Alternatives to Study Abroad: Implications for Students’ Development of Global, International, and Intercultural Competencies

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Definition of GII Competencies

- Knowledge about several dimensions of global and international cultures
- Appreciation of cultural, racial, and ethnic diversity
- Understanding of the complexities of issues in a global context
- Comfort in working with people from other cultures
Importance of GII Competencies

• Enable people to work and live with others from diverse cultural backgrounds

• Foster leadership skills essential for effective participation and leadership in diverse global environment

• Increasingly prioritized among higher education institutions as an outcome
Study Abroad

- Fosters holistic development and global learning/development
- Builds intercultural competence, intercultural maturity, and intercultural sensitivity of students
- Traditional means of fostering GII competencies among undergraduates
Study Abroad: Who Participates?

• 270,604 participants in 2009-2010

• Disparities:
  – Students of color, males, and students enrolled in some degree programs (e.g. STEM) less likely to participate
Barriers to Study Abroad

- Cost—sometimes lack of financial aid
- Difficulty transferring credits and possible delayed progress toward graduation
- Students of color:
  - Fear of encountering racism abroad
  - Familial obligations and concerns
  - Lack of faculty of color leading study abroad programs
Research Questions

• With what frequency do students participate in on-campus and off-campus international and global activities?
• Does participation in on-campus global/international activities have the same significant relationships with students’ development of GII competencies as studying abroad?
Conceptual Frameworks

- Allport’s (1954) contact theory
  – Positive perceptions of others can be formed through contact
- Lewin’s (1936) person-environment interaction theory
  – Intentionally-designed curricular and co-curricular activities can facilitate GII development
Methods

**Instrument:**
- SERU survey
- Academic/global engagement module

**Participants:**
- 213,160 UG, spring 2011, 9 large public research universities
- 38.1% response rate, $n = 81,135$
- Random sample of 30% of students ($n = 15,807$)
Measures

• Demographics: age, gender, race/ethnicity, first-generation status, social class

• Antecedents to GII competency development:
  – Interest in pursuing global/international opportunities
  – Following global/international events in media
  – Development in linguistic skills in another language
Measures

- GII Competencies: self-reported abilities when they started at the campus subtracted from current abilities
  - understanding of the complexities of global issues
  - apply disciplinary knowledge in a global context
  - understand international perspectives (economic, political, social, and cultural)
  - work with people from other cultures
  - appreciate, tolerate, and understand racial and ethnic diversity
  - appreciate cultural and global diversity
  - comfort working with people from other cultures
### Students’ Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social engagement</td>
<td>13081</td>
<td>95.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-curricular activities</td>
<td>9677</td>
<td>70.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic global/international research</td>
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<td>43.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Academic coursework</td>
<td>5882</td>
<td>43.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study or travel abroad</td>
<td>3877</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Methods

• Factor analysis:
  – Global media (six items, $\alpha = .94$)
  – International interest (two items, $\alpha = .71$)
  – Linguistic skills (two items, $\alpha = .78$)
  – Global/international competency (four items, $\alpha = .81$)
  – Intercultural competency (four items, $\alpha = .82$)

• Linear regression predicting last two factors
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Global/International</th>
<th>Intercultural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social engagement</td>
<td>.10*</td>
<td>.13*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular activities</td>
<td>.13***</td>
<td>.12***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study or travel abroad</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic global/international research</td>
<td>-.05**</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic coursework</td>
<td>.19***</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Global/International</th>
<th>Intercultural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Followed news</td>
<td>.13***</td>
<td>-.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest in international opportunities</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic skills</td>
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<td>.25***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credits</td>
<td>.01***</td>
<td>.01***</td>
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</table>
## Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Global/International</th>
<th>Intercultural</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.05***</td>
<td>.08***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low-income</td>
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<td>.10*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Working-class</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td>.06*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students of color</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.07***</td>
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<tr>
<td>First-generation</td>
<td>.08***</td>
<td>.11***</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.04***</td>
<td>.02***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discussion

• Across the board, the international/global activities positively associated with students’ development of GII competencies included:
  – Social interactions with international students
  – Participation in co-curricular activities with international/global themes
Recommendations

• Invest in co-curricular global/international activities—promote these among students
• Collaborate with partners across campus to increase interactions between international and domestic students
• Co-curricular is an important area in which to enhance IaH activities
Thank you!

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• More information about SERU: seru.umn.edu and oir.umn.edu