Deepening Study Abroad Students’ Intercultural Competence Through Reflection

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Intercultural Competence

Intercultural Competence Models

- Darla Deardorff’s “Process Model of Intercultural Competence” (2008)
“...[T]he capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities.”

(https://idiinventory.com/products/the-intercultural-development-inventory-idi/)
Intercultural Development Continuum

Monocultural Mindset

Denial

Polarization

Minimization

Acceptance

Adaptation

Intercultural Mindset

Source: IDI, LLC

“…Unexamined cultural experiences do not facilitate intercultural competence development. Rather, experience plus cultural reflection result in greater cultural insights and increase students’ intercultural competence.”

--Hammer, 2012, p. 131
Reflective Learning

“…[T]he intention to learn as a result of reflection.”
--Moon, 2004, p. 80
Reflective Learning, cont.

- Personal & interpersonal
- Learning about self & others
- Critical incidents
- Learning goals for students
- Clear expectations of students
- Cultural differences & similarities
Reflective Learning Strategies

1. Journaling
2. Blogging
3. Primary Research
4. Peer Reflection
Journaling

- Personal reflection on cultural differences and similarities
- Exploring critical incidents
- Learning about student’s own culture and host culture
- A journal is a student’s own space
## Rubric Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance level</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Advanced (4)</th>
<th>Competent (3)</th>
<th>Developing (2)</th>
<th>Needs Development (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Global Mindedness</strong></td>
<td>Awareness of world affairs</td>
<td>The student uses affairs involving her host country as a resource for her personal reflection/understanding</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy for others from diverse backgrounds</td>
<td>The student is able to relate differences in background and culture to views of the world</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Cross-Cultural Learning</strong></td>
<td>Ability to understand and articulate different viewpoints</td>
<td>The student relates her knowledge of local culture to her culture</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tolerance for ambiguity</td>
<td>The student is able to interpret the same fact under the cultural frameworks of her host country and her own</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to act in accordance with the local culture</td>
<td>The student gives examples of being able to act in accordance to her host country's cultural norms</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Academic enrichment</strong></td>
<td>Ability to understand structure and function in other academic systems</td>
<td>The student gives examples of being able to adapt to the academic system of her host country</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Nick Gozik, Boston College*

Blogging

- Can be used as an online journal
- Wide range of platforms
- Getting feedback from others on your posts
- Students’ general use of social media
- Reminder regarding public nature of blogs
Blog Example

Blog Examples

- Georgetown University’s Junior Year Abroad Network
  - Example blog

- University of Minnesota’s Global Change in Thailand Video Blogs
  - Example blog
Primary Research

- Identifying a cultural difference
- Underlying cultural values
- Primary and secondary sources
- Conducting interviews in that cultural context
Peer Reflection

- Assign the students to groups
- Meet on a regular basis
- Provide some suggested questions for each meeting
Examples of ‘Prompts’

- **Pre-Departure:** What do you anticipate being the biggest difference between the United States and the culture of your host country?

- **In-Country:** What is it like to be a university student in your host country? How is this different from or similar to what it’s like to be a student in the U.S.?

- **Re-Entry:** What new interests might you pursue now that you have studied abroad? How can you find ways to pursue these areas of interest?
Cultural Mentoring

- Rooted in self-awareness on the part of instructors and staff
- Demonstrating intercultural effectiveness for students
- Providing support for, and challenging, students
- Making space for intentional reflection before, during, and after the program

Small-Group Activity
“I wish Germany was more like the U.S., because people are so much friendlier at home.”
“I’ve observed that greeting others with a hug is not very common in China, even with people you’ve known for an extended period of time, so I’ve learned to hold back on hugging people here.”
Intercultural Development Continuum

Example of Student Reflection

“My host family in Mexico is just like my family at home. We all share the same basic values.”

Intercultural Development Continuum

“It seems like the main difference in Japan is the food!”
Intercultural Development Continuum

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Intercultural Mindset
“I think it’s interesting that people in Austria can be quite direct in their communication style, while I tend to be an indirect communicator.”

“Why can’t people at home be more open-minded, like they are in Norway?”
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**Resources**

- *What’s Up with Culture?* (online resource) ([www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture](http://www2.pacific.edu/sis/culture))
Which reflective learning strategies have worked for your study abroad students?
Questions?


