

Opening Plenary

Forum on Education Abroad, Chicago April 3, 2013

What do we know now and where do we go from here?

by Lilli Engle

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WHAT DO WE KNOW NOW

and where do we go from here?

What an honor and how strange to be standing up here before you, when for the last twenty years I've been sitting exactly where you are, in cities around the world, listening to plenary speakers from all walks of life, with stories and accomplishments much greater than mine, sing the praises of study abroad in unequivocally flattering terms. This evening is going to be different.



A French Love Affair

Intimate
Distressingly honest
Everything but indifferent

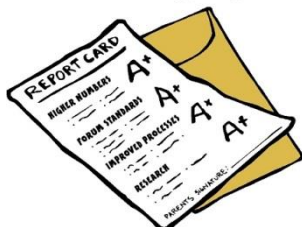
In fact, for those of you who have had one, what follows may remind you of a French love affair!

My life threw me into the arms of study abroad in 1993, so we've been at it together for 20 impassioned years, and, undeniably, as a field, we have come a long way:

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We have come a long way



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- We have tripled the number of students we send abroad to reach nearly 280,000 for the 2010-2011 academic year, as last recorded in Open Doors;
- We have created the Forum, and the ever-evolving Standards of Good Practice to guide our self-evaluation;
- We have fine-tuned the administrative processes that involve: attracting students to go abroad, getting them there, keeping them safe, and returning them happy – all while navigating a mine-field of moral and legal liabilities that demand expertly informed vigilance.

- We have admitted student-learning outcomes onto our list of concerns, so much so that, according to the Forum's *Guide to Outcomes Assessment in Education Abroad*, research studies related to study abroad have totaled close to a thousand in the past 10 years.

We have come a long way

- The Forum + Outcomes and Data Collection Committees
- *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal for Study Abroad*
- University of Minnesota: *Maximizing Study Abroad*
- Developmental Model for Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)
- Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)
- University of the Pacific
- The Georgetown Consortium Study
- *Student Learning Abroad*

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Many of you have contributed extensively to that research. To name a few is to forget many, but we can all applaud the information and insights provided by collective initiatives led by Brian Whalen, Michael Paige, Milton Bennett, Mitch Hammer, Bruce LaBrack, and Mick Vande Berg – Undeniably, ours would be a very different field without their contributions.

So gathered together this evening, prepared to weigh the quality of the student-experience abroad beyond the hyperbolic “It was great,” we can hope to examine with some coherence and supporting evidence what is really happening abroad, what our students are really learning, and what purpose this tremendous mobilization of time, energy, funding, and human resources really serves? In short, we can look cogently at why do we do what we do.

WHY DO WE DO WHAT WE DO?

“study abroad is a good thing”

On one level, the question is easily answered. We do what we do because we think that study abroad is a good thing. (I have even heard some of you say that there is no such thing as “bad” study abroad.) “Access” has thus become a catchword, because this “good thing” must be democratically and equitably shared. Hence the push for growing numbers, for the accommodation of different types of learners, and for university-level mission statements that commit to expanding and internationalizing the campus in the name of educating for a world economy and creating a new generation of global citizens.



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In this promotional vein, institutions put forward a long list of possible study abroad destinations as glamorous selling points to boost undergraduate enrollments, and indeed students see such offerings as résumé-enhancing opportunities for exotic credit-bearing adventures ... all so enticingly described.

How Far Can You Go? We Bring the World Together
Your Once in a Lifetime is Now
The World is Our Classroom
What are you waiting for?
This could be you!



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Indeed, the rhetoric of study abroad sets expectations high. And, in terms of offerings and opportunities, one has only to attend the Forum's exhibit hall or participate in a major study abroad fair to know that as a marketing/commercial enterprise, we are at the top of our game.

The rest is another story.

In terms of student-*learning* abroad, expectations also run high; yet the results are disappointing at best. Well beyond the fundamental goal of academic learning, we ostensibly send students abroad for more. Indeed, we prime our student-audience with promises of “transformational learning” and accounts of “life-changing experience.”

In its Standards of Good Practice, in sober but ambitious terms, the Forum lists four learning objectives for study abroad, here listed on the big screen.

If in fact these are our objectives, latest research clearly informs us that we are falling short of our goals. In the realm of foreign language acquisition and intercultural skills, our students are NOT learning in the ways we had hoped for or expected.

Study abroad may have been synonymous with foreign language acquisition in the past; today, however, according to the Forum’s 2011 State of the Field Survey, the increase in the number of programs taught in English in non-English speaking countries is *at the bottom* of our list of concerns. Only 22% of us collect assessment data on foreign language gains. Those who do, often report mitigated advantages to language learning abroad. A recent major study reports that, on average, female students make an ACTFL *sublevel* more progress abroad than their home-campus peers, while male students show no comparative gain at all.

For more detail, I refer you to the Fall 2004 assessment edition of *Frontiers* edited by Mick Vande Berg, and, above all, to the Georgetown Consortium Study published in the Fall 2009 edition of *Frontiers*.

With academic learning abroad often judged to be more problematic than at home, and foreign language acquisition waning in emphasis, intercultural learning would presumably take-on an important role as a key motivator of our efforts. But in that domain as well, latest research has provided some unsettling insights.

I refer you, once again, to the Georgetown Consortium Study and more recently, to the 2012 Stylus collection of essays entitled *Student Learning Abroad: What our students are learning, what they’re not and what we can do about it*, edited by Mick Vande Berg, Michael Paige and Kris Lou. Both research contributions have examined, in depth, the up and down sides of intercultural learning.

Standards & Expectations

- Intercultural understanding
- Language and intercultural communication skills
- Academic growth
- Student development (e.g. leadership skills, service orientation, maturity, tolerance for ambiguity)

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Seminal Research

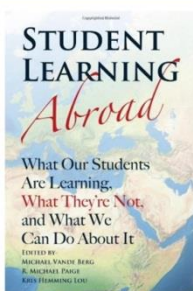
The Georgetown Consortium Project* researched the learning of 1,300 students in 61 programs abroad.

- 190 home institutions, several providers
- \$550,000 Title VI funding
- Two Learning Domains:
 - Oral Proficiency (seven foreign languages)
 - Gains in Intercultural Development

*Vande Berg, M.; Connor-Linton, J., & Paige, R. M. (2009). The Georgetown Consortium project: Intervening in student learning abroad. *Frontiers*. Vol. XVIII, 1-75.

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« Once the search for answers to persistent anomalies proceeds beyond the crisis point, a new paradigm emerges, one that reconstructs the field. » p.8.

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The carefully documented findings debunk some of our most long-held beliefs – such as the inherent value of direct enrollment, or homestays or immersion in general. They confront us with a reality that many of us are coming to recognize – the reality that we are conveniently clinging to outdated visions of study abroad. Those visions focus heavily on logistics, student comfort, or the magic wand of immersion when in fact, such measures in themselves rarely provoke student-learning outcomes worthy of *the massive financial and administrative investment we have undertaken in our field*.

Let me pause here to say that we all know remarkable students. They encourage us forward, helping us believe in what we do and providing us with shining achievements, which we happily applaud, as we will on Friday for the winners of the Forum's Undergraduate Research Awards. We might ask ourselves, though, to what extent these few, who still manifest a genuine, self-motivating hunger for learning, need us at all. Meanwhile, we are, each year, sending abroad hundreds-of-thousands. And research shows that on the whole they, who need us most, are not achieving quantifiably more than what they would have on their home campus.

Barking up the Wrong Tree



Out of inertia or convenience we adhere to an old fairy tale of study abroad magic, while recent research tells us quite another story. Milton Bennett refers to this misguided effort as “paradigmatic confusion” – which basically means that if we really want to see our students grow in their intercultural learning, and if we are working from out-dated assumptions, we’re essentially barking up the wrong tree.

Three evolving paradigms or narratives concurrently shape our approach to study abroad. The first two have shown their limits. The third offers us a new world of insights and strategies.

Positivist Paradigm

It's the Place that Counts

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Since we first imagined study abroad as a civilizing adventure – the old European Grand Tour -- we have given expression to the first, Positivist paradigm. Inspired by Newtonian science, this narrative emphasizes a knowable, predictable external reality. It's the *place* that counts, so we in turn believe that learning will just *happen* by being in Paris or in Shanghai or wherever; and, in brochures and websites, we sell the *destination* as the primary agent of learning. This narrative has been proven incomplete at best.

Relativist Paradigm - Immersion

Proximity to Host Nationals



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Filling that lack, the paradigm of Relativism infiltrated our assumptions. Since it's the cultural context that determines meaning, Immersion became the goal in study abroad. We increased our students' proximity to host nationals, believing that proximity alone would provoke greater understanding and adaptation, learning and growth. This narrative has also been proven incomplete at best.

Constructivist Paradigm - Reflection

Expanding limits of perception and interpretation

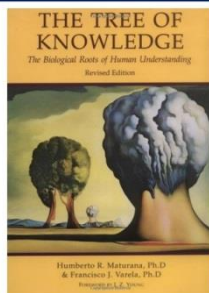


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Finally, the third Constructivist paradigm -- informed by anthropology, psychology, educational theory, Quantum physics, and more -- shifts the emphasis in learning to perception and interpretation. The experience no longer resides in the place or in the event or in the external cultural context, but inside the learners themselves.

So, in study abroad, we ideally cultivate self-reflection and self-awareness, believing that students, left alone, will see and experience only what their personal orientations and cultural conditioning *will allow them to see*. The new study abroad challenge thus becomes how best to expand the limits of perception and interpretation within our students themselves.



« We do not see the
space of our world; we
live our field of vision.

We do not see the
colours of the world; we
live our chromatic
space. » p.18.

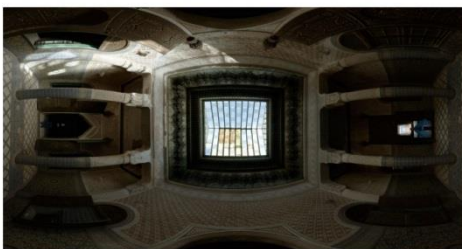
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In the words of biologist Humberto Maturana and cognitive scientist Francisco Varela: “we do not see the “space” of the world, we live our field of vision.”

In summary, as the paradigms evolve, the agent of learning shifts from the physical relational space of the environment to the inner perceptual space of the learner, a shift, in essence, from the outside-in to the inside-out.

Reflection: From the outside-in to the inside-out

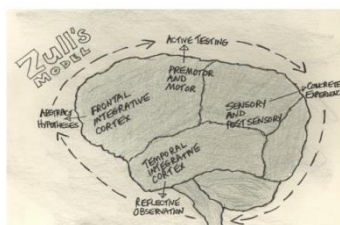


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During my first visit to Fez, Morocco some years ago, I met an artisan plaster-carver who instinctively understood the inner world of the constructivist paradigm: “So what do you think of my city,” he asked me. “It’s a fascinating, mysterious city,” I said. He smiled. You know Madame, *Fez est un miroir qui renvoi à chacun sa propre image*. Fez is a mirror that reflects back to you the image of your own Self. In other words, as you witness your experience of the world, you see who you are.

Knowing How We Know



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In his chapter of the *Student Learning Abroad* book, entitled *The Brain, Learning and Study Abroad*, biologist and pedagogical theorist James Zull underlines the importance for students to “become aware of their own processing and theorizing. Again quoting Zull: “This *metacognition* or awareness of our own mental processes is perhaps the greatest step in developing mental maturity, and thus *transformation*. The human brain seems to be the only

place in the universe where such a process occurs. I suggest that its development is key in programs of study abroad.”
End quote.

If we can answer the question of why we do what we do in terms of our pedagogical efforts to sharpen perception and expand awareness ...

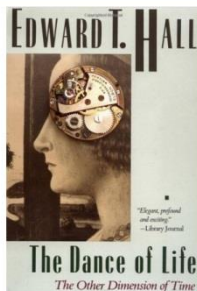
If we can integrate the notion that becoming a global citizen, for instance, has little to do with the extent of our travels but much to do with the development of a non-resistant agility of mind, then we align with timeless wisdom. Let’s savor the strength of that position for a minute:



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In shifting our pedagogical focus inward, we echo not only today’s neuroscientists but the wise men of ancient India who are supposed to have downloaded the wisdom of the universe and affirmed some 5,000 years ago “You are not in the World, the world is in you.” In the early 19th century, the visionary poet William Blake slips a parenthesis into his poem *The Mental Traveler* (*For the Eye altering alters all*) and reminds us that it is through the eye of our imaginations that we break old patterns of perception. More recently, the French anthropologist Raymonde Carroll defines *empathy* -- poetically -- as an attempt to penetrate the imagination of the culturally different other.



« One of the many paths to enlightenment is the discovery of ourselves,

and this can be achieved whenever one truly knows others who are different » p. 8.

“Elegant, profound and moving.”
—Library Journal

And Edward T. Hall, the father of intercultural communication himself, grounds his work in the belief that consciousness expands through the engagement with difference: “My thesis is that one of the many paths to enlightenment,” he says, “is the discovery of ourselves, and this can be achieved whenever one truly knows others who are different.”

We are engaged in a complex, challenging, frustrating and potentially wonderful field. Like it or not, we have our fingers on the pulse of the heart of human relations on a global scale, and we monitor it daily, in the young people who come to us for their education and growth. We witness every day

Engaged in a potentially wonderful field



- either the expansion of their creative ability to include and embrace others who are different from themselves,
- or their contraction away from that encounter, in fear, in judgment, or in the lazy, uninformed belief that the initial awkwardness of difference requires too much effort to overcome.

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Geographical Change of Environment



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Today, to assume our responsibility as international educators, we are called upon to wrench ourselves away from the convenient, but outmoded belief that all we have to do is provide our students with a geographical change of academic environment. Milton Bennett has been telling us for years that an unguided cross-cultural encounter is almost always a negative one and that without some active form of trained intervention and facilitation, students will just reproduce familiar behavior -- albeit against the backdrop of a new, exotic setting -- and re-create for themselves, a home-university experience in the vicinity of Rome, Beijing or Barcelona.

As current research confirms over and over again, students learn best and develop intercultural skills when trained professionals intervene in their learning process. And today we *know* what form that intervention can best take.

In keeping with David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle:

- We can encourage students toward engaged interaction with the local culture;
- We can provide them with the vocabulary and concepts to make sense of what they encounter, thanks to that engagement;
- We can facilitate intercultural friendships or collaborations by attending to emotional, turning-point moments when new-found relationships either fall apart or reform at a higher level of understanding.

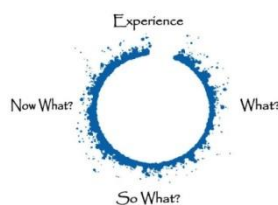
We know that we can do these things and, even better, we know that these interventions bring results, but they take *patience, motivation, and skill*. So the questions become: Do we really want to do this? Do our students really want this level of engagement? Will the principal values that guide the profession allow us to intervene in these informed, intentional ways?

The answers to these questions may likely be *no*. A look beyond study abroad to the larger system of US undergraduate higher education suggests why.

The 2011 publication, *Academically Adrift*, tells us that we, in study abroad, are not alone in being confronted by mediocre learning outcomes; they are endemic to our university system nationwide.

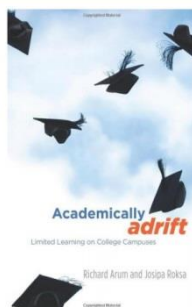
Arum and Roksa, the book's authors, contrast an obsession with "access" as the primary issue of public policy with that of actual academic results. *Adrift's* extensive research demonstrates that the first three semesters of college

The Experiential Learning Cycle



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« In the most optimistic scenario, students will continue their meager progress,

leading to less than impressive gains over the course of their enrollment in higher education. »
p. 37.

education and the rest, have, I quote, "a barely noticeable impact on students' skills in critical thinking, complex reasoning, and writing." The authors qualify these limited learning outcomes in essential life skills, as a "significant social problem."

Indeed, in the provocatively entitled 2012 publication *When China Rules the World*, the London Guardian journalist Martin Jacques points his finger at a handful of reasons for America's decline on the world stage, ONE being: the deeply polarized nature of our political debate and TWO: an educational system described as "grossly inadequate."

After its sobering report, *Adrift* concludes with an even more unsettling observation -- to quote and to paraphrase the authors: The "limited learning in the US higher education system cannot be defined as *a crisis* because the system itself is not being threatened in any significant way":

- Paying parents are getting the safe environment and saleable credentials they want for their children;
- Students are getting an active social life while earning high marks in their courses with relatively little effort;
- Professors are eager to find time for research and to keep their jobs and so tend to pacify and endear students (and their subsequent evaluations) with inflated grades;
- Administrators focus on institutional rankings and the financial bottom line;

Where is the impetus for change?



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In short, "all actors implicated in the system are receiving the outcomes that they seek." (end quote)

With the elephant in the room so collaboratively ignored, where, then, is the sustainable impetus for change?

Coming back to focus specifically on study abroad, here and now behind closed doors, let's self-reflect.

If we hope to obtain student learning outcomes we can advertise with pride, we are going to have to take a cold hard look at the system we have all put in place.

Whether we are affiliated with a US based university or an independent program provider / whether we work on-site for programs or universities abroad, let's think of our own institution and its hierarchy of priorities as related to study abroad policy. How, for instance, does your institution

How to tip the scale
in favor of student-learning?



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evaluate the success of your study abroad initiatives? Is it in terms of the numbers of students sent or received, the economic bottom-line, the preservation of old, unassessed institutional or consortium affiliations, student satisfaction or student-learning outcomes?

Admittedly, despite our ostensible commitment to student learning, we all face hard realities. Stateside many of us deal with understaffed study abroad offices, and the imperative to increase numbers; overseas, many of the unheralded resident-directors deal with large groups of often underprepared, unmotivated students, and more recently with disoriented multitudes of first-semester Freshman.

I stand up here speaking of expanding the limits of perception while many of you deal with the very basic problems of credit transfers, logistics, and, increasingly, the mental well-being of your students ... and yet, large as that gap is, it all falls within the spectrum of this vast, undifferentiated thing called “study abroad.”

So knowing what we know and seeing what we see, we might conclude that our field has reached a turning point – a moment of determinant choice. We now possess enough knowledge to establish a comprehensive strategy able to send students abroad and bring them home -- not only safe and happy, but well-equipped to face a highly competitive, global economy with a marketable set of interpersonal and intercultural skills.

Aspirations vs. Consumer Values

Instead of :	We favor :
Structured requirements	Abundant choice
Surprising difference	Familiar comforts
Selective merit	Inclusive access
Professionally informed guidance	Word of mouth opinion
Measureable learning and growth	Student satisfaction

Yet, our aspirations are weighed down by deeply rooted consumer values, tacit agreements, let's call them, which are abundantly visible throughout the wider American educational system but which, arguably, do not serve desirable learning outcomes in study abroad:

The result is a field that falls distressingly short of its potential – and this despite our evolving discourse which now includes many of the powerful concepts and catch words that could promise change. Today, we may in fact have reached the culmination point of being able to identify desirable learning outcomes and how to obtain them, without being able to muster enough structural, systemic coherence to mobilize the elements for that success on any large scale.

As we get better and better at writing brochures, pamphlets, and websites, I, for one, increasingly feel the dissonance of the shiny, slick rhetorical grandeur of the industry we have put in place, contrasted with the relative hollowness at its core.

Four Aligning Principles

- Intentionality
- Differentiation
- Intervention
- Assessment

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The solution to bringing more identifiable value to our field – value that students can experience and their future employers recognize – hinges on simple, powerful principles we, in this room, can systematically bring to bear:

- Intentionality – expressed in lucid mission statements and in clearly targeted learning outcomes, geared to each SA program we organize or support
- Differentiation – which highlights program differences according to learning goals and comparative levels of adaptational challenge
- Intervention – which is skilled and geared toward experiential learning
- Assessment – which is systematic, reliable, and appropriate to each program's goals

We can act collectively to bring more discernible value to what we do, at all levels. Frankly if we ever intend to measure our success by a standard other than the number of students we send abroad, we are going to have to make a quantum leap toward the implementation of these four aligning principles.

In his essay published in *Student Learning Abroad* entitled, “Taking Stage Development Theory Seriously: Implications for Study Abroad,” Douglas K. Stuart, concludes, “Without the elements of measurement, program design with developmental intention, and structural supervision, the developmental outcome of a student’s study abroad experience is a proverbial crapshoot.”

As I planned my talk for you this evening, I wanted to offer something uplifting, in response to the daunting challenges that we face.

That desire led me to the conception of a proposed Developmental Model for Student-Learning Abroad. It turned out to be too elaborate to share on this occasion, but I thought that a short peek at one aspect of the Model might do us good.

In an attempt to bring more clarity of vision to what we do, I searched for a way to articulate the depth and scope of the intercultural learning that can, and in some cases does, take place abroad. With that intention, I revisited the classification system of study abroad program types that John Engle and I first presented at NAFSA in 1999 and that was later published in *Frontiers* in 2003.

A DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL for Student Learning Abroad

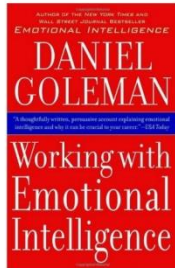
Levels of Immersion and Subsequent Adaptational Challenge

- Program Type (Title, Duration & Components)
- Intervention based on Challenge/Support needs
- Targeted Student Learning Objectives
- Targeted Growth in Emotional Intelligence

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This revised Model, which will hopefully be published shortly in a larger context, addresses the key issue of balancing challenge and support in relationship to identifiable student learning outcomes. The Model finds its grounding in the theory that the engagement with cultural difference serves as a powerful catalyst, which guided interventions seize upon to produce transformational learning and growth.



« For star performance in all jobs, in every field, emotional competence is twice as important as purely cognitive abilities.

For success at the highest levels, in leadership positions, emotional competence accounts for virtually the entire advantage. » p. 34.

In the complete model, the many levels of intercultural learning that can take place abroad have then been correlated with the specific personal and social competencies of Emotional Intelligence which Daniel Goleman has amply proven to be highly valued by the corporate world today.

For our purpose this evening, I thought we might take a very quick look at the cumulative progression of potential learning outcomes *all types of programs* can stimulate if they integrate the Four Aligning Principles into their program implementation and design.

Developmental Model Progression of Levels & Challenges

- 6 Cultural Integration
- 5 Cross-cultural Engagement
- 4 Cross-cultural Encounter
- 3 Cross-cultural Contact
- 2 Cross-cultural Exposure
- 1 Educational Tour



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Program types place themselves along the six-level progression according to the intensity of the student encounter with cultural difference and the intervention strategies they implement in order to capitalize on that learning potential.

Again, we will be looking only at a level-based procession of targeted intercultural learning goals which accumulate as the program types evolve toward cultural integration. Don't worry about memorizing them ... this PowerPoint will be made available to you after the conference.

Each level expresses a potential for achievement; each one different in its targeted goals.

SAL-1: Educational Tour Student-Learning Objectives

- Enjoy and understand academic subject-matter within a living context
- Experience international travel
- Cultivate curiosity and observational skills
- Discover differences in food, dress, artistic expression, societal organization
- Demonstrate civility and cooperation in a group-travel context
- Adhere to foreign laws and regulations
- Self-control
- Trustworthiness



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Level 1 might fit the goals of an curriculum-embedded faculty-led program, or as is the AUCP's case, a one week stay in Fez as part of the larger Marseille program on Immigrant Identities

The Objectives in color at the bottom of each list are the short-hand correlations with Emotional Intelligence competencies as detailed by Daniel Goleman.

SAL-2: Cross-cultural Exposure Student-Learning Objectives

- Draw relationships between in-class subject matter and the local setting
- Learn and respect basic cultural do's and don'ts
- Participate openly in structured cross-cultural events
- Navigate an unfamiliar environment
- Travel independently
- Form friendly ties with locals on a "guest-host" basis
- Observe and record feelings and events
- Emotional awareness
- Achievement drive



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The targeted goals of the Cross-cultural Exposure level are likely most aligned with Short-term Programs, generally 3-8 weeks long.

Just check to see if you think your students are learning and growing in these ways.

SAL-3: Cross-cultural Contact Student-Learning Objectives

- Increase awareness of national and religious heritage
- Increase awareness of the way home culture is perceived abroad
- Increase awareness of judgments and preferences
- Develop initiative to seek out the company of host nationals
- Discern differences in social norms
- Reflect on and accept the emotional ups and downs of an extended time abroad
- Increase self-confidence & independence
- Emotional awareness

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Some short term programs share these Level-3 ambitions with semester-long programs.

I remind you as well that the objectives are *cumulative*, as the colored blocks suggest; level 3 includes and transcends the objectives of levels 1 and 2, and so on.

SAL-4: Cross-cultural Encounter Student-Learning Objectives

- Manage time and responsibilities with reduced supervision
- Make conscious choices in light of subsequent learning outcomes
- Expand repertoire of behavior to include local customs
- Share opinions and worldviews with host nationals
- Adapt to changes in teaching and learning styles
- Cultivate respectful, considerate relations w/ hosts
- Multiply encounters with host nationals
- Independently explore local resources
- Accept cultural difference
- Adaptability
- Conscientiousness
- Optimism

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Here we might have a program that includes foreign language instruction at an advanced level, or it may take place in an English-speaking country.

Academic instruction could be within a US student group and/or with direct enrollment

It would logically include regular in-class meetings for sharing cultural observations and a methodology class or tutoring to cultivate the independent learning required by direct enrollment.

SAL-5: Cross-cultural Engagement Student-Learning Objectives

- Meet responsibilities and deadlines with reduced supervision
- Observe, investigate and synthesize facts, behavior, and events
- Apply academic theory to real-life situations
- Navigate new systems for information and leverage
- Cultivate inductive & deductive reasoning skills
- Clarify career goals
- Engage in reflective dialogue with mentor, advisor or coach
- Leveraging diversity
- Self-confidence
- Building bonds
- Collaboration/Cooperation

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Level Five corresponds to Independent research, internships or service learning programs, which provide both curriculum embedded structure and student autonomy of initiative. Such service learning programs would not be geared to enhancing student résumés, but to cultivating humility and the recognition of the dignity and wisdom of those who find themselves in need.

Here the form of distance mentoring proven so effective by Kris Lou and Gabriella Bosley would be an essential synergistic component to this level of program design.

SAL-6: Cultural Integration Program Student-Learning Objectives

- Cultivate present-moment awareness
- Discern and appreciate cultural difference
- Discern and adapt to local rhythms of life
- Curb dependence on home-oriented social networking
- Interpret meaning within cultural context
- Cultivate empathy and perspective shifting
- Discern and adapt culturally appropriate behavior for desired outcomes
- Cultivate group solidarity and support
- Commitment
- Initiative
- Understanding others
- Communication

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And finally, Level Six goals would most align with a semester or year-long program with multiple intervention strategies; the program could be organized with or without direct enrollment, in an English speaking country or with an emphasis on foreign language acquisition requiring low-advanced entry level FL skills.

It would most effectively include a required, semester-long, credit-bearing training course in intercultural communication.

This was just a peek to underline the fact that between a first taste of international travel on one side and perspective shifting on the other, there is a whole spectrum of intercultural learning outcomes worthy of our attention.



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I believe that once we adopt a Developmental Model for Student Learning Abroad (either this one or another), we will see, at each moment, where we are as a field and, more ambitiously, where we might go, while recognizing the educational value of all the developmental stages along the way.

As educators, we will be able to better orient, better motivate, better accompany, and better assess our students' efforts and achievements.

Most importantly, with newly differentiated, level-based criteria available for data collection, programs and universities will be able to take pride in more than student numbers by highlighting their commitment to upper-level programs and the achievement of their targeted results. Once a value-system based on developmental learning finds wide support, our good, reliable American competitive spirit will send the profession spiraling upward in its ambitions (as depicted on the cover of the Forum conference brochure). And, you, when you return to campus from conferences such as these full of new ideas, those seeds of innovation will, finally, take root in the fertile ground of a clearly articulated, up-to-date vision of student learning abroad.

Just as students have proven to rise to the potential their educators see in them, so it is (in true Constructivist fashion), that what each one of us thinks and feels about study abroad ultimately shapes this field. Study abroad is and will be the very reflection of our dominant, collective vision.

So, the question remains: *now*, knowing what we know, where will we go from here?

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