The Impact of Study Abroad on Senior Year Engagement

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Overview
- Conceptual Framework
- Methods
- Limitations
- Results
- Discussion

Conceptual framework
- Study Abroad - General
  - Associated with cognitive, affective, and cultural development
    (e.g., Hadis, 2005; IIE, 2007; Ryan & Twibell, 2000)
  - Enhanced global perspectives & cross-cultural interests
    (e.g., Bates, 1997; Carlson & Widaman, 1988)
  - Reformed identity as an American
    (e.g., Ottley, 2004; Souders, 2006)

Conceptual framework
- Study Abroad – Return to Home Campus
  - “Reverse Culture Shock”
    (e.g., Gaw, 2000; Sicola, 2005; Souders, 2006)
    • Unmet expectations
    • Need for counseling
    • Stress of cultural adaptation
    • Worries about social isolation and communication

Conceptual framework
- Not known: Upon return from their overseas experiences, were students qualitatively different in terms of their continuing engagement in college?

Conceptual framework
- Experiential Learning Theory
  - Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience
  - Subjective experience given a central role in learning, unlike theories that stress cognition or intentional learning behaviors


Conceptual framework
- Experiential Learning Theory
  - Kolb’s (1984) four-stage cycle
    a. concrete experiences
    b. reflective observations
    c. abstract concepts
    d. active testing

Conceptual framework
- Student engagement
  - A domain of constructs that measures both the time and energy students devote to educationally purposeful activities, and how students perceive different facets of the institutional environment that facilitate and support their learning.


Research Questions
- Does study abroad have an impact on:
  - Deep learning activities and diversity experiences in the senior year after return to the home campus?
  - Self-reported gains in the senior year?
Methods

Data
- NSSE 2004 & 2007 panel data, FY and SR records matched using student ID
- 140 institutions
- 6,925 students, of which 33% studied abroad

Student Characteristics

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<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
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<td>Age</td>
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Institutional Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent of Institutions (N=140)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Private: 76%, Public: 24%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>Master's: 46%, Doctorate: 54%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most Competitive</td>
<td>Highly Competitive: 11%, Competitive: 34%</td>
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<td>Very Competitive: 37%, Most Competitive: 2%</td>
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Limitations

- Matching process favored smaller institutions with higher response rates that participated more often in NSSE
- First-year and senior year contexts differ
- Underestimation due to ceiling effects
- Type and quality of the study abroad experience is unknown

Methods

Measures
- Study abroad participation (concrete experience)
- Deep learning
  - Reflective learning (reflective observation)
  - Higher-order learning (abstract conceptualization)
  - Integrative learning (active testing)
- Diversity experiences (active testing)

Measures
- Self-Reported Gains
  - Personal and Social Development
  - Practical Competencies
  - General Education Outcomes

Analysis
- Seven Multivariate regression models
- All continuous variables standardized
- Unstandardized coefficients compared and interpreted as effect sizes

Results

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<td>Deep Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflective Learning</td>
<td>.13 *** .18</td>
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<td>Higher-Order Learning</td>
<td>.05 * .13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Integrative Learning</td>
<td>.16 *** .25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diversity Experiences</td>
<td>.15 *** .22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Reported Gains</td>
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<td>Practical Competencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>General Education</td>
<td>.08 ** .18</td>
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Discussion/Implications

1. Faculty should consider opportunities for students to reflect on, make sense of, share their past experiences.
2. Study abroad program administrators can help faculty make the most of students’ experiences and maximize positive engagement.
3. Experiential learning theory is an apt framework by which to study high-impact forms of engagement.
Discussion/Implications

4. Student engagement is influenced by prior experiences, and thus has cumulative effects.
5. Appropriate use of NSSE data for longitudinal study

Questions?

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  - Paper available for download at:
    www.cpr.iub.edu/uploads/Gonyea_StudyAbroad.pdf