
WHY STUDENTS ARE AND ARE NOT LEARNING ABROAD

A Review of Recent Research

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In this chapter, we examine the research literature on student learning in study abroad programs. Our focus is on intercultural learning and development, but the key findings have generalizability to other outcomes such as language learning, engagement with global issues, and learning in the disciplines. Periodically, we refer to other learning outcomes as they pertain to intervening in student learning. The purpose of this review is to provide readers with an empirical foundation for the arguments being advanced in favor of intervening in the study abroad learning process. Two central questions are addressed in this chapter:

1. What is the impact of interventions on intercultural learning and development in study abroad above and beyond the impact of the study abroad intercultural experience itself?
2. What is the nature of the interventions that have the greatest impact?

These questions guide our inquiry, and the answers from the literature have enabled us to better understand the intervention-related factors that have an impact on student learning in study abroad programs. The studies also permit us to examine the competing assumptions of the immersion and intervention models of learning.

This review of the literature is targeted on intercultural interventions, which we define as *intentional and deliberate pedagogical approaches, activated*

throughout the study abroad cycle (before, during, and after), that are designed to enhance students' intercultural competence. Hence, this review does not discuss in depth all of the possible explanatory variables that can also have an impact on intercultural development, though we are cognizant of the fact that other variables play a role in student learning. These include *personal factors*, such as age, gender, prior intercultural experiences, and second-language proficiency. Also included are *contextual variables*, such as destination, attitudes of host nationals toward internationals, degree of cultural similarity and dissimilarity of the host to the home country, degree of cultural isolation from home country peers while abroad, and the overall psychological intensity of the intercultural experience (Paige, 1993). Instead, this review focuses on *programmatically factors* that we can design into our study abroad programs: program duration, intercultural coursework, cultural immersion opportunities, on-site and online cultural mentoring; planned intercultural contact; and regularly occurring reflection through journaling, written assignments, peer-to-peer feedback, and other mechanisms.

It should also be pointed out that we do not propose that this chapter serve as an exhaustive review of the study abroad literature over the past 50 years. For the broader historical perspective on study abroad, the reader is referred to the two-volume publication, *A History of U.S. Study Abroad* (Hoffa, 2007; Hoffa & DePaul, 2010), supported and published by The Forum on Education Abroad. For our purposes, most if not all of the relevant research literature regarding our two central questions on the nature and impact of interventions has been published since 2000. This is not to discount the importance of earlier, noteworthy studies such as Koester's (1985) large-scale survey of Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) students, the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990), and the Institute for the International Education of Students' 50-year retrospective survey of past participants (Akande & Slawson, 2000; Dwyer, 2004). The emphasis of those and other earlier studies, however, was not exclusively on intercultural learning, nor was the focus on intervention as an explanatory variable. As Bennett (2010) points out in his review of intercultural learning in study abroad over the past 40 years, there certainly was considerable interest in developing such programs. But before 2000, well-designed research studies on how study abroad programs could affect intercultural learning were lacking. At that point in time, a body of knowledge that could guide study abroad design was badly needed.

Today, that situation has changed dramatically for the better. The research literature on this topic is growing rapidly. Study abroad itself has become a global phenomenon, and there is great interest throughout the world in providing programs that have a demonstrable impact on learning outcomes among secondary, tertiary, and professional school students. There is indeed an emerging accountability imperative within higher education institutions, private study abroad program providers, and youth exchange organizations that is translating into investments in research and program assessment.

Our understanding of intercultural learning and development derives in considerable part from the work of scholars and practitioners from the fields of intercultural communication, intercultural relations, anthropology, psychology, and intercultural education and training, many of whom have contributed to study abroad programming. The conceptual and empirical literature related to intercultural training is particularly salient to our interest in intercultural interventions (Landis, Bennett, & Bennett, 2004; Landis & Bhagat, 1996).

In conducting this literature review, we sought to identify research studies that meet several criteria. First, the study must adhere to rigorous research design and methodological principles. Second, the study must utilize instruments with demonstrated validity and reliability that measure key intercultural constructs. Third, the findings must be generalizable, providing a basis for comparisons across studies. Fortunately, the trend in study abroad research during the past decade has been oriented toward these criteria.

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, 2007; Hammer & Bennett, 1998) is an intercultural instrument that exemplifies this trend. It has been shown to be a valid and reliable measure of intercultural competence (Hammer, 2011; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003) with a strong conceptual and theoretical foundation: Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). Its use in research makes it possible to evaluate the many approaches to developing intercultural competence in study abroad and to determine what approaches are more or less effective, something that could not be done if every study used its own instrumentation exclusively. The IDI is also being used to help design programs and guide intercultural learning (see chapters 5, 12, 13, and 16 of this volume; DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009).

By way of contrast, the student self-report or evaluation at the conclusion of a program, a mainstay of study abroad, provides us with an important

narrative, a story, an account of what the students *feel* the program has meant to them. These narratives give voice to the study abroad experience. But they are ultimately unique to the student and lack generalizability because there is no external criterion with which to evaluate them (see chapter 1). Empirical research, of the type reviewed in this chapter, allows us to say, with increasing confidence, “This is what works if you wish to support intercultural learning among your students.”

Maximizing Study Abroad Research Project: Curricular and Online Interventions

We begin the review with an examination of the University of Minnesota’s Maximizing Study Abroad (MAXSA) project. Sponsored by the university’s Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition and begun in 1993, MAXSA has played a key role in advancing, as well as researching, intercultural learning and development in study abroad. The MAXSA project has included (a) textbook development (1999–2002), (b) research program (2002–5), (c) text revision (2005–9), and (d) study abroad course development (2002–present). In chapter 13, Paige, Harvey, and McCleary describe the MAXSA curriculum project in greater detail. For our purposes, we lead this chapter with the MAXSA project because it is one of the first with intervention in intercultural learning as an explicit and central element of its design.

The MAXSA research program (Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, & Hoff, 2005; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004), conducted between 2002 and 2005, set out to test rigorously the effectiveness of a new text designed to support language and culture learning: *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students’ Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use* (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2002). The text was used as the basis for an online course that was taken by one group of study abroad students, who were then compared with a second group of students who did not take the course. Change scores for intercultural development, second-language learning, culture learning strategies, and language-learning strategies were compared for these two groups.

Intervention

The intervention for the experimental (E-group) students was conducted primarily online. Following a one-day pre-departure orientation (which included learning about speech acts and being introduced to the *Students’*

Guide), the students had to complete weekly assigned readings on language and culture from the *Students' Guide* throughout the semester abroad plus biweekly reflection papers ($n = 7$) pertaining to the students' responses to the assigned readings, their use of the *Guide* while abroad, and their open-ended reflections on their language- and culture-learning experiences. Students had an instructor to whom they sent their papers and with whom they could interact if they wished. On-site study abroad staff members, however, were not involved in the intervention.

Research Design

The research program utilized a true experimental design in which students ($N = 86$), all of whom would be studying abroad for three months, were randomly assigned to either the experimental (E or intervention) group ($n = 42$) or the control (C or nonintervention) group ($n = 44$). By design, the C- and E-group participants shared the experience of studying abroad for a semester in a French- or Spanish-speaking country. What differentiated the two groups was the intervention.

Pre- and posttest administrations of four instruments were conducted for all of the research subjects. The study utilized the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998); the new Speech Act Measure of Language Gain (Cohen & Shively, 2002, 2002/2003); and research adaptations of the original MAXSA culture-learning and language-learning inventories, the Strategies Inventory for Learning Culture (Paige et al., 2002) and the Language Strategy Survey (Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2002). These are described in greater detail in chapter 13 of this volume and in Cohen et al. (2005).

Findings

Regarding intercultural development, the first finding was that the gain for all students of 4.47 points on the IDI was statistically significant. Thus, studying abroad, in and of itself, was associated with intercultural learning. The second finding showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the E-group and C-group on their intercultural development. The results of the qualitative post-study abroad interviews, however, showed that the E-group students felt that the MAXSA materials and assignments had given them a better understanding of culture in general and of their specific host culture in particular. Student after student provided examples of how the knowledge that they had gained about different cultural variables, such as communication styles, was helpful in navigating their daily interactions in country.

The language results showed, first, that the gain for all students between the pre- and posttest was statistically significant ($p < .001$) on the combined “overall success” score of all 10 speech act vignettes. On 9 of the 10 vignettes, the gain in “overall success” from the pretest to the posttest was also statistically significant, at $p < .05$ or higher. When the E- and C-groups were compared on the Speech Act Measure using categorical data (negative gain score, positive gain score, no change), the results were statistically significant ($p < .05$) in favor of the E-group. The raw data results showed E-group students outperforming C-group participants ($p < .05$) on three indicators (“appropriate level of directness”: all requests; “overall success”: meeting professor vignette; and “fit between vocabulary and level of formality”: meeting professor vignette). The language results indicate, then, that the MAXSA intervention did have a positive impact. From an intercultural learning perspective, it is encouraging that the E-group students gained more in handling these situations in which language and culture intersect than did the C-group students.

To summarize, the MAXSA research project provides us with findings that support the intervention hypothesis, though, as we will see, the gains in intercultural competence that the E-students made were modest compared with the gains of students enrolled in a number of the other research studies that we are describing in this chapter. MAXSA stands now as a pioneering effort that has served as an important foundation for intercultural interventions in study abroad.

The Georgetown Consortium Project: Studying Immersion in Depth

The Georgetown Consortium Research Project (see chapter 16 of this volume; Vande Berg, 2009; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009; Vande Berg & Paige, 2009) is the most comprehensive examination of immersion and its impact on intercultural development and language learning yet undertaken in study abroad research. Over a four-year period, 2003–7, the researchers examined the experiences and learning outcomes of students on 61 different study abroad programs, using a comprehensive conceptual model consisting of 14 potential explanatory factors. As seen in the research findings, among the 61 programs, the American University Center of Provence (AUCP) was the only one with a comprehensive intervention strategy, one that included intensive cultural mentoring.

The Georgetown Consortium Research Project was carried out during the same years as the MAXSA study and explored similar questions: Does immersing students in the new culture abroad help them develop intercultural? Do particular aspects of the study abroad immersion experience affect intercultural development more than others? What types of intervention can enhance learning beyond that provided by the immersion itself? The MAXSA research project provided important evidence that study abroad participants were making only limited gains in their language and intercultural development even when they had specialized materials to guide their learning. The Georgetown Consortium Research Project broadened the analysis to include a wider set of immersion-related factors that might be influencing student learning.

It is more than mere coincidence that both studies focused on the factors influencing student learning outcomes in a study abroad environment and were conducted at about the same time. As we saw in the previous chapter, by the end of the last century the study abroad community was divided about the extent to which students were learning effectively abroad on their own, and the tension between those two camps was growing acute. By examining the degree to which immersion practices and intervention approaches were advancing student learning, these two studies were representative of a paradigm shift in which researchers, first singly and then in groups, began to focus on an anomaly (Kuhn, 1962, pp. 19, 82): that students immersed in the study abroad environment were not learning as well as expected. In both testing and challenging the immersion paradigm, these studies represent, then, an accelerating shift from the relativist to the experiential/constructivist paradigm.

Research Design

The Georgetown Consortium Project utilized a pre-posttest comparison group design with the instruments administered at three points in time: before, immediately after, and some five months after the study abroad program. Two research instruments were utilized for the learning outcomes: the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) and the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (Stansfield, 1991, 1996).

Intervention

The Georgetown study explicitly focused on the role of immersion and intervention in student learning abroad using the seven program design elements

proposed by Lilli Engle and John Engle (2003; chapter 12 of this volume). These were the program design elements or “defining components” they felt that educators needed to take into account to ensure that students would learn and develop interculturally. In the Georgetown Consortium study, these design elements were incorporated into the larger conceptual model of 14 predictor variables, operationally defined, and tested. The seven “defining components” were as follows:

1. Length of student sojourn,
2. Entry target language competence,
3. Language used in course work,
4. Context of academic work [In the study this meant whether students took classes with other U.S. students; host country students; non-U.S. international students; or a mixture of international, host, and U.S. students.],
5. Types of student housing [This meant being housed with other U.S. students, host country students, international students, or a host family.],
6. Provision for guided/structured cultural interaction and experiential learning, and
7. Guided reflection on cultural experience (2003, p. 8).

The research sample of 1,297 students included study abroad participants ($n = 1,159$) and a control group of non-study abroad students ($n = 138$).

Findings

The findings provide very little support for the immersion hypothesis. Overall, the IDI gains were not statistically significant for those students in the 60 programs that lacked an intervention strategy—in particular, cultural mentoring. Their average IDI gain was only 1.32 points, and the non-study abroad students gained a mere .07 points. To put this in perspective, the IDI scale has a 90-point range and a standard deviation of 15 points. Clearly, neither students abroad nor those at home developed interculturally in this study. By contrast, the students enrolled in the AUCP program, the only program in the study with a comprehensive intervention strategy, made a most impressive average IDI gain of 12.47 points. When the AUCP data are included, the gain for the study abroad group as a whole increased to 2.37 points.

The study showed no support at all for two of the study abroad community's preferred immersion practices: housing students with host families (thereby presumably providing the deeper social experience of a host country student) and enrolling them in host university courses (thereby presumably providing the academic experience of a host country student). The findings showed that of the four types of housing—homestays, living in an apartment or dorm with host students, living in an apartment or dorm with other U.S. students, and living with international students—only students who lived with U.S. students made statistically significant, though modest, IDI gains (3.37 points). The gain of students who lived with host families (1.07 points) was not significant. It is worth noting, however, that when students chose to *engage with* someone in the host family (“time spent with host family”), the gains were significant; those who spent 26–50% of their free time with their host family gained 3.37 points and those who spent 51–75% of their free time gained 4.95 IDI points.

Of the four classroom environments—direct enrollment in host university courses; courses designed specifically for U.S. students; courses designed specifically for international, including U.S., students; and a mixture of these three environments—direct enrollment courses fared the worst; the 349 students enrolled in these courses gained just .71 points on the IDI scale. By comparison, those studying with other international students gained 4.99 points.

One of the Engle and Engle (2003) defining components, program duration, was significantly correlated overall with IDI gains ($F = 2.65$; $p = .037$), but the gains were quite modest. Program length mattered the most for students who studied abroad for a semester (13–18 weeks): they gained a relatively small 3.4 points on average. Yet this group gained more than those who studied for shorter or longer periods of time. This study indicates that another preferred immersion practice—program duration—does not predict intercultural development as clearly or dramatically as many members of the study abroad community have traditionally supposed.

Of the seven Engle and Engle (2003) variables, the one the Georgetown Consortium study shows to be most predictive of intercultural development is cultural mentoring, that is, “guided reflection on the students’ cultural experience.” Students were asked how often they had received cultural mentoring on-site, either individually or in groups. For both individuals and groups, as cultural mentoring increased in frequency from “never” to “very often,” the intercultural gains increased (from .83 to 5.02 for group mentoring and from .78 to 5.47 for individual mentoring). Except for those who

did not receive any mentoring, these intercultural gains were statistically significant at or near the .05 level. In fact, analysis of the findings has revealed that the group of students who received the most individual and/or group mentoring made greater IDI gains than any other group.

The practice of providing cultural mentoring on a regular basis, throughout the study abroad experience, is not supported by the assumptions of either the positivist or relativist paradigms. It is, however, a central feature of the experiential/constructivist paradigm, which, as we will see in discussing other research studies in this chapter, predicts that students abroad learn most effectively—and appropriately—when educators take steps not only to immerse them, but to actively facilitate their learning, helping them reflect on how they are making meaning from the experiences that their “immersion” is providing.

In contrast to cultural mentoring, participation in guided/structured experiential activities was not significantly related to either the intercultural- or language-learning outcomes. This finding seriously challenges the immersion hypothesis; it suggests that providing students with experiential learning opportunities alone is insufficient for intercultural learning to occur. Finally, pre-departure and on-site-arrival orientation programs, long a staple of study abroad programs, did not show a statistically significant relationship with intercultural or language learning.

The Georgetown Consortium study gives us a tantalizing hint at the power of reflection and the importance of guiding the learning process. Regardless of the other characteristics of the study abroad program, the student, or the setting, it is clear that cultural mentoring makes a difference. The consistency of the cultural mentoring finding for both intercultural development and language proficiency is striking. What the Georgetown Consortium study does not tell us is how to structure interventions designed to support intercultural learning. Those insights come from several studies that we now discuss.

The American University Center of Provence: Comprehensive, On-site Intercultural Intervention

The pioneering efforts being undertaken at AUCP, begun in 1994 by Lilli and John Engle, are particularly important to this inquiry for three major reasons. First, the program directors from the very beginning were quite systematic and deliberate in facilitating linguistic and intercultural competence. These outcomes are at the core of what are now two AUCP programs,

one in Aix-en-Provence, and the other in Marseille (see chapter 12). Second, these AUCP programs provide us with an important example of the numerous ways that intercultural competence can be facilitated on-site. The MAXSA project showed that online language and intercultural interventions can contribute to student development in those areas. The AUCP program allows us to see how intercultural interventions can be structured on-site. Moreover, the Georgetown findings showed that cultural mentoring supports intercultural development, but not how. AUCP provides answers to the question of how such learning can be organized and delivered by professional staff on-site. Third, AUCP staff have conducted rigorous research about student learning on their programs for a number of years, the results of which (see chapter 12; Engle, 2009; Engle & Engle, 2004) are directly relevant to this chapter.

Intervention

AUCP promotes French-language competence and intercultural competence, among other things, through intense cultural immersion, a French-only language pledge, and ongoing cultural mentoring. For cultural immersion, students participate each week in a series of community-based, experiential learning activities called French Practicum (see chapter 12). Student learning is supported by a 15-week intercultural communication course, French Cultural Patterns (Engle & Engle, 2004; see chapter 12). In the words of the directors, “The leading program components here—consistent use of French, coursework, required intercultural contact, guided cultural reflection, individual housing—are intended to combine to form a synchronized, harmonious whole” (Engle & Engle, 2004, p. 221). In chapter 12, Engle and Engle discuss the three defining orientations that guide the AUCP intervention model: (a) challenging and supporting the students, (b) utilizing a holistic program design (drawing on and integrating into the program a wide variety of learning approaches), and (c) mentoring for intercultural competence. With respect to the first, students are regularly challenged by being deeply immersed in the culture and using the French language at all times, both of which, as Paige (1993) points out, can be very stressful. On the other hand, the program staff provides continual cultural mentoring on-site, space in the intercultural course for discussions of intercultural issues, and culture content to help the students better understand their experiences.

Research Design

Since 2002, AUCP has been systematically researching its own semester- and year-long programs with pre- and post-program administrations of the Test

d'Evaluation de Français for French language proficiency, and the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) for intercultural competence. The early IDI results (Engle & Engle, 2004) were impressive, and the more recent findings (Engle, 2009) even more so.

Findings

In the first AUCP research report, Engle and Engle (2004) found that for the 187 AUCP students in the sample, intercultural competence increased during the one-semester program. In their article, the authors use “percentage of achievable progress” (AP) to report the IDI results. For all students, the average gain was 36% of their AP. Of these students, 25.6% ($n = 48$) gained between 50% and 100%, 26.7% ($n = 50$) gained between 30% and 49%, and 25.1% (47 students) gained between 10% and 29%. Only 27 students (14%) declined during a semester. In the first study of full-year students ($n = 25$), Engle and Engle reported that the students achieved 28% of the AP in the first semester and 40% of their remaining AP in the second. Based on their research, Engle and Engle conclude, “Two factors lead to the clear development of cross-cultural competence in the American student group: as much direct, authentic contact with the host culture as possible, and skillful mentoring which guides, informs, inspires, and stimulates the experiential learning process” (2003, p. 232).

At the 2009 Forum on Education Abroad conference, Lilli Engle (2009) presented AUCP research findings for the period 2002–8. For students in semester-long programs, the average gain on the IDI was a striking 11.97 in Aix-en-Provence ($n = 414$) and 10.81 in Marseille ($n = 73$). Moreover, as the program has developed, the IDI gains have increased. In chapter 12, Engle and Engle report that the average gains between fall 2006 through spring 2011 were 13.43 points.

In terms of intercultural development, these gains translate into movement away from ethnocentrism and into ethnorelativism. Of the students in Aix-en-Provence and those in Marseille, 39.3% and 35.9%, respectively, had reached the Acceptance level of intercultural development at the end of one semester, a notable accomplishment. The results are even more impressive for students in yearlong programs, with 57.6% attaining Acceptance. These are among the largest IDI increases that have been reported. These intercultural gains far exceed those of the Georgetown Consortium students (average IDI gain excluding the AUCP students = 1.32) or those of the MAXSA intervention group students (average IDI gain = 3.82). The AUCP research

has provided important evidence to support Engle's (2009) conclusion that "program intervention brings results."

Willamette University-Bellarmino University: Intentional and Targeted Online Intervention

Gabriele Weber Bosley (Bellarmino University) and Kris Hemming Lou (Willamette University) have developed the Bosley/Lou Intentional, Targeted Intervention (ITI) model, an intercultural intervention approach that combines in-person pre-departure and reentry seminars with in-country intercultural programming conducted online (Lou & Bosley, 2008; chapter 14 of this volume). Two of the unique features of the ITI approach are that it is being used with both international students in the United States and U.S. students abroad, and that it utilizes student learning communities in which students contribute to the learning of their peers. Here we look first at the features of the intervention and then at the research findings.

Intervention

The ITI model (chapter 14) begins with a pre-departure orientation that brings U.S. students together with each other, and an arrival orientation at Bellarmino and Willamette for international students that serves the same purpose. Students learn key intercultural concepts, work in groups to develop their ethnographic skills, and develop greater cultural self-awareness by examining their own core values. The orientation sets the stage in terms of group learning processes and substantive intercultural content for the in-country phase. While abroad (the U.S. students) or in the United States (the international students), online learning communities of three to five students are created on the basis of having similar pretest IDI results, with some groups consisting of a mix of U.S. and international students. On a weekly basis, the students participate in activities designed to increase their engagement with the culture, doing relevant readings assigned for that week and writing reflection journals about their experience. Every week, each student in the group gives the others feedback on his or her online journal entries. This process of continual reflection on one's own and others' intercultural experiences is based on Kolb's (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; chapter 6 of this volume) learning theory and is central to the ITI Model. Not only are the students reflecting on their own experiences, but they are also giving and receiving feedback. There are two versions of the model: one that features a course

instructor, based at Bellarmine or Willamette, who reviews the journals and provides online feedback to the students; and one that does not rely on an instructor.

The program concludes with a postprogram workshop following the U.S. students' return to the Bellarmine and Willamette campuses that brings all the students back together and explores aspects of reentry, including the transferring of skills and knowledge acquired by the U.S. students abroad, to their home environment.

Research Design

Lou and Bosley (see chapter 14) provide detailed information regarding their research program. They utilized a pre-posttest research design with the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) serving as the measure of intercultural competence.

Findings

The average IDI gains of 144 U.S. and international students who to date have participated in the instructor-guided ITI program is 8.08 points. When the data for students participating in the non-instructor version of the ITI are included, the gain drops to an average of 6.65 points. This difference between the instructor-guided and noninstructor versions becomes even more striking when we examine the international student results. Those who had an instructor ($n = 29$) gained 10.17 points on the IDI, whereas those who did not ($n = 29$) gained only 1.94 points. At least in the case of international students, the presence of an instructor has proved to be a critical variable in the success of the model.

University of Minnesota Duluth: On-site, In-country Intervention

The intercultural intervention examined by Pedersen (2010) is an in-country, semester-long Psychology of Group Dynamics course that utilizes a multifaceted intercultural pedagogy. The students are participants in the academic year Study in England (SIE) program offered by the University of Minnesota Duluth; they take this (elective) course during their first semester.

Intervention

The course features the following intercultural elements. At the beginning, students take the IDI (Hammer, 2007). The instructor gives them individual

feedback about their IDI results; that is, they learn about their “primary orientation” on the intercultural continuum, and the instructor then encourages them to use that knowledge to continue their intercultural development. The course also provides intercultural content, a variety of interculturally relevant classroom activities including group projects, outside-of-class cultural immersions, and guided reflection through written assignments and journaling. Students thus are exposed to and reflect on culture in numerous ways, both inside and outside of class. This intercultural pedagogy model is based on a grounded, constructivist theory of learning that Pedersen (2010) describes as “a process of creating our own knowing and meaning . . . primarily from experience” (p. 73).

Research Design

The researcher employed a pre-posttest control group repeated measures design that included three groups of students: (a) those in the 2006–7 SIE program abroad who took the intercultural course ($n = 16$), (b) those in the 2006–7 SIE program who did not take the course ($n = 16$), and (c) those who stayed on campus in 2006–7 but who had expressed interest in the SIE program. All three groups took the IDI at the start of the academic year, and 9 to 11 months later.

Findings

There are two major findings of this study. First, SIE students in group one, who took the intercultural course, on average gained 11.56 points, whereas students in group two, who had studied abroad but who were not enrolled in the course, gained only 1.22 points. Students in group three, who remained on campus that year, gained 1.43 points. The gain for group one was statistically significant, as were the differences in gain scores between group one and groups two and three. Clearly, the intercultural course had a major impact. Second, the impact was greatest for those students who had not traveled abroad before (IDI gain = 24.9 points). As Pedersen (2010) points out, this group moved “from a denial/defense worldview to just above the mid line of minimization” (p. 76). This finding is consistent with Hammer’s (2005) research finding that the major intercultural shift of AFS students in that yearlong program was from Denial or Defense to Minimization.

AFS Intercultural Impact Study: The Effects of a Youth Exchange Intercultural Experience

AFS Intercultural Programs is an international organization best known for its one-year programs for high school–age students from the United States and elsewhere who have the opportunity to study in any of more than 50 countries. The organization has a long research tradition, and during the past decade it has commissioned two impact studies pertaining to intercultural competence, one an assessment of AFS participants in the 2002–3 program (Hammer, undated) and the other a long-term, follow-up assessment of participants who had been in AFS programs from 1980 to 1986 (Hansel, 2008; Hansel & Chen, 2008).

Intervention

The aforementioned studies are of special interest because the essence of AFS intercultural intervention is long-term immersion in another culture (10–12 months) that includes living with a host country family (the homestay experience). As Hansel (2008) puts it, “The AFS Program is first and foremost a program of experiential learning. AFS provides the participant with a direct experience in another culture” (p. 5). In effect, AFS programming relies heavily on long-term immersion and close contact with host culture members by means of the homestay. It is a classic example of the immersion model.

Research Design

In the study of AFS students abroad during the 2002–3 academic year, Hammer (undated) utilized a pretest, posttest, and post-posttest control group design. The sample included students who had been abroad for 10 months and lived with host families ($n = 1,500$), and a control group of “student friends” ($n = 600$) who had not studied abroad. Intercultural learning was assessed using the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998), the Intercultural Anxiety Scale (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990), student journals, and the perspectives of the student’s own and host families.

In the long-term impact study (Hansel, 2008; Hansel & Chen, 2008), a posttest control group design was implemented. The sample consisted of AFS participants who had been in one-year or summer programs in 1981–82 ($n = 1,920$) and a control group of high school peers, nominated by the AFS group, who had not been abroad ($n = 511$). The IDI and the Intercultural Anxiety Scale were the primary assessment instruments, which allowed

the researcher to compare the 2002–3 and 1981–82 groups. They were also able to address the question, “Would the gains hold up over the years?”

Findings

Hammer (undated) found that the students in the 2002–3 group on average gained 2 points on the IDI during their 10 months abroad. On further analysis, he discovered that the greatest changes occurred among those who had begun the program at the earliest, most ethnocentric levels of intercultural competence: Denial, Defense, and Reversal (DD/R). They gained an average of 8 points, which moved many to the beginning of Minimization. Those who had begun in Minimization (M) or in the ethnorelative orientations of Acceptance and Adaptation (A/A) stayed where they were. The author reports, “Essentially, the DD/R group ‘caught up’ with the M group on all measures at the completion of the program. These results were maintained six months later (post-post test)” (p. 4). In total, 61% of the AFS participants scored in Minimization on the post-posttest. The author also found that intercultural anxiety was reduced from pre- to posttest and that this reduction had not changed at the time of the post-posttest. It is encouraging that both the gains made on the IDI and the reduction of anxiety, as shown by the post-posttest results, were still maintained after six months.

It appears that the long-term/homestay type of intervention provided by AFS is quite effective for those who are the most ethnocentric initially, but far less so for those who are in Minimization and beyond. This finding suggests that something more is needed, such as a more structured and intense form of cultural mentoring, if further intercultural development is to occur.

The findings from the 1980–86 group are similar (Hansel, 2008; Hansel & Chen, 2008). Hansel and Chen report, “The AFS returnees are somewhat more likely than the controls to be in the M group, while controls are somewhat more likely than returnees to be in the DD/R group” (Hansel & Chen, p. 6). Approximately 65% of the returnees were in the M group, compared with 59% of the control subjects, while 29% of the returnees were in the DD/R group, compared with 36% of the control subjects. Minimization, then, represents the largest intercultural orientation for both groups, though it is slightly smaller (61% versus 65%) for the long-term returnees. Interestingly, more than 33% of those in the long-term group studied abroad again in college; for those who did study abroad, compared with peers who did not, their IDI score in this study was higher, their intercultural anxiety

score was lower, and they outperformed their peers on a number of other measures, such as language fluency.

CIEE: Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad

CIEE has been offering its semester-long Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad (“the Seminar”) as an option for students in CIEE semester-long programs since 2008 (see chapter 16 of this volume). The CIEE Seminar represents a comprehensive intervention strategy for intercultural learning that includes the On-Line Pre-Departure Orientation Program; deep immersion experiences in the host culture; and regular, structured opportunities for reflection on those experiences.

Intervention

The CIEE Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad is the first study abroad program to systematically utilize what Hammer (see chapter 5) refers to as IDI Guided Development. The concept here is to tailor student mentoring and guidance to the level of intercultural development, at the beginning of the Seminar, and to use that information to support learning that is developmentally appropriate and relevant to each student. This is a challenging pedagogy for the CIEE Resident Directors (RDs) who teach the Seminar. Accordingly, they receive intensive preparation before they begin to teach the course, including completion of the IDI and individual feedback sessions about their own intercultural development, and ongoing coaching during at least the first two semesters that they teach it. By the time the RDs are serving as Seminar instructors, they are very familiar with the intercultural development continuum and with learning activities that are useful for students at different levels. However, unlike the approach used in the University of Minnesota Duluth Psychology of Group Dynamics course abroad, students are not given their individual IDI results at the beginning of the course.

The core content of the Seminar includes culture-general and culture-specific materials. As the course has evolved, in response to student suggestions and RD observations, there has been an increasing emphasis on applying culture-general concepts specifically to the local culture. This has been accomplished, in part, through the use of *Cultural Detective* materials (Saphiere, 2004; see chapter 16), a reliance that contributes to the students’

understanding of subjective culture, cultural literacy, and their ability to bridge cultural differences.

Research Design

The research design is a straightforward pre-posttest design that uses the IDI (Hammer, 2007) for assessing intercultural learning. To put the Seminar intervention in a broader perspective, CIEE data are then compared with data from many of the other studies using the IDI that are reported in this chapter.

Findings

During the pilot semester of the Seminar in fall 2008, students on average gained 4.03 points on the IDI. Analysis of data from 13 Seminars conducted in spring 2011, however, showed students gaining, on average, 9.0 points on the IDI. Vande Berg, Quinn, and Menyhart (see chapter 16 of this volume) attribute the increase in student intercultural competence primarily to the preparation, training, and ongoing coaching of the RDs who are teaching the course.

The CIEE case offers important lessons. First, a course specifically designed to foster intercultural development can have a positive and meaningful impact on student learning. Second, the Seminar demonstrates that for this type of course to be successful, the cultural mentors, be they faculty or professional staff, need a great deal of preparation and support to learn how to facilitate it. This is a specialized course that requires faculty to support the development of intercultural competence by taking into account the learning needs and capacities of students, both individually and in a group. As we have seen here, when instructors are well prepared, the results are striking.

Westmont in Mexico Program: A Holistic Approach to Intercultural Learning

The Westmont in Mexico (WIM) program (Doctor & Montgomery, 2010) provides an important example of intervening in learning abroad through the entire study abroad cycle, from pre-departure to reentry. Begun in 2004 by Westmont College, WIM is a three-semester program that includes a three-month pre-departure course, one semester in country, and a three-month reentry course. The program is grounded in Bennett's (1993) theory

of intercultural development and Sanford's (1966) pedagogy of challenging and supporting learners.

Intervention

The WIM intervention is multifaceted. First, during the time that students are in Mexico they take courses in Spanish (language, composition, or literature) that are determined by their existing level of Spanish at the time of arrival, as well as a Mexican history course. Second, they live with Mexican families in homestay placements throughout their stay and thus have the opportunity to experience language and culture in a naturalistic setting. Third, they may select from a variety of elective courses, including some that focus on various aspects of Mexican culture. Fourth, they are required to participate in the WIM seminar, the centerpiece of the intervention. In the manner of the CIEE program, there is an RD, in this case a Westmont faculty member, who teaches the seminar and serves as a cultural mentor. The course is tailored to the individual student's needs and level of intercultural development. Students can use English in the seminar and are encouraged to treat it as a place to discuss their engagement with the host culture, for example, in their homestays. In addition, instructors give students other assignments to gather cultural information and discuss what they are learning in the class. In principle and practice, the WIM seminar links experience with reflection to support intercultural development.

Research Design

The WIM research program utilized a pre-posttest comparison group design. WIM students ($n = 52$) and non-WIM students ($n = 18$) comprised the sample and were drawn from programs that ran between 2004 and 2009. The non-WIM students were participants in other study abroad programs. All of the research subjects completed the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) before and after their study abroad programs.

Findings

The 52 WIM students gained a statistically significant and very impressive 14.4 points on the IDI. Interestingly and contrary to the Georgetown Consortium Project results, the gain for men (18.41) was higher than for women (13.32), and both groups had nearly identical Time 1 scores. The students' 18 non-WIM counterparts gained only .7 points, with women gaining 2.83

points and men declining 4.86 points. The authors also reported that while all students had started, on average, at low Minimization, 43% of the WIM students progressed to the ethnorelative stages, whereas none of the non-WIM students progressed beyond Minimization. Among all WIM students, 33.8% showed no change, 53.8% moved forward developmentally, and 7.7% moved backward. Only 16.7% of the non-WIM students made progress; for the remainder there was either no change or decreased progress.

The WIM approach shares a number of similarities with the AUCP model, in particular, deep cultural and language immersion, intensive cultural mentoring on-site, and a course in which students can reflect on their intercultural experiences. Both programs are showing quite striking results in intercultural development and are providing important evidence regarding the value of a comprehensive intercultural intervention.

University of the Pacific: Comprehensive Intervention for Intercultural Learning

The University of the Pacific (see chapter 11 of this volume) has provided academic coursework to support intercultural learning in study abroad programs for more than 35 years. The work done there by Bruce La Brack and his colleagues has had a profound influence on the study abroad field. This was the very first intervention to systematically link pre-departure with reentry coursework for the purpose of both framing and reinforcing the study abroad experience (La Brack, 1993). These courses have set the standard for pre-departure and reentry programs.

Intervention

Two features of the University of the Pacific's intervention are particularly important. The first key feature is the innovative pre-departure and reentry courses, both of which incorporate core intercultural concepts and are sequenced developmentally. When these were originally developed, a focus on intercultural learning in study abroad was uncommon. La Brack's identification and development of intercultural content and methods, including his successful efforts to get these courses offered for academic credit, represented important innovations that have over time come to have a wide-reaching impact on the field of study abroad. Coming at a time when study abroad work was typically positioned at the margins of the academy, his work, grounded in anthropology and the growing field of intercultural

communication (see chapter 11 in this volume), gave the courses credibility and helped bring intercultural coursework and study abroad into the mainstream.

The second key feature is the integration of the university's intercultural courses into the institution's broader curriculum. This integration has assured that learning is framed not only during study abroad but also at home, where students can apply understandings gained abroad to the diversity that surrounds them in the context of the disciplines they are pursuing. This is particularly the case in the School of International Studies (SIS), which requires all SIS undergraduates, as a part of their academic program, to study abroad for a semester and to complete the two intercultural courses.

Faculty members are well prepared to teach these Pacific courses through participating in courses at the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, auditing for a semester the course they are going to teach, and participating in peer mentoring with a faculty member who is already teaching the course.

Research Design

The Pacific research program uses a pre-posttest comparison group design. The intercultural intervention sample consists of SIS students, all of whom are administered the IDI (Hammer, 2007), first within several weeks of the beginning of their studies, and then again shortly before the end of their senior year. The two comparison groups are (a) University of the Pacific seniors who had studied abroad but were not in the SIS program and (b) seniors who had neither studied abroad nor been SIS students.

Findings

According to earlier research (see chapter 8 of this volume; Sample, 2010), the students' intercultural gains are very impressive. SIS students gained 17.46 points, a statistically significant gain ($p = .000$). Their pretest mean IDI score of 92.13 placed them in early Minimization, while their posttest mean score of 109.60 located them toward the end of Minimization and on the cusp of Acceptance. Their non-SIS counterparts who studied abroad did not fare so well. Starting with a pretest score similar to that of the SIS students, they had a far lower posttest IDI mean score of 95.90, a difference that is also statistically significant ($p = .004$).

Sample (2010) reports data collected for a sample of SIS students ($n = 53$) between 2007 and 2010. The IDI average change score of 19.78 points

for this group is statistically significant ($p = .000$), one of the largest seen in the literature. Comparison of this average IDI gain with that of a random sample of University of the Pacific seniors ($n = 35$) who averaged 91.31 points of gain provides important evidence that intercultural competence is not simply a function of human maturation or of being a college or university student.

It is important to keep in mind that these results, unlike results in the other studies we have discussed, represent gains made not merely across a semester or a year of study abroad, but over a three- to four-year period. What they show, though, is that intercultural gains are much stronger when study abroad is integrated into the curriculum, as is the case with students enrolling in the SIS. Intercultural learning is deeply embedded and facilitated throughout the curriculum, and this is clearly making a meaningful difference in the learning and development of students.

Related Studies of Intercultural Professional Development

A number of studies related to professional development provide additional support for the power of an intercultural intervention. DeJaeghere and Cao (2009) report the results of an in-service teacher development program designed to enhance intercultural competence. The school district used the IDI for both a baseline assessment that would serve as the basis for designing subsequent professional development activities, and pre- and posttest assessments. As the authors explain, “The district initiative sought to relate specific school professional development to the school’s intercultural developmental needs” (p. 440). Beginning in 2003, teachers participated during the first year in a wide variety of intercultural training sessions and in the subsequent years in four half-day workshops annually. These activities constitute the intervention; the average IDI gain over a 2.5- to 3.5-year period was 6.90 points, statistically significant at $p = .001$ ($n = 86$). The authors conclude that

intercultural competence can be developed through district and school-based professional development programs, in which the DMIS and the IDI serve as a process model to guide intercultural development. Given the variance in the change in teachers’ intercultural competence, school leaders and trainers should be careful to provide developmentally appropriate training that supports teachers’ learning. (p. 437)

Altshuler, Sussman, and Kachur (2003) report on an intercultural training program designed for pediatric residents ($n = 26$) working in an urban U.S. hospital serving a very diverse clientele. Participants were assigned to one of three groups. Intervention group one received didactic cultural content and had a behavioral rehearsal working with culturally different patients, group two participated only in the behavioral rehearsal, and group three received no intercultural intervention. At the conclusion of the training program, those who were in group one (didactic plus rehearsal) had lower ethnocentrism scores (Denial, Defense, Minimization) and higher Acceptance and Adaptation scores than those in the other two groups. Contrary to expectations, those in group two (only the behavioral rehearsal) showed a small decrease in Acceptance and small increases in Denial and Defense. In effect, the rehearsal-only model represents an immersion approach without any accompanying cultural mentoring and cultural content to support the learning. We concur with the authors' conclusion that "providing a cognitive framework for cultural differences would promote a greater understanding of such differences and enhance trainees' ability to learn specific communication skills around cultural issues" (p. 400).

Koskinen and Tossavainen (2004) utilized study abroad in England combined with cultural mentoring to increase the intercultural competence of Finnish nursing students. Based on DMIS-oriented content analysis of oral and written materials produced by the students during the program, the authors found that the students' experience of difference ranged from Defense to Acceptance. One very important finding was that "the students adjusted better and learned more in the placements where they had a named nurse mentor and regular meetings with a nurse teacher than in the placements where they practised without such support" (p. 117). The authors conclude that

the host tutors and mentors are probably the key persons in encouraging the students to cross the inevitable language barrier. . . . The tutors and mentors should adopt strategies that encourage direct client encounters and reflect openly on the problems aroused by the inter-cultural differences. (p. 118)

Marx and Moss (2011) discuss the critical importance of cultural mentoring and how it works to support intercultural development in the detailed ethnographic case study of one student, Ana. "Ana's program had several important components: opportunities for mentoring and guided cultural

reflection, credit-bearing coursework related to cross-cultural issues, and opportunities for intensive immersion into the local culture” (p. 38), including her internship within a school. The data included pre- and posttest completion of the IDI; 400 hours of participant observation; and five “in-depth, open-ended” interviews with a mentor. The data revealed that participation in the program positively influenced Ana’s intercultural development, and that having a cultural mentor and guide who was able to provide “a safe space for Ana to engage in the critical cultural reflection necessary for the development of cultural consciousness” (p. 45) proved crucial. The authors conclude that “[the] role of cultural translator and intercultural guide needs to be built into a study abroad experience and should be played by someone who is trained in providing support for intercultural development” (p. 44).

Intervening in Intercultural Learning Abroad: Lessons Learned From the Literature

We summarize this review by identifying some of the most important lessons learned from the literature:

- *Cultural mentoring and the cultural mentor.* The significance of cultural mentoring and the value of having a cultural mentor cannot be overstated. This conclusion is supported by many of the studies in this review, including the Willamette-Bellarmine ITI study, which shows a very wide difference in IDI gains between a first group of students enrolled in an intercultural course taught online by a faculty member and a second group enrolled in the same course without active faculty intervention. As the CIEE findings show, effective cultural mentoring means engaging learners in ongoing discourse about their experiences, helping them better understand the intercultural nature of those encounters, and providing them with feedback relevant to their level of intercultural development. Cultural mentors need to be trained in order to become skillful in providing support and knowledgeable about culture, the process of intercultural adjustment, and the ways in which learners characteristically react to cultural differences. As Paige and Goode (2009) point out, those who work with sojourners do not always possess those intercultural skills and knowledge. The preparation of cultural mentors, whether they are faculty, in-country professional staff, or others, is an essential part of student success in study abroad.

- *The provision of cultural content.* Study after study demonstrates the importance of providing learners with cultural content such as value orientations, communication styles, nonverbal communication, conflict styles, and ways of learning. This knowledge enables them to become more culturally self-aware and more observant of cultural patterns different from their own. Understanding the process of intercultural development is another key component of cultural content because, as Engle and Engle (see chapter 12) suggest, it enables students to chart their progress and direct their learning in order to gain greater intercultural competence. Cultural content anchors the intercultural experience by serving as a foundation for reflection and learning.
- *Reflection on intercultural experiences.* Providing opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences is an essential element of an intercultural intervention. As Passarelli and Kolb (see chapter 6) argue, it is through ongoing reflection that students make meaning of their intercultural encounters. They begin to challenge their own cultural assumptions, consider other cultural perspectives, and shift their frame of reference to the particular cultural context. Many of the interventions described in these studies incorporate journaling and other forms of writing to stimulate the reflection process. Thinking through situations with peers and instructors enables students to bounce their ideas off others. Cultural mentoring and the provision of cultural content drive and support reflection.
- *Engagement with the culture.* Although these studies demonstrate that immersion in another culture, in and of itself, is not as powerful as immersion plus reflection, engagement with the culture is still at the heart of the study abroad experience. Becoming involved with another culture brings abstract cultural concepts to life. Seasoned intercultural trainers are well aware of how difficult it is to discuss culture in pre-departure orientations; many students simply lack sufficient experience with diversity to make sense of these concepts until they are actually in country. Many of the interventions in the studies we examined build opportunities for engagement with the culture into the program such as internships, service-learning projects with host culture counterparts, and studying with host country students in regular courses in the target language. These can be effective as long as a cultural mentor is working with the students to help them process their experiences in such culturally challenging activities and contexts.

- *Intercultural learning throughout the study abroad cycle.* The research on study abroad suggests that the most effective programs are those that work through the entire study abroad cycle. A number of the interventions examined in these studies, including those in MAXSA and in Willamette-Bellarmino, provide for learning before, during, and after study abroad. Pre-departure orientations and readings begin the process and provide cultural frames for continued learning. In-country intercultural programming brings culture concepts and theories to life through cultural engagement and reflection. Reentry programs support study abroad, reinforce earlier learning, and help students make sense of their experiences, particularly with respect to their educational and occupational futures.
- *Online versus on-site intercultural interventions.* The MAXSA and the Willamette-Bellarmino ITI studies have demonstrated that online interventions can have an important impact on intercultural learning. The AUCP, University of Minnesota Duluth, and CIEE studies, among others, provide evidence that on-site interventions can be even more powerful. It appears that intervening online has less of an impact than intervening through a mentor at the site. That being said, the evidence shows that both forms of intervention can in fact support meaningful intercultural development.
- *Comprehensive intercultural interventions.* Several of these programs—WIM, AUCP, and University of the Pacific—make the case for comprehensive interventions for intercultural learning to be fully realized. When intercultural development is woven into the fabric of the larger educational experience, the study abroad experiences take on greater significance than they otherwise would.

It is our hope that the programs and findings discussed in this chapter can serve to inform those working in study abroad, and that through their ongoing efforts they can more effectively support their students' intercultural learning and development.

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