the new frontier!

REFERENCE

1. National Athletic Trainers' Association International Committee. Resources. National Athletic Trainers' Association Web site. <https://www.nata.org/professional-interests/international/resources>. Accessed November 30, 2019.