

**Spring 2016 Academic Affairs Faculty Symposium
Breakout Group Assignments
Study Abroad**

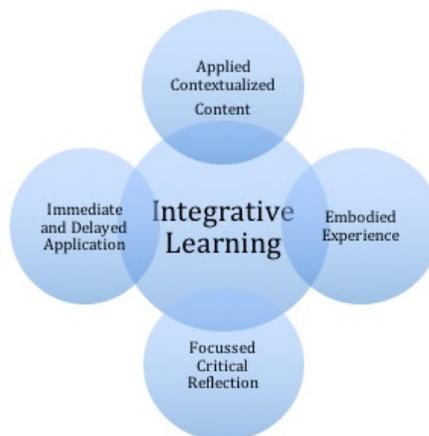
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Faculty and Student Participants: Markus Crepaz, Colin Fite, Silvia Giraud, Adam Goodie, Sonia M. Hernandez, Juanita Johnson-Bailey, Colleen Kuusinen, Paula Mellom, Katie Prusiecki

Recorder: Paula Mellom; Presenter; Colleen Kuusinen; Reporter: Sonia M. Hernandez

To provide a contextual framework for our recommendations, our group agreed upon the following definition for integrative thinking.

Integrative learning is learning that occurs when experience and explicit knowledge are unpacked (made known) through guided critical reflection and dialogue and through subsequent application (Figure 1).



Our group believes strongly that:

I. Study Abroad experiences, including, but not limited to faculty-led programs, fulfill an important mission of the University, furthermore, because experiential learning in Study Abroad differs from and has value beyond what students/faculty can do on campus in the U.S., we believe Study Abroad experiences are perfectly aligned with the University's initiatives related to integrative and experiential learning objectives (at the end of this document we list some specific qualities of Study Abroad programs that sets them apart from on-campus learning).

and

2. Institutional funding and support does not appear to have kept pace with increased demand, despite the fact that the percentage of students attending study abroad has increased. Concurrently, our student body is becoming increasingly diverse with greater needs for more financial support and faculty support. Unfortunately, it appears that many Study Abroad opportunities will become a more exclusive experience, perhaps limited to “elite” students. This trend is antithetical to the University’s commitment to experiential learning and the creation of effective global citizens

Our group has the following Two Recommendations:

1. **Firstly, because** Study Abroad is a “cross-roads” for many other experiential learning experiences, we believe we need to **Create More Access to Study Abroad for both Students and Faculty which will open more widely** these great programs along three dimensions:
 - a. students whose main barrier is financial;
 - b. students whose barrier is that they are in a less commonly found major;
 - c. faculty who are in underrepresented fields

To do so we recommend the following specific actions:

- Create a Fund for Need-based Study Abroad Scholarships particularly targeting traditionally underrepresented students – this is an Investment in future fund-raising – (It might be useful to track and chart how much future fund-raising is directly attributed to Study Abroad experiences – per David Williams comments)
- Develop a Identify and Implement a Mechanism to identify and recruit Diverse Students for participation
- Quantify engagement and impacts of Study Abroad through validated scales and other outcome measures (i.e. to measure “integrativeness” – perhaps using Gardner 2004; International posture using Yashima et al., 2004; number of international newspapers read; measures of global citizenship; amount of fund-raising from study abroad)
- Support Faculty-lead programs as the most powerful pedagogical strategy for creating “integrativeness” and change
- Develop clear tracking of programs that make the necessary accommodations for students with disabilities and expand those accommodations to other programs
- Increase resources for students at the university and college levels for students with financial limitations
 - Reserve scholarships for students with demonstrated financial need
 - Increase awareness among faculty/students about available money
 - Elevate student and faculty support for study abroad to match CURO
 - Consider if there are system inequities that unfairly advantage Foundation Fellows who receive funding for several international experiences, while other highly qualified students receive little or no support.

- Look at Look at policies of AAU institutions (e.g. Texas A&M) – who offer \$1000 to \$2000 of support to study abroad students who demonstrate financial need.
 - Given current student enrollment patterns, actively work to diversify students who participate in Study Abroad experiences; many programs still have far fewer students of color than majority group students
 - Institute university and college policies that facilitate faculty involvement in study abroad
 - For programs that do not provide the following, provide incentives at the college and university level for those faculty who lead study abroad:
 - Financial compensation as Instructor of Record and Program Director
 - Course buy-outs
 - Recognition for promotion and tenure
 - Recognition in annual reviews for significant contributions to experiential learning (i.e., departmental- and university-level)
 - Create support positions in the Colleges to handle the logistical management of the programs so that faculty can focus on curricula, recruitment, and program content details
 - Support a “Faculty Apprenticeship” program so that new interested faculty can be mentored their first year by a seasoned leader
2. It is clear that not all Study Abroad courses are equal, and their effectiveness as integrative learning depends on specific pedagogic practices that can improve this experience. Thus, we recommend **Developing a Study Abroad Toolkit** by seasoned leaders of successful Studies Abroad programs. The Study Abroad Toolkit would be posted on the OIE website and would ideally become part of required preparation material for faculty developing program.

This is a volunteer effort that our committee is undertaking immediately.

Below is an outline of the proposed Tool Kit

Best practices that seasoned leaders of studies abroad compile as a resource for other Studies Abroad program leaders could be organized as “How to,” “Strongly Advise,” and “Suggestions”

For example, some suggestions include:

- ❖ Strategies for students to break out of the “American Bubble”
 - How to maximize the chances for encounters with host population and integration into local society
 - How to create and sustain collaborative relationships with host country institutions/NGOs
- ❖ Activities that seasoned leaders have found worked well in the past. **For example:**
 - To ensure reflection and integration of theory with embodied experience:

- Self-reflection journal – identify every day something that students learned and made them uncomfortable
 - Sensory journal (What did you hear? What did you smell? What did you see? What did you feel? What did you taste?) during and post trip
 - Online reflections that attach experience to content and offers space to respond to other students. Importance of time to discuss
 - Create a group blogging site to narrate and interpret the experience for the home audience
- To encourage deeper assimilation and learning of material pair discussion leaders to teach content
- To promote positive group dynamics and develop peer mentoring
 - Facilitate connection between students (assign partners and roommates – works especially with groups that are very diverse in terms of knowledge base)
 - Assign graduate students to work with group of undergraduates
 - Encourage students to “unplug” or detach from technology
 - Map out trip according to the interpersonal intimacy that will evolve amongst the group as the program evolves, , i.e., put the most emotionally challenging activities at a time in the trip when the group has already bonded and can be supportive
 - Create collaboratively a set of interaction norms for the trip
- To encourage student integration with host cultures/people
 - As appropriate, require home-stay, service learning or work shadowing (e.g. in the local hospital)
 - Develop a policy regarding phones and cameras (to avoid distancing from the place and experience) – could assign a “photographer of the day”
 - Take as much advantage of local activities and local culture) as possible – so you are not just teaching what and how you would in Athens
 - Create intentional activities where students have to work alone or in pairs in the community; if you stay as a group, then there is the risk that students will only hang out with each other
 - Prepare students to interact in culturally appropriate ways through activities that push them to think about cultural norms and “appropriate behavior” (sometimes we just don’t know we are being “rude”)
 - Create a blend of US and host country students
 - Create a musical playlist drawn from local music – assembled with help from in-country partners
- To cultivate lasting collaborative relationships with host community
 - Work with a key informant before you leave to decide what to bring and/or do rather than going in with a preconceived notion e.g. TALK – Teaching African Languages and Knowledge

- Make connections with people “on the ground” who can inform your program and get you places that an outsider couldn’t have access to (e.g. ATEC which coordinates immersion in the culture to give back to the community and protect the environment; local businesses)
- Create activities that encourage interaction with local people
- Create opportunities for faculty to repeat trip more than once to develop relationships and deepen understanding
- Create an agreement with the host university to have UGA students as students of that university and host university students participants of UGA program activities to:
 - learn a lot more (can create awareness of cultural differences/similarities etc.)
 - improve cultural buy-in
 - allow you to “get into” the local places
 - provide local students a “certificate” from the local university (potentially from UGA) –
 - encourage UGA and local students to stay in the same dorms living and learning together

❖ Strategies to support efficient experiential learning:

- Avoid packing the schedule (both activities and assignments) too tightly in order to avoid overwhelming the students)
- Address balance between levels of experience/knowledge/expectations (i.e. for grad/professional students compared to undergraduates)
- Address balance between levels of experience/knowledge/expectations
- Encourage interdisciplinary collaborations between/amongst students
- Manage level of journaling relative to emotional intensity of activity/group discussions
- Randomly assign people to groups so that no one is “left out”
- Create a mechanism to integrate experience and articulate its importance into UGA classroom and life after study abroad

Unique Characteristics of Study Abroad Programs that differ from on-campus courses and which align them perfectly to experiential and integrative learning

- Create and foster unique mentoring relationships for students with professors
 - Professor really “knows” the student and vice versa. Sees professor as a “person” with a career trajectory and can begin to “see” themselves and a potential professional path.
 - Professor can write a good letter of recommendation because knows student on more levels

- Because professor is with students 24/7 they depend on professor for everything (not just instruction, but for guidance in the daily minutia of the international experience). Intensive, guided field immersion pivotal for helping students integrate their experience as applied content learning (Administration should recognize that time that is spent in abroad courses is VASTLY different from that spent in U.S. Should value contact hours – 1 hour classroom = 1 hour field because the value of being abroad is being in the community/field/culture – don't want to just do what is done in Athens – otherwise why go?)
- Benefits that you can't pay for
 - Professor learns from students who have personal experience/background knowledge –
 - Multiple (cost effective) opportunities for faculty enrichment and professional growth through international experience and leadership
 - Increased faculty engagement and contentment in work
 - Data for research – developed ideas for collaborative research
 - Opportunity for international collaboration with businesses, governments, schools
 - Extension of UGA's profile and reputation with other institutions
 - Increased source of Alumni loyalty and fund-raising
 - Increased introduction to becoming a Global Citizen
- Almost exclusively a collegiate experience