

Qualitative Study Results on Student Learning from International Immersion Experiences

ACPA National Conference
March 31, 2014



Meredith Carpenter, University of Maryland

@MeredCarpenter

Jay Garvey, Ph.D., University of Alabama

@JasonCGarvey

#UMDGlobalExp

#ACPA2014

OUTLINE

- Introduction
- Global Experiences
- Assessment
- Relevance to practice

ATTENDEE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Attendees in this session will have the opportunity to learn about ...

- best practices to enhance student learning during global learning experiences
- simple and complex strategies for assessment
- findings from our study

INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE REVIEW

- Greater collaboration and understanding^{1,2,3}
- Self-awareness, empathy, and openness^{4,5}
- Culturally-sensitive communication^{5,6}

INTRODUCTION

RATIONALE & CONTEXT

- Relationship to strategic plan
- Structure and function of committee
- Emergence of Global Experiences
- Department politics

OUR GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

Two types of short-term international immersion experiences

Service

Dominican Republic (2010, 2011)

Nicaragua (2012)

Leadership and cultural immersion

Oman/Qatar (2010)

Scotland (2011)

Morocco (2011)*

* Not covered in this study

OUR GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

IMPORTANT DISTINCTIONS

- Tailored for student leaders and employees
- Emphasis on experience, not “tour”
- Incorporation of trip components
- Focus on learning outcomes

OUR GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

TRIP LEADER PERSPECTIVE

- Partnering with organizations
- Administrative functioning
- Reflection

OUR GLOBAL EXPERIENCES

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Inclusive process between committee co-chairs, trip leaders, and assessment coordinator
- **Examples:**
 - Participants will be able to describe how their multiple identities influence their leadership style
 - Participants will give examples of how their understanding of the Community Living Principles were challenged and/or supported during their service learning experience

ASSESSMENT PURPOSE

- To compare short-term service learning and cultural immersion experiences in achieving student outcomes related to the values of the Department of Resident Life at UMD

ASSESSMENT DESIGN

- Team of 6
- Pre- and post-test surveys
- Focus groups

METHODS

- Pre-test
 - Open-ended questions
- Post-test
 - Open-ended questions
 - Likert-scale items

METHODS

- Focus groups
 - Multi-site study⁷
 - Theoretical propositions
 - Team analysis approach
 - Between- and within-site contexts

FINDINGS: LIMITATIONS

- Findings are context- and institution-specific
- Quantitative data reviewed for trends, not descriptive statistics
- Financial and administrative support may not be possible for others

FINDINGS

- Pre- and post-tests
 - Overview was positive and useful for program evaluation purposes
 - Overall: Consistent with focus group data
 - Individual level – initial findings positive
 - Limited small sample size

FINDINGS: COMPLEX

- **Theoretical propositions from focus groups**
 - **Lens/Filter**
 - Cultural experiences and insight
 - **Internal insights**
 - Learning opportunities
 - Understanding of self
 - Leadership
 - **Connections with others**
 - Interpersonal interactions
 - Service
 - Community development
 - **Additional themes**
 - Administration and finance

FINDINGS: COMPLEX

LENS/FILTER

- **Cultural experiences and insight**

“[Often] we only see what’s put in front of us, we only hang out with people who are like us. So this is an opportunity to move out, learn some things and come back, branch out and force people around [us] to also branch out, especially if they’re in a leadership position within their student group.”

-QOF3

17

FINDINGS: COMPLEX

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS: Internal Insights

- **Learning Opportunities:** Global Experiences incorporate intentional strategies and experiential learning to enhance student knowledge and insight.
- **Understanding of Self:** Global Experiences enhance students' self-awareness, understanding their identities and possibilities for their futures.
- **Leadership:** Global Experiences enable students to learn and apply leadership skills both during the experience and upon returning to the U.S.

FINDINGS: COMPLEX

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS: Internal Insights

“...I learned that I have stereotypes I did not know I had. Like I am an RA I figured I was trained against this. But I expected redheads and a lot of sheep there, and there weren’t.”

–P1:Scotland

FINDINGS: COMPLEX

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS: Connections with others

- **Interpersonal Interactions:** Global Experiences facilitate interpersonal interactions, resulting in opportunities for communication and building connections.
- **Service:** Global Experiences provide opportunities for students to learn about serving others, mutuality, and partnering service organizations.
- **Community Development:** Global Experiences enable students to experience, examine, and compare various communities and the ways in which people interact with these communities.

20

FINDINGS: COMPLEX

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS: Connections with others

“It was just amazing to see that you could just be from completely different sides of the world but there are still similarities. We went to class with these students. They’re still on Facebook as the professor is talking.”

– QOF3

FINDINGS: COMPLEX

THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS: Additional Themes

- **Administrative Support:** Administrative support and structure affect students' Global Experiences.

“I thought the logistical portion of the meeting were helpful like knowing transportation and the passports forms.”

-NICM5

RELEVANCE TO PRACTICE

ESTABLISHING & COORDINATING SIMILAR PROGRAMS

- Administrative support, communication, recordkeeping
- Logistical considerations for own campus and host site
- Realistic goals and timeline
- Establishing buy-in and support

RELEVANCE TO PRACTICE

ENHANCING STUDENT MEANING MAKING

- Learning outcomes drive intentional learning opportunities
- Provide repeated opportunities for reflection
- Strategically incorporate assessment

AUDIENCE REFLECTION

- What schools are engaged in similar work? Please share your best practices.
- How applicable are the study findings to programming efforts on your own campuses?
- What other suggestions do you have for enhancing student meaning making?

CONTACT INFORMATION

- **Jason C. Garvey, Ph.D.**
Assistant Professor, Higher Education
Department of Educational Leadership, Policy, and Technology Studies
University of Alabama
jcgarvey@bamaed.ua.edu
- **Meredith Carpenter**
Coordinator for Human Resources
Department of Resident Life
mcarpent@umd.edu

www.reslife.umd.edu/globalinitiatives

REFERENCES

www.outreach360.org

1. **Bates, 1997**
2. **Black & Duhon, 2006**
3. **Williams, 2005**
4. **Hadis, 2005**
5. **Hutchins, 1996**
6. **Drews & Meyer, 1996**
7. **Creswell, 2007**