Assessing Student Outcomes in Study Abroad Programs

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Why Assess Student Outcomes?

- 1,022 US institutions reported information on their study abroad programs
- 174,629 U.S. students studied abroad


- Inform continuous quality improvement
- Advocate for international education
- Satisfy regional accrediting bodies
- Add to basic understanding of student growth in this area

- Young, wide-open field
- Much need for better methods and more data on many different dimensions
- This presentation is not a step-by-step overview, but three examples (See Forum’s upcoming Guide to Outcomes Assessment in Education Abroad)

Presentation Overview

- Context
- Assessment Methods
- Review of Instruments
- Preliminary Results
- Contributions to Study Abroad Assessment
Saint Mary’s College

Catholic Women’s Liberal Arts
- Established 1844

About 1600 enrollment
- 98% full-time
- 82% on-campus
- 9% students of color

20% of students study abroad

Study Abroad Programs

Year/Semester
- Ireland (Year only)
- India (Semester only)
- Rome
- Spain
- France
- Australia
- Austria

Mission of the Center for Women’s InterCultural Leadership

Saint Mary’s College’s mission includes preparing women to make a difference in an increasingly complex and interdependent world. The role of the Center for Women’s InterCultural Leadership (CWIL) within this mission is to foster the intercultural knowledge and competence critical to educating the next generation of women leaders.

Assessing Study Abroad… Going Beyond Student Satisfaction
Evaluation & Assessment Goals
- Evaluate programs’ effectiveness
- Measure Students’:
  - Sensitivity to cultural differences
  - American identity development
  - Success in achieving own goals
  - Intercultural engagement (interaction and reflection)

Assessment Methods
- Longitudinal Research Design
  - Pre-test/Post-test (some grad follow-up)
  - Procedures – 70% response rate so far
- Control Group
  - 30 First-year students
- Focus Group
  - Study Abroad Re-entry Course
  - Written reflection and Kolb’s LSI

Assessment Instruments: Pre-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Abroad Participants</th>
<th>Control Group</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)</td>
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<tr>
<td>- American Identity Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Goals from Saint Mary’s College Study Abroad Survey</td>
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Assessment Instruments: Post-Test

<table>
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<tr>
<td>- Saint Mary’s College Study Abroad Survey (Goals &amp; Engagement)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data Collection Timeline

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<td>Spring Semester</td>
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Review of Instruments
Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)

- 50-item Self-Assessment
- Valid & Reliable Psychometric Measure
- Culture general in focus
- Quantifies the subjective experience of cultural difference
- Most widely used currently
- Based on Milton Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (constructivist stage model)

IDI Measurement Scales

- Denial/Defense
- Reversal
- Minimization
- Acceptance/Adaptation
- Encapsulated Marginality

American Identity Questionnaire

- 10-item Self Assessment
- Adaptation of Jean Phinney’s Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (good record)
- Based on Eriksonian identity development theory. Trying to measuring 2 Factors:
  - identity search
  - affirmation, belonging, and commitment
- One goal of study abroad is more complexity in understanding own culture, and students in pilot focus group felt it captured an important dimension

Saint Mary’s College Study Abroad Survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester/Year-Long Programs</th>
<th>Summer/Short-term Programs</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core Survey</td>
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<tr>
<td>Customized Addendum</td>
<td>Customized Addendum</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Saint Mary’s College Study Abroad Survey

Semester/Year-Long Programs

- Question Sections Include:
  - Demographics
  - Goals
  - Pre-Departure
  - Academic Program
  - Cultural Tours & Excursions
  - On-Site Student Services
  - Intercultural Engagement
  - Overview of Program
  - Volunteer Interests

Summer/Short-term Programs

- Question Sections Include:
  - Demographics
  - Pre-Departure
  - Living Arrangements
  - Intercultural Engagement
  - Overview of Program
  - Volunteer Interests

Preliminary Results

IDI Worldview Profile: Pre-Abroad

IDI Worldview Profile: Controls

American Identity Questionnaire

- Affirmation, belonging and commitment
  - no significant difference

- Identity search
  - statistical significance
  - (at the .05 level)

Pre-test Results:

Summary of Preliminary Results

- IDI: Students’ scores do not support developmental model
- IDI: Low Minimization Score
  - Catholic beliefs .... We’re all God’s children
- Control on both: Heritage Seeker Factor
  - Are study abroad participants a different population than other SMC students?

What we’ve learned so far about Assessing Intercultural Outcomes…
Issues from Preliminary Results

- Importance and Challenges of Control Group
- Difficulty quantifying engagement
- Procedural effects (e.g. on-line vs. hard)
- Many improvements to (and rationale for) programs already. Overhauling re-entry course

Benefits to Study Abroad Assessment & Challenges to Institutional Research

- Study Abroad Survey
  - Comparable & program specific data on students’ intercultural interactions
- AIQ
  - Examine identity dimension, connect to literature on this

- Study Abroad Survey
  - Labor-intensive development and administration
- AIQ
  - Reliability and Validity of adaptation
  - Needs refining

Benefits to Study Abroad Assessment & Challenges to Institutional Research

- Intercultural Development Inventory:
  - Standardized instrument
  - Ability to compare study abroad program outcomes with domestic intercultural programs

- Intercultural Development Inventory:
  - Requires qualifying training to administer
  - Highly rigorous and proprietary
  - Labor- and cost-intensive for large scale use

Next Steps

- Analysis
  - Change
  - Correlations with program variables, engagement
  - Qualitative
  - Psychometrics on AIQ

- Data collection
  - Add 1 year follow-up
  - Leadership Portfolios?
  - Pilot new measure based on Byram’s ICC?

For more handouts, go to www.saintmarys.edu/~cwil, or email us at:

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