



# Intercultural Learning through Education Abroad

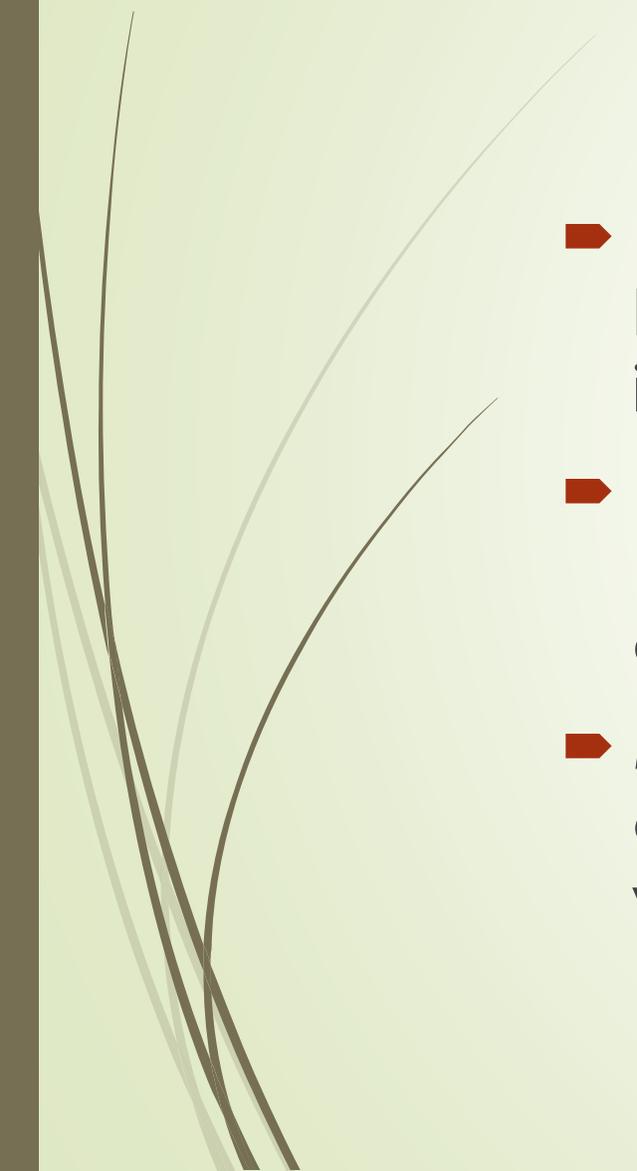
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# Introduction: “The Big Picture”

- ▶ Intercultural competence is a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that are greatly needed in the globalized economy/world today
  - ▶ Nearly 1 million international students are studying in the U.S. along this year, with 4-5 million students studying outside of their home country globally
  - ▶ Migration, economic globalization, and technological change make it essential that our students graduate with abilities to interact with culturally different people
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# Introduction, page 2

- ▶ Yet as a field, international educators are still working to understand intercultural competence, what types of experiences contribute, what types of program structures are needed, and what we can do with students to raise their awareness and pique their interest
- ▶ Ground-breaking work of people like Mick Vande Berg, Lilli and John Engle, R. Michael Paige, Milton Bennett, Janet Bennett, Bruce La Brack ... over last 40 years
- ▶ A significant amount of research over the last decade has set the groundwork for what I will discuss today

# About me

- Ph.D. in history from Indiana University
- Taught Russian, European and world history for several years before taking administrative positions
- Currently Assistant Vice President, University of Nebraska (system)
- Also President of the Institute for Cross-Cultural Teaching and Learning
- “Preparing to Study Abroad” (2014) is my first book written directly for students





# Activity #1

- ▶ Use four post-it notes
- ▶ Write the top four challenges our **students** face in terms of intercultural learning abroad, one on each paper
- ▶ Then, with others at your table, arrange your four notes and the notes of others at your table into groups
  - ▶ You decide what the groups are



# Challenges for students

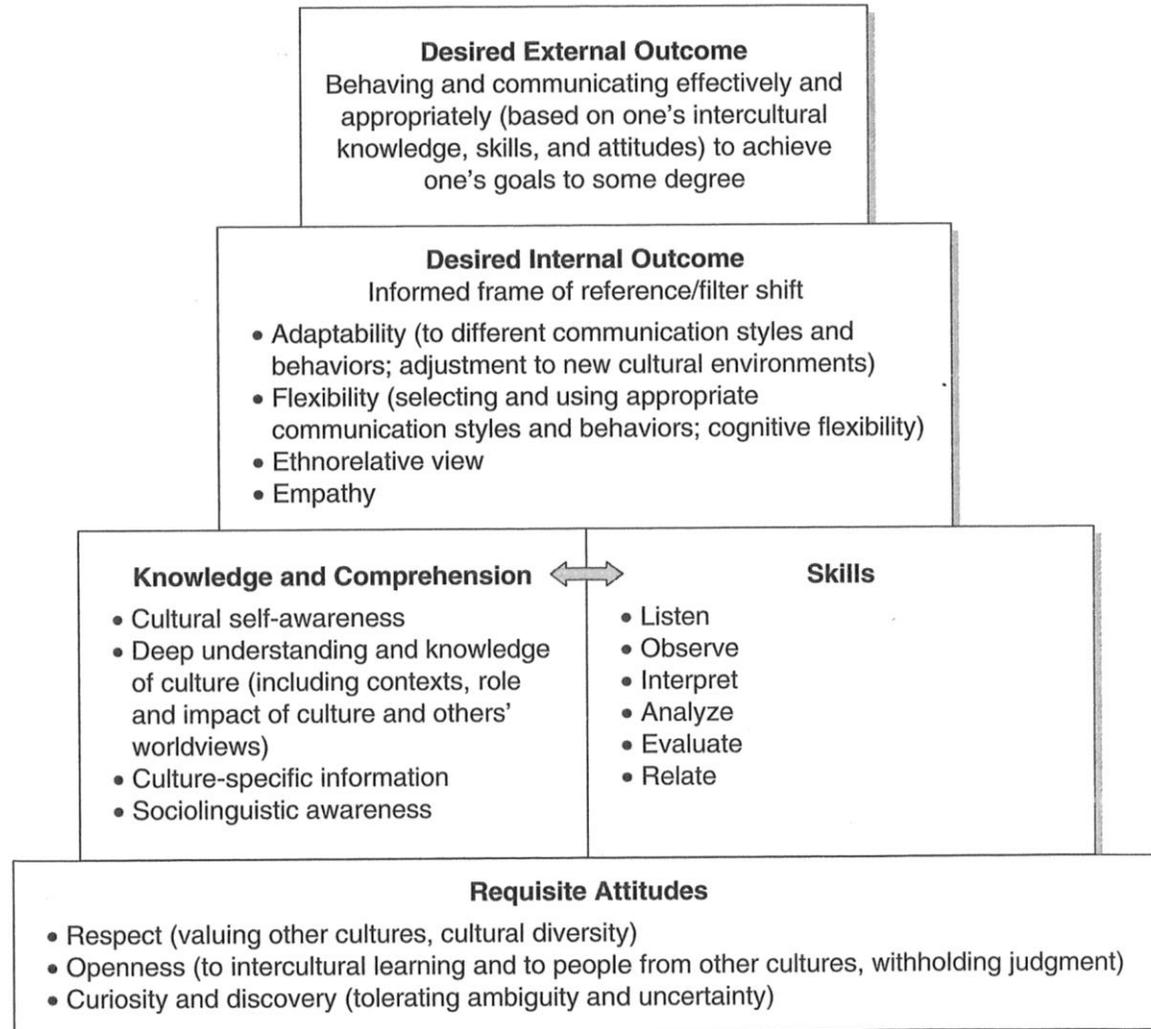
- What patterns do you see?
- What can we learn from each other?
- What steps might be needed to tackle these challenges?
- What resources might be needed to address these challenges effectively (best effort, if money was no obstacle)



# Intercultural Competence



- ▶ A combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes
- ▶ Deardorff's pyramid model includes requisite attitudes (respect, openness, curiosity and discovery), comprehension (cultural self-awareness, deep understanding of culture, sociolinguistic awareness) and skills (listen, observe, interpret, analyze, evaluate, relate)
- ▶ Hammer writes: "Intercultural competence is the capability to accurately understand and adapt behavior to cultural difference and commonality."



**Figure 1.3** Deardorff Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

SOURCE: Deardorff (2006). Used by permission.

# D. Deardorff Pyramid Model of Intercultural Competence

From:  
Spitzberg and  
Chagnon  
(2009), p. 13.



# Research on Intercultural Learning: Georgetown Consortium study

- ▶ Beginning in 2002, education abroad professionals at three (later four) universities, led by Mick Vande Berg at Georgetown University, studied learning outcomes in intercultural learning and second language acquisition
- ▶ Students were recruited from 61 programs run by the four universities as well as three program providers
- ▶ [Vande Berg, et al., 2004; Vande Berg, et al., 2009; Paige and Vande Berg, 2012]



# Georgetown Consortium Study: Key Findings (page 1)

- Students who studied foreign language previously had higher gains on IDI
- Students who studied for a semester (13-18 weeks) had highest gains on IDI, while those studying on shorter programs saw very little gain
- Students who studied the target foreign language abroad had higher gains than those who did not
- Students who took classes with mixed group had higher gains than those who studied with host nationals



# Georgetown Consortium Study: Key Findings (page 2)

- Strong support for cultural mentoring
- Students who received cultural mentoring on-site made greater gains than those who did not
- Students who were housed with U.S. students or host-country students had higher gains than those who did a home-stay or lived with international students
- Students who spent 26-50% of their free time with host nationals had the greatest gains (over those who spent less than 25% or more than 50% of time)
- [Vande Berg et al., 2009]



# Georgetown Consortium Study: Key Findings (page 3)

- ▶ Little support
  - ▶ for the immersion hypothesis (immersion without support)
  - ▶ Host families (without support)
  - ▶ Direct enrollment at local university (without support)
  - ▶ Role of foreign language learning on intercultural learning (as measured by SOPI and IDI)



# Three Master Narratives (Vande Berg, Paige and Lou, 2012)

- Positivist Narrative: Learning through “experience” and basic exposure to the new and different
- Relativist Narrative: Learning through being “immersed” in a new and different environment
- Experiential/Constructivist Narrative: Learning through immersion and cultural mentoring
- The key: “moving learners beyond habitual ways of experiencing and behaving” (p. 19)



# Student Learning Abroad (2012): chapters

- Bruce La Brack and Laura Bathurst describe University of the Pacific's intercultural learning courses over 35 years
- Lilli Engle and John Engle describe the research-driven format and transformation of AUCP's programs, using holistic intervention and cultural mentoring
- R. Michael Paige, Tara Harvey and Kate McCleary relate Univ of Minnesota's Maximizing Study Abroad project
- Kris Lou and Gabrielle Bosley describe their intervention
- Vande Berg, Quinn and Menyhart relate CIEE's Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad



# Where are we at?

- Intervention is needed to maximize student learning
  - This is the constructivist/experiential approach
  - Cultural mentoring provides an important format for helping students to frame and reframe their experiences abroad, especially “culture bumps”
  - The skill and experience of instructors who work with interventions and mentoring has a direct relationship with the gains of their students
  - Invest time and resources on staff development
- 



# So what is the value of intercultural skills?

- ▶ British Council, Ipsos Public Affairs and Booz Allen Hamilton did research that resulted in “Culture at Work: The Value of Intercultural Skills in the Marketplace” (2013)
- ▶ “The research shows that there is real business value in employing staff who have the ability to work effectively with individuals and organizations from cultural backgrounds different from their own” (p. 3)
- ▶ Employees who lack intercultural skills can cause problems, including damage to an organization



# Important intercultural skills highlighted in “Culture at Work” (2013)

- The ability to understand different cultural contexts and viewpoints
- Demonstrating respect for others
- Knowledge of a foreign language
- Work with diverse teams
- Demonstrating strong communication skills
- Showing cultural sensitivity (p. 3)

Chart 6: The terms employers use to define intercultural skills



The terms employers use to define intercultural skills, “Culture at Work” p.10

Note: The term most used by employers to define intercultural skills appears in the largest box and the term least used in the smallest box.

Source: Telephone/face-to-face surveys of public sector, private sector and NGO employers responsible for employment decisions. Base: Ipsos Public Affairs, 2012. Global (n=367).



# Global Dexterity by Andy Molinsky (Harvard Business Review Press, 2013)

- ▶ Molinsky worked with international refugees in Boston while working on Ph.D. at Harvard, found that many of them couldn't find jobs because of cultural differences
- ▶ While teaching MBA students at USC, he found many international students had a hard time contributing to class discussions and projecting selves in interviews
- ▶ “Global dexterity – the capacity to adapt your behavior, when necessary, in a foreign cultural environment to accommodate new and different expectations that vary from those of your native cultural setting” (p. 9)



# Cultural Intelligence by Brooks Peterson (Intercultural Press, 2004)

- “Cultural intelligence is the ability to engage in a set of behaviors that uses skills (i.e., language or interpersonal skills) and qualities (e.g. tolerance for ambiguity, flexibility) that are tuned appropriately to the culture-based values and attitudes of the people with who one interacts” (p. 89)
- Expands on the work of Geert Hofstede with numerous examples from the world of work, such as role of managers, decision-making style, conflict style, views on change, quality, and level of control over life & business



# The SAGE Handbook of Intercultural Competence (ed. Deardorff, 2009)

- ▶ Combination of theoretical and conceptual chapters plus chapters applying intercultural competence to various areas of work
  - ▶ Human resources, business, teacher education, social work, engineering, religious orgs, and health care
  - ▶ Additional chapters on research and assessment, including a chapter by Alvino Fantini about tools for assessment



## Activity #2

- ▶ Use four post-it notes once again
- ▶ On each paper, write one of the top challenges faculty leaders face in terms of intercultural learning abroad
- ▶ If you are an education abroad professional, write about top challenges EA professionals face in working with students on intercultural learning
- ▶ Attach each of your papers on the wall, grouping with other papers as you think appropriate



# What? So What? Now What?

- ▶ What can faculty and education abroad professionals do to enhance intercultural learning in programs abroad?
  - ▶ What can you do to help students understand these issues better and to have interest in intercultural learning?
- 



# My suggestions for faculty and advisors

- Encourage (and facilitate) students to interact with local people in meaningful ways
  - Be intentional about how you involve students in the local community and with the people, both in the academic program and in co-curriculum
  - Be a cultural mentor, ask students questions
  - Intervene in your students' learning: be intentional!
  - Describe intercultural skills for students
  - Challenge students to meet many people (50, 100, 200)
- 



# My suggestions for students, p. 1

- Meet people: How can students hope to understand local cultural patterns without interacting with people?
- Learn as much as you have time for about history, political and educational systems, the arts, economy, social structure, etc.
- Learn about cultural patterns
- Be observant: look for patterns, become more active in observing and asking questions



# My suggestions for students, p. 2

- Join a club or group so you can meet people
- Set a goal of the number of people you wish to meet (50, 100, 200)
- Become a “culture sleuth” = observe how things operate and how people act, then ask questions
- Reflect on what you have observed – in writing or a blog, but focus on the people and your interactions with them
- Be patient with yourself and others
- Trust your instincts (health and safety), but push yourself a bit



# References and Resources, p 1

- ▶ British Council, Ipsos Public Affairs, and Booz Allen Hamilton (2013). “Culture at Work: The Value of Intercultural Skills in the Workplace.” [www.britishcouncil.org](http://www.britishcouncil.org).
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- ▶ Molinsky, Andy (2013). *Global Dexterity: How to Adapt Your Behavior Across Cultures Without Losing Yourself in the Process*. Harvard Business Review Press.
- ▶ Paige, R.M. and Vande Berg, M. (2012). “Why Students Are and are Not Learning Abroad: A Review of Recent Research,” in Vande Berg, et al. eds, *Student Learning Abroad*, pp. 29-58.



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- ▶ Vande Berg, M., Balkcum, A., Schied, M., and Whalen, B. (2004) "The Georgetown University Consortium Project: A Report at the Halfway Mark," *Frontiers*, vol. X, pp. 101-116.
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- ▶ Vande Berg, M., Paige, R.M., and Lou, K.M. (2012) eds. *Student Learning Abroad: What Our Students Are Learning, What They're Not, and What We Can Do About It.* (Stylus)
- ▶ Vande Berg, M., Paige, R.M. and Lou, K.M. (2012). "Student Learning Abroad: Paradigms and Assumptions." In Vande Berg, Paige and Lou, eds., *Student Learning Abroad: What Our Students Are Learning, What They're Not, and What We Can Do About It.* (Stylus), pp. 3-28.