Global Learning as a Social Capital-Building Endeavour

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Ponder This:
What goals do students and families—across academic programs—consistently rank as the most critical outcomes of the university experience?
Social Capital: Defined

“Networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively” (Oxford Languages)

“Networks [real-world links between groups or individuals] together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups” (OECD)

**Bonds:** Links to people based on sense of common identity

**Bridges:** Links that stretch beyond shared sense of identity

**Linkages:** Links to people, groups further up/down the social ladder

“The commonalities of most definitions of social capital are that they focus on social relations that have productive benefits” (Claridge)
Social Capital Theory: Discussed

Robert Putnam: Social Networks have Value

- Information
- Reciprocity/Mutual Aid
- Collective Action/Impact
- Sense of Identity, Solidarity

Image credit: monadymorningmojowithkevin
Social Capital Theory: Discussed

Pierre Bourdieu: Our Relationships Connect Us to Valuable Potential Resources

Power/Access Maintained via Exclusivity of Relationships

Members have Access - Others are Denied

Not Necessarily for Nefarious Purposes

Often Unintentional as Relationships are Based on Trust – We Share with Those we Trust
Social Capital: Embedded in University Relationships

“Access to social capital is itself also a major outcome of college, and perhaps the most significant outcome of college.” (Adler & Kwon)

“Given the globalised labour market, social relationships with others with similar or different cultures may provide graduates with cultural capitals required to be successful in the long term.” (Rienties, Johan & Jindal-Snape)

College Student’s Journey: Can see network of bonds, bridges & linkages that emerge:

- Living Learning Communities/Residence Life Experiences
- First-Gen Student’s Professor/Advisor/Mentor
- Student-Alumni Connections
- Exclusion of First-Gen Student
“In addition to” not “instead of”

Utilize this framework as a means of expanding notions of how international education might adapt move forward.
Social Capital & International Education: Relevant Research

What outcomes do students value?
- A CIS Abroad survey asked, "What was one aspect of your program that you enjoyed the most?" Nearly 41% of 460 respondents discussed networks, connections, friendships, or bonds.

What can we take from independent student learning?
- Research into the “hidden curriculum” shows that it “plays a significant role in advancing professional and personal knowledge.”
Social Capital & International Education

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Expanding the bonds, bridges, and linkages we value and plan for:

**Bridges**
- We should *continue* programming that encourages connections across different national cultures (potentially an existing strength).

**Bonds**
- We might plan for and value interactions among home-country peers, recognizing that they may be “particularly important [for] personal and professional success” (potentially an area for development).
Social Capital & International Education: Looking Inward

- Embedded activities
- "Ideal" program types
- Current models vs. inclusion

Programs designed w/social capital lens
Moderated Discussion

How can we apply social capital theory to

- Energize international programming while thinking outside of the box?
- Move from accidental to intentional?
- Better meet the needs of diverse students?
Moderated Discussion

1. What’s an activity we could intentionally design for social capital development?
   - Within study abroad offerings?
   - Within international student programming?
   - Within “internationalization at home” activities (e.g., virtual exchange)?

2. What kinds of learning outcomes would be designated for these activities?

3. How could a social capital lens help international education better serve diverse student populations, positively affecting our students’ personal and professional lives?
What’s an activity we could intentionally design for social capital development?

- Virtual collaboration to get students to know one another prior to the program.
  + 2

- For study abroad have students collaborate on a service learning project
  + 0

- Predeparture/returnee programming
  + 0
What kinds of learning outcomes would be designated for these activities?

- Min of three encounters with a host national in which you both explore individual viewpoints
  - + 0

- Ask students to explain the new connections they've made
  - + 0

- Understand the value of the new relationships
  - + 2

- A relationship continuing after the experience was over
  - + 0

- Say the quiet parts out loud: recognize that people do make connections purposefully seeking mutual aid
  - + 0

- Peer advisor groups: building a support network on campus
  - + 0

- Utilize your connections to assist with resiliency and self-efficacy
  - + 0

- Identify personal power in connections with others
  - + 1

- Reflect on each relationship to mitigate loss of opportunities
  - + 0

- Diagram their relationships and identify the value of each friendship
  - + 0

- Understanding the value of the relationship that brings on new social capital
  - + 0
How could a social capital lens help international education better serve diverse student populations, positively affecting our students’ personal and professional lives?

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<th>Understand that students get more confidence from one another</th>
<th>Nation group peer time could be structured or guided with reflective prompts to facilitate bonding.</th>
<th>you can find out what challenges particular groups may be experiencing</th>
<th>Structured intentional activities to encourage social networks</th>
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<td>Helps IE professionals think about how to tap into existing student groups such as student athletes.</td>
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<td>Encourage “in-group” students to actively build intercultural understanding by extending themselves outside of their groups - step by step.</td>
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<td>Helping students who thought of themselves as outsiders realize that they have like-minded peers.</td>
<td>It could help students realize the social capital they already have.</td>
<td>Identities are not always obvious and by meeting students where they are and focusing the instruction on SC it is a commonality</td>
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References


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