Methods for Preparing and Assessing Intercultural Competence in Study Abroad

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Session Overview

Introductions and Objectives of Session

Cultural Learning Activities and Debrief

Overview of intercultural competence and why it’s important

Project Overview

Discussion in small groups

Final Discussion in Large Group

Small groups can share some of the ideas they discussed

Opportunities for questions about the project
With many thanks to:

Elon University’s Center for Engaged Learning Seminar on Integrating Global Learning with the University Experience: Higher Impact Study Abroad and Off-Campus Domestic Study

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Seminar Leaders:

- Nina Namaste, Elon University
- Neal Sobania, Pacific Lutheran University
- Amanda Sturgill, Elon University
- Mick Vande Berg, MVB Associates
3 Session Objectives

1. To facilitate a dialogue about intercultural competence, specifically in the context of short-term study abroad programs. What is intercultural competence? How can we (and why should we) foster it in student learning experiences?

1. To describe our research project and methodology for assessing intercultural competence.

1. To invite sharing among participants about efforts to foster and/or assess intercultural learning.
http://www.transum.org/Software/SW/Starter_of_the_day/starter_Sevenber23.asp
TheImmersionAssumptionInStudyAbroad

The world awaits you.
The Cultural Iceberg

Surface Culture
- Food
- Flags
- Festivals
- Fashion
- Holidays
- Music
- Performances
- Dances
- Games
- Arts & Crafts
- Literature
- Language

Deep Culture
- Communication Styles and Rules
  - facial expressions
  - gestures
  - eye contact
  - personal space
  - touching
  - body language
  - tone of voice
  - handling and displaying of emotion
  - conversational patterns in different social situations
- Notions of:
  - courtesy and manners
  - friendship
  - leadership
  - cleanliness
  - modesty
  - beauty
- Concepts of:
  - self
  - time
  - past and future
  - fairness and justice
  - roles related to age, sex, class, family, etc.
- Attitudes toward:
  - elders
  - adolescents
  - dependents
  - rule expectations
  - work
  - authority
  - cooperation vs. competition
  - relationships with animals
- Approaches to:
  - religion
  - courtship
  - marriage
  - raising children
  - decision-making
  - problem-solving
Intercultural Competence and Why It’s Important for Global Learning

“Building intercultural competence involves increasing cultural self-awareness; deepening understanding of the experiences, values, perceptions, and behaviors of people from diverse cultural communities; and expanding the capability to shift cultural perspective and adapt behavior to bridge across cultural differences.”

- Mitchell R. Hammer
Intercultural Competence and Why It’s Important for Global Learning

Intercultural competence is a skill

Relevant for student learning at home, as well as abroad

Ethical reasons for teaching intercultural competence

Intercultural competence leads to greater self knowledge and reflexivity
What is the Intercultural Development Inventory?

The IDI is a 50-item, cross-culturally generalizable, valid and reliable assessment of intercultural competence.

The IDI been “back translated” into many languages.

IDI measures intercultural competence along a continuum, which is based on the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity developed by Milton Bennett.

IDI has been used in more than 70 publications and 66 PhD dissertations. i.e. its validity is backed up by extensive research!

Confidential results!!
Project Overview

Our research question: How does the extent of pre-departure cultural orientation affect students ICC in short-term, faculty-led study abroad programs?

Will students in short-term programs demonstrate growth in ICC if appropriate pre-departure orientation is provided?
Will students in programs with higher levels of cultural orientation demonstrate greater growth in ICC?

Challenges with short-term study abroad

What are some of the gaps in our knowledge?

Difficult to assess intercultural competence
Difficult to understand what brings about change in ICC
Difficult to understand the role of pre-departure orientation
Data Collection

Data being collected:

- Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) administered pre- and post-study abroad program
- Writing prompts for written reflections at 4 times before, during, and after program

Data collected from 92 participants in 6 short-term study abroad at 6 institutions in the U.S. and Canada:

- Community College of Philadelphia, Tanzania, 9 subjects
- Elon University, Italy, 24 subjects
- Wabash College, Peru, 12 subjects
- St. Olaf College, Peru, 18 subjects
- Guelph University, India, 20 subjects
- Mount Royal University, Honduras, 9 subjects
Data Analysis

Comparison of pre- and post-IDI scores for evidence of development in ICC

Qualitative data:

- Coding themes identified following multiple rounds of open coding
- Inter-reliability established among the 6 researchers
- Storage and coding of student reflections using Dedoose software ([www.Dedoose.com](http://www.Dedoose.com))
What have you done to facilitate intercultural learning in your study abroad programs? Share effective activities and strategies with your group.

How might you adapt this methodology to assess intercultural learning among your study abroad participants?

What challenges do you face in your study abroad programs that are related to teaching or assessing intercultural competence? How do you address them?
Final Discussion

Share ideas and questions generated in your table discussion.