Building Pathways for Intercultural Learning: Globally Engaging First Generation Business Students

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Abstract

This paper presents the argument that experiential learning frameworks, based on constructivism, may be useful to determine how best to meet the call for intercultural competency development by creating sequenced and experientially based study abroad programming. More specifically, the case is made for the use of learning styles and motivation engagement concepts as a basis for intentionally designed short and intermediate term study abroad serving different learning goals from traditional study abroad and which dismantle barriers that inhibit participation rates in traditional study abroad opportunities.

Introduction

Heeding the call by major study groups to "greatly increase the number of American college students studying abroad" (National Press Club, 2007a), U.S. institutions of higher learning are tasked with identifying new ways to accelerate student participation in study abroad opportunities. While a majority of students and faculty in U.S. higher education institutions express support for international activities, which is further evidenced by enrollment in international course work, the reality is that the majority also fail to actually participate in study abroad activities (Olson, Green, and Hill, 2006; Martinez-Fernandez, 2006), suggesting that barriers, not interest level, inhibit participation in such programs. "Building upon and strengthening existing support for internationalization among students, faculty, and the public can provide momentum for internationalization efforts and turn support into greater participation" (American Council on Education, 2003). This paper presents the argument that experiential learning frameworks, based on constructivism, may be useful to determine how best to meet the call by creating sequenced and experientially based study abroad programming. More specifically, the case is made for the use of learning styles and motivation engagement concepts as a basis for intentionally designed short and intermediate term study abroad programming serving different learning goals from traditional study abroad, and which dismantle barriers that inhibit participation rates in traditional study abroad opportunities.

Understanding Barriers to Participation

Barriers identified to study abroad participation (Gudykunst, 1998), as distinct from interest, tend to fall into two types: barriers of structural negotiation (i.e., cost and foreign

system navigation) and cultural negotiation (i.e., fear of difference and failure to interface successfully in the host culture). Structuring educational systems to overcome barriers in the context of good design for learning seems, then, to be critical toward realizing the objective of accelerating student participation rates in study abroad (National Press Club, 2007b).

Unlike counterparts in nationally dense geographic regions such as Europe, opportunities for Americans, and perhaps others, for international cultural exposure may be limited by both mental (e.g., lack of norm reference) and physical obstacles (e.g., transferability of academic work and cost of travel) resulting in isolation (NAFSA, 2007). Geographic limits coupled with numerous domestic travel opportunities may be significant inhibitors to travel and study abroad. This may be especially true for first-generation global travelers who have not had the benefit of familiarization experiences for traveling cross-border for vacations with family or otherwise before attending college or university (Hahs-Vaughn, 2004).

Many efforts are under study, such as the Lincoln Commission study, to address the cost barriers associated with study abroad but one element seems complex: cost as a barrier is not only a function of affordability but also a function of perceived value. In other words, the realization of the personal value gained as a result of investing time, money and energy into study abroad is increased through the actual experience of having done so. Attestations alone to the benefit of study abroad fail to adequately inform potential participators; however, participation providing first-hand knowledge reveals the value added by such experiences, often resulting in the quest for more and varied experiences (Hulstrand, 2006). Thus, one indicator for overcoming the barrier to the cost to study abroad participation, besides the simple provision of increased funding to support such activities, is the exposure to the value added gain realized from the direct experience of participation.

Also associated with structural negotiation is the fear of one's inability to navigate foreign systems resulting in the potential for physiological and safety breakdown (e.g., inability to secure essential needs such as housing and food as well as fear of not remaining free from personal harm). These are lower order needs that the perceived lack of which may inhibit participation to realize higher order aspirations. Pusch (1996) confirms this transitional act of entry and settling-in barrier as being an issue for study abroad participants, indicating associations with survival (e.g., finding what is needed to live), perspective (e.g., traveler coming in as cultural outsider), knowledge acquisition (e.g., lack of cultural insider's know-how) and expectations (e.g., the unknown). Pusch goes further to indicate that the stages experienced through entry and settling-in are sequenced as pre-occupation with survival issues, discovery that accustomed behavior and expectations are not acceptable, decisions for what to do next, embarkment on pioneering experience and, finally, development of coping mechanisms. In doing so, she suggests that overcoming the foreign navigation barrier is experiential.

Finally, there is much in the literature addressing the barrier of cultural negotiation, with the preponderance focusing on pre-departure orientation. However, the most current and

convincing body of work is that which was originally derived from Piaget's theory of constructivism (1969) wherein he postulates that knowledge is built upon prior experiences and that there must exist a connection to the learner in order to be meaningful. Further, learners respond more effectively to the extent that a connection exists between them and the material to be learned. The point of departure, then, is with self. According to Von Glasersfeld (1984) "…the criteria by means of which sameness or difference is established are criteria which are created and chosen by the judging, experiencing subject…" Preparing learners with an understanding of this context is essential to their achieving the benefit of the intercultural experience. The understanding or knowledge of the cultural 'other' cannot be the result of passive receiving; rather, it originates via the experiencer's active operation as a product of perception and the learner must become cognizant of that point. In this way, learning frameworks are dynamic and constructed. Von Glasersfeld indicated that learners constantly try to make sense of the world and in so doing, construct hypotheses and generate knowledge. As a result, intentionality of design of the learning experience results in a more determined result.

Building on this foundation and the observed and reported experiences of people in intercultural situations, Bennett (1993) applied constructivism to establish a framework for the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), wherein "the underlying assumption of the model is that as one's experience of cultural difference becomes more sophisticated, one's competence in intercultural relations increases." Moreover, he extends his analysis in the intercultural developmental approach with a focus on the subjective (i.e., cultural experiences as opposed to cultural products).

> Culturally adapted behavior is not generated solely by employing cognition with the appropriate attitude, as is sometimes supposed in intercultural theory. Of course, it is necessary to know in a cognitive sense as much as possible about another culture, and certainly there are attitudes that appear to either facilitate or impede adaptation. What we are adding here is the additional link that can generate a feeling for the other culture. With that feeling, behavior appropriate in the other cultural context can flow naturally from our embodied experience, just as it does in our own culture. The challenge is to create methods usable in intercultural training and other developmental efforts that will provide learners with (a) access to the embodied feeling of their own culture, (b) techniques for apprehending the embodied feeling of other cultures, and (c) the mind-set necessary to support these skills (Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004, p. 260).

An example of this point is the difference between the act of bowing in some Asian cultures when delivered by a Westerner without an understanding of underlying cultural values of hierarchy associated with the act. The context and nuance is important and all too frequently the absence of understanding for such acts becomes a reification of the culture, quietly viewed as disturbing by those within the culture. Developing the embodied feeling for *role* in these cultural settings that underlies the act of bowing through experiential sensing provides a stronger foundation for empathy, or the development of a feeling for the culture (Ramsey, 1998). Gaining a subjective

understanding for the experience of culture creates the empathy to transcend cultural products, such as acts that are merely surface representations, and is indicative of an individual better prepared for the study abroad learning experience. "Based on developmental theory, the approach suggests that we can increase long-term effectiveness of diversity [read as intercultural] initiatives by carefully assessing the readiness level of the individuals and the organization" and "when sequencing interventions to participant receptivity, the diversity professional begins with user-friendly topics and efforts, such as those appropriate in the denial stage" (Bennett and Castiglioni, 2004). Once again, the emphasis on experience as the vehicle for overcoming cultural negotiation barriers to participation seems to be proffered.

How, then, is the question to be answered in providing experientially based opportunities for students to study abroad that also, by design, overcome barriers to participation. Many in the field of study abroad have interpreted traditional study abroad, generally interpreted to mean a semester or a yearlong period of study, to be the superior if not the only true intercultural development approach. If true, this sink or swim model of intercultural development seems ill equipped to address the aforementioned barriers to participation, especially for first generation global travelers. While pre-departure orientation, in-country support, and re-entry programs are clearly essential to the success of the actual experience, they may not alone and in isolation overcome the barriers to greater participation for many students that must be resolved to increase participation rates. While the mature student may do well in such situations, the student without referential foundation will be challenged, so much so that the experience can become counter-productive to the aims sought. Models for adaptation (Gudykunst and Hammer, 1987) are illustrative of this effect. When uncertainty (structural negotiation) and anxiety (cultural negotiation) are both high, the outcome for the study abroad participant frequently results in either a premature return home or a poorly functioning adaptation to the host culture. When uncertainty is low and anxiety is high, the study abroad participant will often function successfully but results in a negative cultural impression. When anxiety is low but uncertainty is high, the participant may tend toward avoiding cultural interactions and seek similarity with one's own. However, where both uncertainty and anxiety can be reduced, the probability increases for effective interactions as well as the experience more likely results in a positive cultural interaction for the participant. While mature students will be better prepared for more complex intercultural situations, the novice cultural participant overcoming barriers associated with structural and cultural negotiation will require experiential designs suited to reducing uncertainty and anxiety to increase their chance for successful growth as an intercultural learner.

Conversely, an alternative design has emerged in the form of short-term study abroad that may begin to reduce barriers to participation. In fact, evidence is quite clear that short-term programs are popular with students who indicate that barriers to participation are less inhibiting (Hulstrand, 2006). However, this design has suffered from criticism of insufficiency to allow for the necessary time required for perspective taking and is frequently referred to as study abroad light by those seeking to minimize its value as compared to traditional study abroad. In making this argument, detractors assume the same goals for short-term study abroad as that applied to traditional study abroad. It is

true, as Bennett contends, that taking the perspective of the cultural other is a key factor within the DMIS model, which focuses on empathy development and the opportunity for third-culture communication frameworks. Interestingly, Bennett's position is one that advocates for cultural-general development rather than specific, in that sensitivity development can become applicable across varying cultural differences, which has increasing import for developing a global mindset with emerging business professionals. To be realized as an intercultural competency, some depth of experience would be necessary, although intercultural sensitivity can exist or be developed in many other ways beyond study abroad experiences. For most participants, short-term study abroad alone will be inadequate for development based upon sensitivity.

Thus, long-term study abroad provides sufficiency for depth of experience but has failed to address the barriers that keep students from participating at higher rates. Conversely, student participation rates in short-term study abroad continue to grow but often fail to provide sufficient cultural engagement to allow for the complexity of perspective taking. The result is a dichotomy. The removal of barriers (structural and cultural negotiation) is essential to increasing participation rates in study abroad. At the same time, intercultural experience is established as fundamental to achieving real intercultural sensitivity. A false dichotomy, however, may have been created between short-term and traditional study abroad in that a one- size experience does not fit all learners or learning goals. In fact, an argument can be made that both are necessary and speak to differing yet complementary learning objectives.

Conceptualizing a Model

Achieving the study abroad programming balance between the varying needs of learners reveals that multiple formats for study abroad are not only necessary but, in fact, may be developmental. Much exists in the literature on learning styles; however, that which is related to learner preparedness seems to provide a framework on which to begin designing study abroad programming that allows for tailoring to the developmental needs of the study abroad participant. More pointedly to the call to action by national organizations for increasing study abroad participation rates, learner preparedness frameworks create the mechanism for overcoming barriers and sustained intercultural learning.

Jacobs and Fuhrmann (1984) identify three basic types of learners according to levels of readiness that may be useful for this purpose: dependent, collaborative and independent. The three styles are of equal merit but each will be more appropriate to the learner based upon the participant's learning situation.

> Dependent learning may occur with introductory information and work situations when the learner has little or no information when entering the situation. Collaborative learning occurs when the learner has some knowledge, information, or ideas and would like to share them or try them out. Finally, independent learning occurs when the learner has much knowledge or skill upon entering the learning situation and wants to continue to search on her or his own or has had successful experiences in working

through new situations alone (Kirrane, 1988).

These differences can be exploited in learning environments that seek to move learners from the unknown to the known as a means of knowledge acquisition and preparedness. Jacobs and Fuhrmann recognized the critical relationship between the learner and learning facilitator as an essential consideration in order to effectuate the learning process. This framework focused on learning style as interaction. In this model the relationship is developmental, recognizing the initial dependent relationship of learners to the learning facilitator around knowledge acquisition on which there is no prior basis of reference. As learners gain foundation, the nature of the relationship moves toward a collaborative and, eventually, independent relationship with the learning facilitator. For example, participants overcoming barriers to participation will require more structure and seem more dependent while engaging in study abroad. As participants gain in maturity, for which Jacobs and Fuhrmann relied on Hersey and Blanchard's (1982) definition--willingness (i.e., one's level of motivation) and ability (i.e., one's knowledge, skills, and talents to a particular function)--their competence in and confidence about independent learning increases. Mature participants believe that the study abroad experience is important and are determined to learn while confident in their ability to do so. The barriers have been removed. In the case of intercultural competency development through study abroad, the learning facilitator is the institution designing programs for such purpose.

Consistent with the learning style framework, Freeman (1994) has also addressed learner readiness by reviewing the learning engagement styles of students in college and university settings but with an experiential learning context. Freeman, in working with college placement activities, extended work in this area by identifying learner engagement levels, or readiness, as an additional component to factor when designing developmental learning programs that move learners from dependent to independent. In being confronted with the unknown, learners are "reactive" in terms of their level of readiness and require the additional stimulation to engage in the learning process. In Freeman's work the effort was around experiential learning and the search for employment or graduate school admission but is equally applicable to the need to engage in the development of critical new skills, such as those associated with intercultural competency. Engagement is accomplished through development of a message that reaches and conveys the importance of the learning that needs to be undertaken. As learners become engaged and gain such a foundation, they develop a proactive learning capacity for trying out new knowledge and move toward becoming more involved in the content of their learning. In the process, they become empowered with increased confidence around the new knowledge acquisition. Ultimately, Freeman supports that learner readiness should be continually moved toward an interactive level wherein the learner becomes self-engaged in the learning experience and is facilitated to direct one's own development around the subject of exploration.

Similar to Jacobs and Fuhrmann, Freeman classified the motivation engagement levels as reactive, proactive, and interactive, providing another layer of understanding for preparation, seemingly important for experiential learning designs. This is accomplished

through (a) the creation of a clear message to students regarding the nature of the subject, (b) the empowerment of students with the skills and knowledge to impact their own futures, and finally, (c) the provision of facilitating services which assist students in realizing their learning goals.

Freeman's model also has overlap with that of Jacobs and Fuhrmann in that a reactive level of learning or engagement is necessarily dependent upon the facilitator for the stimulation of learning. At this level, Freeman is suggesting that what is important is the creation of an exploratory message about the need for and value of the learning. Further, as students embrace the message and become increasingly engaged in their own learning effort, the proactive orientation necessitates a collaborative interaction with the learning facilitator. Repositioning by the facilitator for the effective use of guided experiential design that empowers the learner becomes beneficial as the application of learning by the learner leads to increasing success. Finally, when learners gain confidence through successful experiences and take full ownership of their learning growth, the learner becomes independent of the learning facilitator and requires interaction on a learner-determined need basis only that facilitates reflection on the learner's self-determined objectives. Of course, every learner is different but using this framework helps inform the instructional design on the type of learning abroad experience best suited to move the learner to the next progressive level of intercultural development, as illustrated in developmental curriculum matrix for experientially based learning abroad.

Table 1: Developmental Curriculum Matrix for Experientially Based Learning Abroad

Learner Readiness *1	**Relationship with Learning Facilitator *2**	**Learning Need Characteristics**	**Strategy Adaptation**	**Potential Design Focus**
Reactive	Dependent	• Structure • Direction • Encouragement	Message Development	Short term Exploratory
Proactive	Collaborative	• Observation • Interaction • Practice	Empowerment	Intermediate term Experiential
Interactive	Independent	• Internal Awareness • Non-judgmental Support • Time	Facilitation	Long term Reflective

*1 Based on learning style framework (Freeman, 1994)
*2 Based on learner needs framework (Jacobs and Fuhrmann, 1984)

A successful learning abroad experience is characterized by the achievement of the learning objectives suited to the learner at the learner's level of need as determined by frameworks for level of engagement. For example, assumption of cultural learning objectives that focus on sophisticated and complex adaptation skills requiring high levels of sensitivity and empathy, a typical aspiration for traditional semester abroad learning, is

premature for the learner in a reactive readiness level and dependent upon others for guiding the learning experience. A more appropriate programmatic response is that of facilitating the learner in gaining an appreciation for the need in developing intercultural communication skills. Shorter-term programs wherein the learner can observe the role model of the learning facilitator and become more familiar with understanding what the learner does not know, becoming conscious of the learner's cultural incompetence, is more suited to the need and better prepares the learner for the more advanced stages of cultural learning to come through longer-term opportunities. As the learner becomes more aware of the competencies of intercultural sensitivity development, the learner moves progressively to achieve more sophisticated goals. This might take the form of practicing to develop competence with intercultural skills of which the learner is now conscious through both intermediate and long-term opportunities. Eventually, the goal of gaining competence in intercultural adaptability without conscious effort would become the desired outcome through longer-term opportunities, which is probably the only possible structure by which such sophisticated levels of empathy could be developed. These developmental steps when combined present a progression that better aligns learner needs and goals with learning abroad program opportunities (see Figure 1) and should ease transition, stimulate interest and properly prepare learners using established educational frameworks.

Thus, the unsuccessful learning abroad experience is that which is ill-matched to the learning need and either engages learners in an experience for which they are not fully prepared or, conversely, does not provide a better prepared learner with longer-term study abroad opportunities wherein the learner can develop more sophisticated competencies. Shorter-term programs cannot provide experiences for developing sophisticated competencies and should not be expected to do so, which is often the expectation by critics who impose on short-term programs the learning objectives of long-term programs.

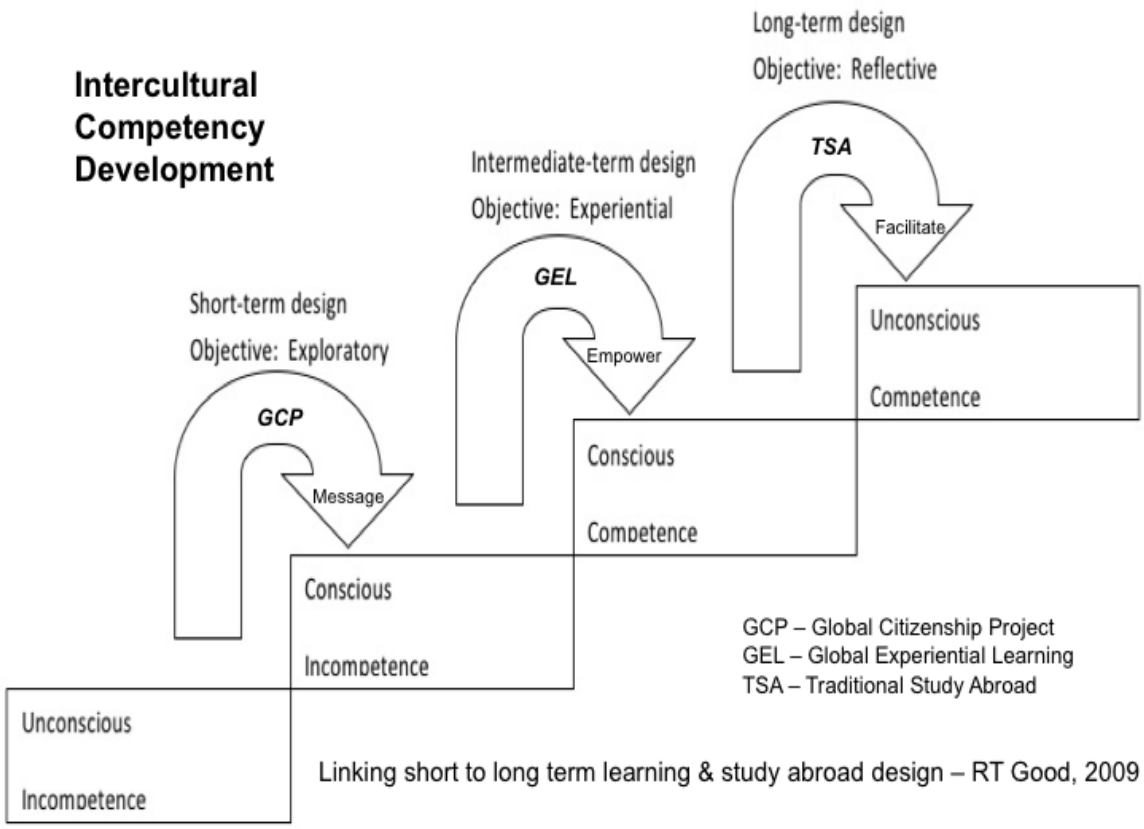

Figure 1: Developmental Steps in Study Abroad

Implementation

Relying on these frameworks for learning style and engagement level as indicators of learner readiness, an applied model for study abroad at a case institution was piloted in stages, integrating both short-term and long-term study abroad designs. The objective of the model was to create the mechanisms to reduce barriers to study abroad opportunities through intentional design of short-term and intermediate-term programs, consistent with learner-readiness models, while preserving traditional study abroad designs to serve the sensitivity development of more mature participants (see Table 2). Further, the model was conceived as a sequential design to move the learner from dependent and reactive learning, through collaborative and proactive learning, and, ultimately, toward independent and interactive learning.

Table 2: Application of the Developmental Curriculum Matrix for Study Abroad

Learner Readiness	**Relationship with Learning Facilitator**	**Learning Need Characteristics**	**Strategy Adaptation**	**Case Institution Programs**
Reactive	Dependent	• Structure • Direction • Encouragement	Message Development	*Global Citizenship Project (GCP)*
Proactive	Collaborative	• Observation • Interaction • Practice	Empowerment	*Global Experiential Learning (GEL)*
Interactive	Independent	• Internal Awareness • Non-judgmental Support • Time	Facilitation	*Traditional Semester/Year Abroad (TSA)*

Traditional study abroad at the case institution existed in concept but lacked in application. An established history and infrastructure to support traditional study abroad was not in place until the turn of the millennium. The institution did enjoy a global mindset in terms of diversifying the student body with international students but failed in the efforts to send domestic students abroad. Thus, the international character of the campus was one-sided.

Throughout the 1990s there was a turn in the business field to mirror that which was occurring in general commerce in that there became an increased interest in global markets and preparing business school graduates with some level of exposure to foreign markets (a new targeted source of market share increase). This led to discussions on how to increase content in the curriculum and experiences for students to develop global perspectives. Concurrently, the school of business at the case institution began the process of exploring specialized accreditation, adding another element that would stimulate the review of study abroad at the institution.

In determining how best to increase the level of study abroad participation at the institution, the obvious challenge quickly became evident - financial resources. However, this alone was not the only inhibitor to participation. As financial resources were initially identified, other inhibitors were revealed regarding student barriers for participation in study abroad, in part driven by a student body in the school of business that drew heavily on first generation students and a local, commuter population with many adult students who maintained other work, family and home responsibilities. In reviewing these challenges literature was reviewed, benchmark programs were considered, both within and outside of study abroad, and alternative forms for study abroad were explored in an effort to provide intercultural exposure while overcoming barriers to participation. The

result led to shorter-term programming and eventually toward a model that recognized students' learning styles and engagement levels as a factor for sequencing study abroad programming that would best serve students' learning development around intercultural competence.

While traditional study abroad existed in concept at the case institution, application was absent not for failure of institutional commitment, even though infrastructure was not developed to precede demand, but for lack of student interest, a fact that foreshadowed that eventual call to action being made by many national organizations today. Drawing on alternative models for study abroad and experiential learning literature, the Global Experiential Learning (GEL) program was created in 1999.

The GEL program was established, by design, to overcome barriers to participation in study abroad. The cost barrier was reduced with the provision of credits associated with the experience without the charge of tuition (i.e., credits provided were reduced to that of a single course). Participants would only be responsible for their costs associated with travel and residence in the host destination. Barriers related to competing responsibilities for adult-students were also addressed in that the programs were structured between three to six weeks, allowing for adult-students to use accrued vacation time, summer breaks, and/or work out other coverage for domestic responsibilities, a major benefit described in the literature around the value of shorter-term study abroad designs. Barriers to foreign system and cultural navigation were handled through the identification of faculty members who would lead students in small groups with disciplinary focus for the duration of the travel and course experience. This final barrier took the foreign system navigation onus off the student participant through providing an experienced faculty member to model the way. While these elements of design were important from the perspective of reducing barriers to participation, there was a more guiding element of design related to instructional design.

Design of the GEL program was guided by experiential learning concepts so the program differed in a specific way from the variations often found in non-traditional study abroad programs, such as touring or class sessions simply occurring out of country. The design was intentionally experiential in that the program required some element of placement activity in the destination setting. Since the program began with the school of business, this took the form of internship placements where cultural and language navigation was less a challenge and shadow programs where navigation was more of a challenge. Shadow programs are opportunities for learners to observe and reflect on practice in the contextual setting. Unlike internships, shadow programs are placements within organizations for learning purposes but without the expectation that the learner will be executing tasks. Shadow programs often precede internships as an instructional tool. As the program expanded to include other disciplines, the variations of placements grew. What became important by design was that the program was guided by principles drawing on the learner style framework for the collaborative learner (Jacobs and Fuhrmann, 1984) and engagement level for the proactive learner (Freeman, 1994). During this stage, the learner requires opportunities for interaction, practice, probing of self and others, observation, participation, peer challenge, peer esteem, and

experimentation--all in terms of structural and cultural navigation in addition to content driven by the associated course. By design, it was important that participants have the opportunity for individual experiences, such as the internships and shadow placements for example, but to also allow for return to a comfortable reference source, such as the faculty leader and fellow participants, to process experiences and to obtain guidance. The faculty leader, now present in the host destination as opposed to only being a link back at the home institution as would be the case for traditional study abroad, becomes collaborator, co-learner and environment negotiator. Participation rates increased as a result of structural (i.e., travel, accommodation, meal, and safety logistics) and cultural (i.e., modeling intercultural communication, monitor of conditions, and resource for negotiation practice) barriers being resolved, supported or guided by experienced faculty leadership. The ultimate goal is to empower participants with the knowledge, skills, and abilities through the experience to increase confidence in their ability to navigate cultural dynamics on their own in preparation for traditional study abroad and, potentially, eventual careers abroad.

The GEL program was successful in moving more students abroad for intercultural learning experiences, especially for the school of business, but had limitations. GEL programs were limited by the level of interest in the faculty for providing such experiences. Only disciplines where faculty would serve as leaders allowed for courses to be constructed around the GEL model. Student interest, as a result of peer networks, created diverse demands. Additionally, the financial barrier remained for many students in that even though tuition charges were waived, travel and residency costs remained. The institution struggled with how to make more opportunity available to a wider range of students while continuing to remove financial barriers.

Continuing to build on experiential learning models, the Global Citizenship Project (GCP) was created in 2004. The GCP program sought to create both a global exposure opportunity available for individuals throughout the institution while also removing the final barrier to participation--cost--and, as a result, addressed the remaining challenges to participation. With the focus on increasing global learning interest, experiential learning ideas were relied upon to guide design.

The GCP program became a short-term study abroad opportunity building on some of the successful elements of the GEL program. The GCP program experience was designed to be a limited, approximately a 10-day program, and would continue with the group design and faculty leadership approach. However, the opportunity for placements would be removed to allow for broader participation and the program would not provide academic credit for the experience given the broad nature of the program. The goal is to simply stimulate interest for more global learning opportunities. The program content, while still very academic in nature, became a more generalized experience--focusing on culture-general concepts, people-to-people interactive opportunities, and culture-specific experiences. The program requires of participants a commitment to both pre- and post-travel learning commitments.

Again, experiential learning concepts are guiding factors. Important in the design is that

the program was guided by principles drawing on learner style theory for the dependent learner (Jacobs and Fuhrmann, 1984) and engagement level for the reactive learner (Freeman, 1994). During this stage, the learner requires structure, direction, external reinforcement, encouragement, and esteem with authority--elements that could be guided closely with the GCP design. The faculty leaders, serving as directors, experts, and authority holders are selected based on a depth of understanding of the culture by being either natives of the host destination or scholars who speak the local language--thus, providing a direct cultural bridge and reference with credible delivery.

Other elements are also woven into the GCP program. The program is competitive in that the institution is unable to financially or logistically support universal coverage of interest in the program, a problem resulting in the unexpected benefit of heightening demand on campus for participation. Those interested apply to participate through a streamlined application that seeks to identify motivation as the primary selection criterion. Importantly, applicants apply with the expectation that they may be sent anywhere in the world (i.e., destinations are not disclosed until after selection and choice of destination is not an option) and only have the opportunity to elect out of the program after destinations are revealed. Six groups for six destinations are selected and are limited in size, 10 to 12 participants, composed to represent the diversity of the institution using many factors and resulting in the unexpected benefit of cross-disciplinary networking. Additionally, in an effort to stimulate interest and intercultural exposure throughout the University community, participation is open not only to students but also to staff and faculty, with now an established history of including vice-presidents, housekeepers, accounting personnel, maintenance workers, deans, faculty, and even members of the institution's board of trustees. The benefit comes from creating greater cultural sensitivity by service personnel and others at the institution when working with international students hosted by the institution as well as an effort to elevate interest in global education with faculty having only limited global exposure opportunities themselves. Finally, in the context of a shorter-term program, the processing of frequently overwhelming cultural information from the experience can often be aided with the identification of a culturally relevant focus, such as a theme for examination by the visiting delegation. In the case of the GCP program, learners gain the added advantage of post- processing information on the theme with other learners who traveled with groups to other cultural destinations. The advantage of this, then, is that the theme becomes examined not solely in the context of similarities and differences between the learner's culture of origin and host culture but also with the multiplicity of many cultural inputs. Thematic foci in the past at the case institution have included citizenship (2005), power (2006), identity (2007), time (2008), borders (2009) and, upcoming, sustainability (2010).

The goal for all participants in GCP is to whet the appetite through message development that drives interest for more intercultural experiences while also providing the introductory tools for doing so. In this way, the GCP program stimulates interest in the GEL program and other travel abroad programs. Students awaken to the value added of learning abroad by participating in the GCP program. They become empowered through experiential learning design to recognize their own potential in overcoming barriers through the GEL program. Traditional study abroad creates the opportunity to develop

sensibilities to gain intercultural competence. In this way, the combination of programs is more intentional, developmental and progressive. Strategically aligned, they have the potential to be more powerful as a comprehensive and interconnected instructional design.

Limitations

While the addition of the GEL and GCP programs at the case institution have added considerably in stimulating study abroad interest, success indicators for the model are long term and currently under collection. Early indicators are quite positive. Measuring change in intercultural competency at the varying programmatic levels is currently underway through use of the Intercultural Development Inventory (Bennett and Hammer, 2001) to gauge the impact of change for sensitivity development, which will serve to identify barrier reduction in the area of cultural negotiation. Further, measuring participation rates of participants into alternative global learning opportunities, whether study abroad in design or otherwise, is also underway to serve to identify the degree to which barrier reduction is occurring with respect to structural navigation. Individual program offerings have gained improvement through program assessment each year and continue to be refined to respond to learner determined needs even though general participant assessment has been overwhelmingly positive. The determination of long-term systemic change, however, is the result of achieving the outcome determined by the ability to achieve the call to action for increasing overall study abroad participation. The nature of this longer-term effort necessitates ongoing analysis.

Conclusion

Ultimately, traditional study abroad moves individuals into greater cultural sensitivity but can only do so if barriers to participation are removed. Shorter-term programs have the capacity to remove barriers but are limited in achieving the desired outcome of greater intercultural sensitivity. Shorter-term programs, when carefully designed, do contribute toward capacity for developing greater cultural navigation skills. It is a false dichotomy to substitute the value of one type of program for the other. In fact, they can be complementary when relying on the framework for learning styles and engagement building blocks: short-term programs stimulating interest through message development, intermediate-term programs empowering to build confidence, and long-term programs creating opportunities for intercultural sensitivity development resulting in the model for developmental programming for study abroad.

The matrix is one that blends frameworks for learner engagement levels, as indicative of learning abroad preparedness, with the expectations of the facilitator in serving the needs of the learner. In the case institution, the learning facilitator is the institution as well as faculty and addresses the learning need characteristics of learners through differentiated learning abroad programs that focus on related outcomes. In the case of the reactive learner, the focus is to engage them with the message for the importance of developing intercultural communication competencies (i.e., whet the appetite). In the case of the proactive learner, the focus is for building on the engaged interest with the skill training

that empowers further development and confidence building. Finally, in the case of the interactive learner, the task is to facilitate more sophisticated learning that comes with time, maturity and nurturing. At the case institution, the programmatic response to facilitate the learning abroad preparedness needs for each is represented through the GCP, GEL, and traditional study abroad (TSA) programs, respectively.

Unique barriers inhibit participation in learning abroad for many students in higher education settings. Throughout this paper the author has addressed learning preparedness as a strategy for addressing barriers. In doing so, an examination of barriers were explored and theoretical constructs were investigated, including the redefinition of the concept behind learning abroad outcomes and the parameters of short, intermediate, and long-term learning abroad designs. Using this foundation and employing frameworks for effective educational design, the formative designs for two model programs were presented in an attempt to begin to resolve inhibitors to learning abroad participation and to lead students toward increased depth of participation. Applications of the designs were described based on the implementation experience at a case institution. While the long-term results are not yet finalized, preliminary findings indicate that the approach may have merit and be a potential application for other institutions.

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Biography

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