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To the Editor:

Nicholas D. Kristof encourages students to spend a year between high school and college traveling abroad to prepare themselves "to survive globalization."

While exploring and working in an unfamiliar community can certainly be educational and helpful, students, especially those who might not be able to afford or do not otherwise have the opportunity, need not necessarily go overseas to do so.

As the recent devastation of Hurricane Katrina demonstrates, there are numerous communities here in the rural and urban parts of the United States where one can gain an education in foreign languages, religions and cultures while working on such serious problems as poverty, homelessness, illiteracy, unemployment and discrimination.

Too often, we assume that cultural enrichment and valuable public service occur only abroad. Gaining worldliness while making a significant contribution to addressing the social ills of globalization can also start at home.

Zachary D. Kaufman
Stanford, Calif., March 21, 2006

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