

Assessment and Evaluation

MODERATOR: Madeleine Green, Vice President, Center for International Initiatives, American Council on Education

RAPPORTEUR: J. Barron Boyd, Professor of Political Science, Director, Center for Peace and Global Studies, Le Moyne College

PARTICIPANTS

- **Christa Olson**, Associate Director, Center for International Initiatives, American Council on Education
- **Michael Vande Berg**, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Council on International Education and Exchange (CIEE)
- **Caryn McTighe Musil**, Senior Vice President, American Association of Colleges and Universities
- **Steven Poulos**, Director, South Asia Language Resource Center, University of Chicago

- **Summary of Presentation Topic/Theme**

The panel consisted of a group of distinguished leaders in the field with particular experience in assessing the outcomes of programs in the International Education Program Services area. Originally the panel was given the following questions/issues as an organizing theme:

One of the most difficult aspects of program management in any field is assessing successes and failures. Educators generally like to focus on educational inputs. That is, they count numbers of students in a class, the numbers of contact hours between teacher and student, and the number of participants at various seminars or fora.

The innovation in educational assessment, however, is measuring learning outcomes. As noted in the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) report on the Title VI/FH programs, "In determining the effectiveness of a program, one should aim to assess impacts and outcomes or the accomplishment of program or social objectives that can be attributed to the program."

Moreover, evaluation and assessment has become a much more important aspect of philanthropic giving in the United States, and of course the US Department of Education requires that its IEPS programs evaluate their impact. The panel discussed current initiatives to measure the success of internationalization at institutions of higher education.

Panel chair Madeline Green began the session with the comment that in recent years attitudes toward assessment have changed profoundly on American college campuses. Whereas before there was great skepticism about the need for and motivation behind assessment, recently there has been a sea change and people realize that assessment can be very useful in establishing what has been done and focusing on what remains to be achieved.

She proposed that the panelists address three themes sequentially:

1. What is being assessed,
2. How do we assess outcomes in those areas,
3. What problems have been encountered.

Green also suggested that the discussion move from the most specific program to the most general, beginning with Steven Poulos (Director, South Asia Language Resource Center,

University of Chicago) and the Center's attempt to develop online assessment of competence in South Asian languages. Michael Vande Berg would subsequently explore assessment of study abroad programs, with particular reference to data produced by the Georgetown Consortium. Caryn McTighe Musil, would discuss the American Association of Universities and Colleges's "Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility" program, and finally, Christa Olson would present the American Council on Education's, "Assessing International Learning Outcomes" which is a subset of the larger ACE "Enhancing Campus Internationalization" initiative.

Round One: What is it that we are assessing?

Dr. Poulos focused on assessing competence in South Asian languages, using an on-line adaptation of the STAMP program developed at the University of Oregon. This instrument supplements the only previous test in the language group, an Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in Hindi, developed by the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL). Having more assessment instruments delivered in different ways will facilitate the assessment process, and help with placement in educational programs, especially in language courses, after a study abroad or work experience. It will also prove potentially useful for business and government and will give guidelines for teachers of South Asian languages, especially those with less experience.

Michael Vande Berg, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Chief Academic Officer, Council on International Education and Exchange (CIEE) followed with a discussion of assessing study abroad programs, especially US students studying abroad. He cited, in particular, the Georgetown Consortium, a three-year study of 1300 students at four universities designed to analyze evidence of student learning abroad in three areas: second-language acquisition, gains in intercultural sensitivity, and learning within disciplinary contexts such as business, English, social sciences, etc.

This study, according to Vande Berg, explored attitudes on study abroad which are often taken for granted or ignored, provided baseline data on motivations for going abroad, and might lead to longitudinal studies (15-20 years) on the long term effect of study abroad experience.

Caryn McTighe Musil, Senior Vice President, American Association of Colleges and Universities, has seen another "sea change" in what "global learning" means on college campuses. It is not merely study abroad anymore, but now includes a broader definition of global learning which is being incorporated into the DNA of institutions and what they do on home campuses, as well.

Data indicates that students want to learn about global issues, but only 20% have had a course dealing primarily or exclusively with international subject matter, and 40% have had no exposure to international issues in courses.

One important goal is to infuse global issues and questions into core/general education course as well as in mission statements. How do we get to that goal? Study abroad and language course are not adequate to attain the larger goal so we need to explore comprehensive ways to move toward greater global consciousness for all students.

The AACU "Shared Futures: Global Learning and Social Responsibility" program, supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Secondary Education (FIPSE) is one such comprehensive program and its goals are to help institutions:

- Gain a deep, comparative knowledge of the world's peoples and problems
- Explore the historical legacies that have created the dynamics and tensions of their world
- Develop intercultural competencies so they can move across boundaries and unfamiliar territory and see the world from multiple perspectives

- Sustain difficult conversations in the face of highly emotional and perhaps uncongenial differences
- Understand—and perhaps redefine—democratic principles and practices within a global context
- Gain opportunities to engage in practical work with fundamental issues that affect communities not yet well served by their societies
- Believe that their actions and ideas will influence the world in which they live (<http://www.aacu.org/SharedFutures/guidingprinciples.cfm>)

Christa Olson, Associate Director, Center for International Initiatives, American Council on Education, described an on-going program, "Assessing International Learning Outcomes" (also supported by FIPSE), which aims to assess what it means to produce "globally competent grads."

Assessment is critical if institutions want to know whether their efforts at internationalization have been successful. How else do they know if learning outcomes have been affected? How do they improve and globalize their curricula? and how do they realize greater coherence in their approach if there are no ways to measure what works and what doesn't?

This presupposes a consensus on goals because one cannot assess without agreement on what goals should be, and this is a complex and difficult task. What is needed is a common set of desired learning outcomes.

Round Two: How do we assess?

Dr. Poulos described the STAMP program which will provide a common national standard for competence in Hindi. By providing a benchmark for achievement, the development of the assessment instrument (supported by a IEPS International Research and Studies [IRS] grant) will allow government, business and educational institutions to judge the ability of individuals to understand Hindi in a common framework.

Michael Vande Berg commented upon the results of some research efforts. One of the critical sets of issues for study abroad concerns which model is most effective. Is it direct enrollment in foreign schools, or is it an island approach where Americans live and study with other Americans? What are the results of long-term experiences versus short term immersion programs?

The research points to other issues like do student learn effectively by themselves or with effective mentors and more support. "If we toss them in the deep end, some swim, some drown, and most cling to the side of the pool and freak out." How can we get more folks to do well and benefit maximally from a study abroad experience?

Research also shows that females do well but males do poorly-- barely outperforming students who don't travel-- on language competence and intercultural sensitivity after a study abroad experience. It also showed that home stays work, but that the factors which improve learning are complex and multifaceted. There is a tendency to plateau in intercultural understanding and learning without effective mentoring. With mentoring learning continues to higher levels.

Caryn McTighe Musil responded by suggesting that we should assess developmental level in the process and ask what is normal learning. We don't turn to research often enough and perhaps females are socialized to do better in intercultural understanding.

She also asked we consider what is working for which student and when? If we disaggregate the factors for success it might be more effective.

When assessing global initiatives it is important to consider the cumulative effect of programs. There are five levels of goal setting, the combined effect of which is important and mutually reinforcing:

- Institutional goals
- Divisional departmental goals
- General educational goals
- Course goals
- Campus life--the importance of living and learning

One thing is known about diversity. It is not just having a diverse student body; it is a matter of engagement with diversity: It is not just going abroad; it is what you do when you get there.

Christa Olson said that "Assessing International Learning Outcomes" project, proposed nine learning outcomes in answer to the statement:

A globally competent student graduating from our institution...

Knowledge

1. Understands his culture within a global and comparative context (that is, the student recognizes that his culture is one of many diverse cultures and that alternate perceptions and behaviors may be based in cultural differences).
2. Demonstrates knowledge of global issues, processes, trends, and systems (that is, economic and political interdependency among nations, environmental-cultural interaction, global governance bodies, and nongovernmental organizations).
3. Demonstrates knowledge of other cultures (including beliefs, values, perspectives, practices, and products).

Skills

4. Uses knowledge, diverse cultural frames of reference, and alternate perspectives to think critically and solve problems.
5. Communicates and connects with people in other language communities in a range of settings for a variety of purposes, developing skills in each of the four modalities: speaking (productive), listening (receptive), reading (receptive), and writing (productive).
6. Uses foreign language skills and/or knowledge of other cultures to extend his access to information, experiences, and understanding.

Attitudes

7. Appreciates the language, art, religion, philosophy, and material culture of different cultures.
8. Accepts cultural differences and tolerates cultural ambiguity.
9. Demonstrates an ongoing willingness to seek out international or intercultural opportunities.
(<http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/International/Campus/GoodPractice/fipse/tools/toolkit1.htm>)

Despite consensus on the desired outcomes, and the existence of a web-based tool kit, it was difficult to find common goals among the participating institutions.

Round Three: Challenges

Steven Poulos felt that the limited cadre of developers and reviewers as well as the complexity of developing fonts for the many South Asian languages was daunting. He stressed the need to get the several Title VI National Resource Centers for South Asia involved in the project as well as to develop non-NRC schools where South Asian language study is strong and get them involved.

He also stressed that it is difficult to create a test and assessment for small cohorts of students taking LCTLs. Paying for that testing when so few students would utilize it was a central problem.

Michael Vande Berg noted two particular challenges. The first was funding for research. While the Georgetown Consortium was supported by a Title VI International Research and Studies grant, other research on study abroad is not so well funded and will prove difficult.

The second challenge to adequate assessment was the models used at various institutions. Having 20% or 30% or 100% of students study abroad, as college presidents like to cite as an example of their institutional level of engagement globally, is not the same as assessing the quality of the experience for the students.

Caryn McTighe Musil felt that the greatest challenges were structural barriers, departmental divisions in which we organize ourselves into fiefdoms. We need to bear in mind three things in regard to assessment:

1. is assessment meaningful; does it tell us something we need to know.
2. is it do-able?
3. is it integrated into what people on campuses are doing?

If so, it will help us achieve our goals. If not it will be counterproductive.

Christa Olson felt it was a challenge to look at our students on the micro level, in specific courses and to assess what they learned. Generally, challenges were leadership support for programs, coordination of assessment efforts, money, and resource availability.

- Summary of Follow-up Discussions – After the formal presentation a series of questions and comments were made from the audience following up on specific aspects of the presentations, asking for more information and clarification of points and terms. Often the answers referred to web sites and where possible, those web sites have been noted in this report.

- Best Practices--The best practices were mentioned, *seriatim*, in the presentations. But the following programs and practices deserve special mention:
--The American Council on Education, *Enhancing Campus Internationalization* project, especially its Assessing International Learning Outcomes guide:
<http://www.acenet.edu/Content/NavigationMenu/ProgramsServices/International/Campus/GoodPractice/fipse/index.htm>

- --The American Association of Colleges and Universities *Shared Futures* program:<http://www.aacu.org/SharedFutures/guidingprinciples.cfm>

- Recommendations for Future Directions-- It was the general consensus that much has happened in assessment and while more people and institutions realize the value of assessment internally and externally, we have not yet been able to figure out how to apply research to university programs. More resources need to be devoted to assessment so there will be a cultural change within institutions and assessment will be an accepted way to improve efforts to globalize post-secondary education.