Is it Educative?
Assessing Learning in Study Abroad

Wednesday, February 19, 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

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Agenda

• Why Assess?

• Institutional Learning Goals: What do we want students to know?

• Using Assessment to Improve Learning Outcomes
What We Get When We Don’t Assess

Experience that doesn’t last

And doesn’t enrich the pre and post layers
A better sandwich when we do assess

Goals and intention

Richer study abroad experience

Reflection/Assessment
What Research Tells Us about Learning Outcomes

Analysis of 200 articles assessing study abroad learning outcomes
What students tell us

• become more independent
• leave comfort zone
• discover who they are and what they can do
• improve language skills
• learn about another country/people
• have FUN

goals identified by students on intake sheets for advising appointments
Assessment can help students turn fun into something that will help them grow and prepare for their futures.
Why assess? Rationales

1. External accountability – to the public, state, funding sources

2. Institutional/programmatic performance
   – To understand if educational outcomes are being met
   – To modify programs/practices to achieve better outcomes
and most importantly

To help students

– understand what they learned, where and how

– answer the “so what” and “what next” questions

• And give us data to make changes to improve learning outcomes
1. Use data to drive meaningful change [and help students understand what, how, and where they learned]

Adapted from Twombly et al, *Study Abroad in a New Global Century*
Study Abroad and Institutional Learning Goals

Juniata College, Huntingdon, PA

- Mission and Vision (promise)
  - Global Learning Goals
  - Mapping
- Rubric(s)
- Study Abroad Survey
Task 1: Study Abroad and Institutional Learning Goals

Participant Institutions

- Institutional Mission and Vision
  - Global Learning Goals
  - Mapping
- Rubric(s) – generation and resources
- Study Abroad Survey – generation and resources
Tips for assessing off-campus learning

• Make the assessment meaningful for the students

• Embed the assessment in existing practices

• Be selective – don’t assess all of your goals/outcomes at once

• Adapt – don’t adopt – assessment models
Beloit College Study Abroad Project

• Use application essays to
  – Encourage student ownership of learning (What? How? Why?)

• Use post-study abroad reflective essays to
  – Facilitate reflection and integration (So what? What next?)

• With aim of helping Beloit College
  – improve off-campus learning – by understanding what students are learning, where, and how
Use Existing Practices/Structure to Improve Learning

SA application: intention, imagination

Post Study Abroad: Reflective essays

No to satisfaction surveys, Yes to learning
Beloit College Study Abroad

Goals
• new perspectives on studies,
• intercultural competencies and communication skills,
• challenge own assumptions and values,
• learn to articulate their cultural experience, and
• learn about and from the study abroad environments

Outcomes
Greater capacity
• for life-long learning
• contribution to a diverse society (intercultural competence)

mission-driven
From Goals to Outcomes

• Broad learning goals

• Attainable and measurable learning outcomes

At outcome is what the goal, when achieved, looks (feels, sounds, reads) like. It is the goal realized.
Setting the Goal

Attaining and Measuring the Outcome
2nd Task

Analyze reflective essays to understand how study abroad is helping develop students’

• capacity for life-long learning

• intercultural competency
## Findings

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0-3 pt. scale
Lessons

- It is hard and takes time
  
  but

- It yields rich information that benefits the students - and

- Helps you improve practice
- Advising
- orientation
- Faculty development
- Curriculum Development
THANK YOU