

Supporting Student Learning Abroad

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AIEA Conference

Washington, DC

February 19, 2008

Study Abroad Research Growth*

<u>Decade</u>	<u>Studies</u>	<u>Growth</u>
1950s	34	+127%
1960s	117	+244%
1970s	189	+62%
1980s	377	+99%
1990s	675	+79%
2000-05	c. 500	N/A

(* Bolen, M. (2007). *A Guide to Outcomes Assessment in Education Abroad*. Carlisle: Forum on Education Abroad, p. 99.)

Research and Learning Abroad

Three Research Studies:

- Georgetown Consortium Study
 - Student Decision-Making and Study Abroad (CIEE)
 - Employer Attitudes Toward Study Abroad
- **The Question: How can the results of these studies help inform our decisions about intervening in student learning abroad?**

Overview

- Explore key frameworks of student support
- Discuss practical examples of student support while abroad
- Apply information to your program

Your Turn....

In pairs, please briefly discuss student learning goals and what is currently being done at your institution to support student learning abroad

Overview of key frameworks

- Challenge-support Theory (Sanford)
- Transformative Learning (Mezirow)
- Self-directed Learning (Knowles)
- Intercultural Competence Model (Deardorff)

Challenge-Support Theory (Sanford)

- Readiness, Challenge, Support
- BALANCING challenge
(dissonance/disequilibrium) and support
(environmental/structural)
- Challenge + Support = Growth

Transformational Learning (Mezirow)

- Catalyst to transformative learning occurs through “disorienting dilemmas” (situations not fitting preconceived expectations)
- Critical reflection is key to transformation (challenging assumptions) = perspective transformation
- Influenced by Friere’s work – deeper awareness and acting on awareness

Self-Directed Learning (Knowles)

- Moving away from dependence on educator
- Relevancy and immediacy of application
- Hands-on, experiential approach
- Learning contract = active student engagement

Self-Directed Learning – Learning Contracts

- What are you going to learn?
- How are you going to learn it?
- Target date for completion
- How are you going to know that you learned it (evidence)?
- How are you going to prove you learned it (verification from experts/faculty)?

Relevancy

SCANS Commission (Sec. of Labor's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills):

- Resource Management
- Information Management
- Social Interaction (inc. teamwork, culturally diverse environment)
- Systems Behavior/Performance Skills
- Technology Utilization

Relevancy

SCANS Report continued – Foundational Skills

- **Basic Skills**
- **Higher Order Intellectual Skills**
(reasoning, problem solving, decision making, etc)
- **Motivational/Character Traits**
(maturity, responsibility, self-esteem, sociability)

Intercultural Competence

See ICC model on handout....

Your Turn.....

Small Group Discussion

Using the intercultural competence model, please discuss a specific learning goal for your students and ways in which this learning can be supported abroad

Key Points in Supporting Student Learning Abroad

Involve students!

Prepare students adequately

Provide feedback to students

Integrate active student learning into the program/curriculum

Be intentional and structured

Language Learning Abroad (#1)

Oral Proficiency Gain: Males vs Females

On average, **Female SOPI scores *improved one ACTFL sublevel***, from just below Intermediate High to just below Advanced Low.

On average, **Male students improved *only about half an ACTFL sublevel***, from below Intermediate High to Intermediate High.

Language Learning (#2)

Change Over Time of Males' "Desire to Learn a Second Language": Increasing Enthusiasm for Language Learning

Pre-Test (T1)		F	M
	NO	28	24
	YES	102	45
Mid-Test (T2)	NO	27	14
	YES	103	55
Post-Test (T3)	NO	26	6
	YES	104	63

The Data Do Make Us Wonder:

Are there ways that we might **intervene to influence male student attitudes** about foreign language learning, prior to and during the early part of their sojourn abroad?

Language Learning (#2): Housing and Language Gain

Study abroad students housed either with a) host families or b) other international students made equal oral proficiency gains

Study abroad students housed with c) other U.S. students or d) host country students gained less than those in housing type a or b)

Language Learning (#3) Oral Proficiency Gains and Free Time Spent with Host Families

We did, however, find *significant correlations* between language gains and *the percentage of free time students spent with a host family* (the more time spent with them, the higher the gains)

- An example of **student decision-making that impacts their learning abroad.**

Again, the Data Beg the Question:

How might we intervene to help students make the decision to spend more free time with their host families?

or alternately:

How might we intervene with host families to improve the language learning of students?

Intercultural Learning Abroad (#1)

Gender and Intercultural Learning

Female students showed statistically significant increases in their IDI score.

Male scores, however, actually decreased—their scores were in fact lower than scores of all Control students (and Male Control students) on home campuses.

(See differences in “Change score” column.)

Gender and IDI Gain (SAPs only; N = 1156)

	N	Mean							Effect size (Cohen's d)
		IDI-1	SD	IDI-2	SD	Change score	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Male	384	94.31	14.68	93.81	17.22	-.4919	-.639	.523	.033
Female	772	97.19	13.97	100.94	15.29	3.745	8.683	.000	.312

Males vs. Females: “I want to learn more about the people and culture where I’m going” (#2)

FEMALES (95)

1. **Host families: active (43%)**
2. **Observing/exploring (43%)**
3. **Meeting locals: active (40%)**
4. **University/Study Center (38%)**
5. **CIEE program activities (26%)**
6. **Meeting locals: passive (19%)**
7. **Volunteering/teaching (15%)**
7. **Traveling outside site (15%)**
9. **Host family: passive (14%)**
10. **Clubs, sports (13%)**
11. **Read, research (12%)**
12. **Apartments, flats: active (5%)**
13. **Apartments, flats: passive (2%)**

MALES (48)

1. **Observing/exploring (50%)**
2. **University/Study Center (38%)**
3. **Meeting locals: active (35%)**
4. **Meeting locals: passive (33%)**
5. **Host families: active (29%)**
6. **Host family: passive (25%)**
7. **Clubs, sports (19%)**
7. **Read, research (19%)**
9. **CIEE program activities (15%)**
10. **Apartments, flats (13%)**
10. **Travel beyond city (13%)**
12. **Volunteer/teaching (8%)**
13. **Aparts: pass. (4%)**

What do these Gender-Based Data Suggest About Intervening in Student Learning?

Put differently: does our **knowledge about gender-based behavioral differences abroad** suggest how we might intervene to support student intercultural learning?

Intercultural Learning (#3) Group Mentoring and IDI Gain

Students who received **cultural mentoring in groups “often” to “very often”** showed the greatest increase in IDI scores.

**Group mentoring on site
(SAPs only; N = 931)**

	N	Mean							Effect size (Cohen's <i>d</i>)
		IDI-1	SD	IDI-2	SD	Change score	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	
Never	359	94.65	13.93	95.50	15.23	.831	1.214	.226	.064
Rarely	302	96.27	13.82	97.88	14.62	1.607	2.247	.025	.129
Sometimes	179	96.91	14.30	99.09	16.99	2.178	2.301	.023	.172
Often	60	96.65	17.09	99.80	17.21	3.143	1.951	.056	.252
Very often	31	94.89	12.53	99.91	18.46	5.016	1.987	.056	.357

Research Finding 4

Perceived Cultural Similarity/Dissimilarity and IDI Gain

Students whose IDI scores changed significantly were those who felt the host culture was “somewhat dissimilar” to “dissimilar” from the host culture.

In other words, the perception of dissimilarity is associated with greater IDI change, except for the highest rating of “very dissimilar.”

(Think of the “**Challenge/Support**” Hypothesis.)

Perceived Cultural Similarity/ Dissimilarity (SAPs only; N = 864)

	N	Mean							Effect size (Cohen's d)
		IDI-1	SD	IDI-2	SD	Change score	T	Sig. (2- tailed)	
1 very similar	29	95.51	15.04	93.62	16.75	-1.896	-.975	.338	.181
2 ↑	146	93.96	14.68	93.53	15.44	-.4315	-.438	.662	.036
3	350	95.07	13.96	97.66	15.72	2.584	3.844	.000	.205
4 ↓	293	97.67	13.77	99.96	14.83	2.284	3.244	.001	.190
5 very dissimilar	46	95.68	14.06	94.78	18.81	-.9020	-.384	.703	.057

Again, the Data Beg the Question:

How might we intervene so that students perceive that the host culture is neither very similar nor very different from the culture at home?

Who would do the intervening, how, and how often?

Intercultural Learning

Engagement with Target Culture

We evaluated three dimensions of cultural engagement in exploring the relationship of students' exposure to the target culture and gains in their IDI scores:

- Exposure to **Host Family**
- Exposure to **Other People from the U.S.**
- Exposure to **People from the Host Country**

Intercultural Finding (#5A) **Exposure to Host Family**

The higher the amount of free time spent with the host family, the larger the change in SAP IDI score.

Recall that we have seen that this variable—amount of time spent with host family—was associated significantly with language gain as well.

Host Family (SAPs only; N = 572)

	N	Mean							Effect size (Cohen's d)
		IDI-1	SD	IDI-2	SD	Change score	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	
1: 1~25%	445	96.85	13.67	98.03	16.20	1.172	1.823	.069	.086
2: 26~50%	120	94.98	13.81	98.34	14.09	3.366	2.904	.004	.265
3: 51~75%	7	94.38	8.84	99.33	10.66	4.947	1.723	.136	.651
4: 76~100%	0	-----		-----		-----	-----	-----	

Again, the Data Beg the Question:

What might we do to influence students so that they decide to spend more free time with host families?

Intercultural Learning (#6)

Exposure to Other U.S. People

Students who spent the least amount of time with other people from the U.S. had the highest gains in intercultural learning.

Students who spent the most time with other people from the U.S. showed the smallest gains in intercultural learning.

Other US People (SAPs only; N = 923)

	N	Mean							Effect size (Cohen's <i>d</i>)
		IDI-1	SD	IDI-2	SD	Change score	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	
1: 1~25%	231	96.60	14.69	99.11	15.66	2.509	3.308	.001	.218
2: 26~50%	402	95.50	13.78	97.16	15.64	1.648	2.477	.014	.124
3: 51~75%	212	94.48	14.09	96.19	15.01	1.710	2.095	.037	.144
4: 76~100%	78	96.52	14.64	95.56	17.50	-0.956	-0.556	.580	.063

Intercultural Learning (#7)

Exposure to Host Country People

Students who spent 26-50% of their time with host country people showed greatest gains in their intercultural learning.

However, students who spent more than 50% of their time with host nationals actually lost ground, interculturally.

(Recall the **Challenge/Support Hypothesis**)

Host Country People (SAPs only; N = 924)

	N	Mean							Effect size (Cohen's <i>d</i>)
		IDI-1	SD	IDI-2	SD	Change score	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	
1: 1~25%	737	95.55	13.89	96.98	15.23	1.437	3.137	.002	.119
2: 26~50%	153	96.65	14.68	99.44	18.08	2.795	2.188	.030	.185
3: 51~75%	28	96.47	15.38	96.06	15.86	-.411	-.220	.828	.042
4: 76~100%	6	88.12	9.53	86.39	13.34	-1.733	-.359	.734	.147

Employer Attitudes Toward Study Abroad

Data 2C: Which Study Abroad Types are More Likely to Develop Valued Qualities and Skills? (#1)

<u>Program Type</u>	<u>MGT</u>	<u>HR</u>	<u>+SA</u>
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• 1-3 wk. Jan, May sum. w./ classes	1.80	2.30	2.39
• 1-3 wk. Jan, May sum. Serv. Learn.	1.91	2.36	2.51
• 4-10 wk. sum. w/ classes	2.29	2.80	3.08
• 4-10 wk. sum. Serv. Learn.	2.60	2.87	3.18
• 14-18 wk. sem. non-univ. classes	2.80	3.16	3.60
• 14-18 wk. sem. Univ. classes	2.86	3.31	3.84
• 14-18 wk. Serv. Learn.	3.00	3.26	3.64
• 14-18 wk. Internship	3.57	3.60	4.14
• AY outside classes + Intern	3.42	3.70	4.30
• AY univ. classes + Intern	3.50	3.74	4.37

Which skills do employers value in prospective employees? (#2)

<u>Skills</u>	<u>MGT</u>	<u>HR</u>
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• Effective working in teams	4.66	4.74
• Works well under pressure	4.66	4.69
• Analyzes, evaluates & interprets well	4.61	4.60
• Works effectively outside comfort zone	4.32	4.57
• Expresses self in writing effectively	4.26	4.22
• Knowledgeable: firm's core business	4.24	4.21
• Communicates effectively intercult. sits.	3.03	3.45
• Knowledgeable about bus. other country	2.81	2.92
• Knowledgeable re. other history/culture	1.66	1.96
• Understands current global, econ, politics	2.65	2.77
• Well informed re. world events and history	2.61	2.70
• Effective socializing/doing bus. elsewhere	2.05	2.18

Given what we know about employer attitudes,
how might we intervene to improve student
employability?

Four Corners: Propositions

Study abroad participants should learn things, and learn in ways, that they won't at home—and **if they don't, something is wrong with the program.**

US students abroad learn most effectively when we intervene proactively in their learning **while they are abroad.**