

Internationalization of U.S. Education in the 21st Century:
The Future of International and Foreign Language Studies
April 11-13, 2014
College of William and Mary
Williamsburg, Virginia

Study Abroad and International/Foreign Language Education: How Can the Various Modalities and Structures More Effectively Work Together to Instill Global Competence?

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Introduction

These are challenging times for higher education in the United States. Public universities continue to face increasing disinvestment from states forcing students and their families to assume a higher proportion of the cost of education. Student debt has surpassed the \$1 trillion dollar mark and is becoming recognized as a drag on the U.S. economy by preventing a large cohort of graduating students any significant participation because of their obligations to repay student loans. In the context of this shift to more private support there is a concomitant shift in the perception that higher education is more of a private good, a commodity- a ticket to a career and good paying job. The push toward majors and disciplines that have the potential for higher paying positions often leads students to make choices that (1) allow them to finish their degree more quickly; and (2) exclude or minimize those disciplines and courses that are seen as non-essential. It is against this backdrop of the challenges in higher education that the needs of international and foreign language education and the economic, cultural and security needs of the nation must be assessed.

While there is agreement that a university education is neither a purely public nor private good it is clear that while benefits accrue to the individual there is also a viable argument to be made that education has substantial positive externalities. College-educated citizens often have

higher paying jobs and therefore pay more taxes and college-educated citizens often volunteer and contribute to their local communities through other civic service, to cite just a couple examples. A rational argument can also be made that along a continuum of public versus private good spectrum that fields such as international, area and foreign language studies represent a greater tendency toward the public end of the spectrum due to their greater tendency to meet the conditions of defining a public good: non-excludability (non-payers still benefit from the activity) and non-rivalry in consumption (additional consumers do not diminish the benefits to others). (Baum, McPherson, 2013) If one adopts, even partially, the notion that international and foreign language studies represent more of a public than a private good, then it follows that public funding should support a greater proportion of these endeavors.

Advocacy and Development Efforts

The need for globally and linguistically competent citizens has been made through a series of task forces, mandates and calls to action. The historical pattern of these well-meaning activities appears to be a spike in optimism and activity within the international and foreign language education communities. However, a re-reading of Senator Paul Simon's The Tongue-Tied American (Simon, 1980) demonstrates that, despite progress, some of the chapter headings have themes that continue to resonate almost 35 years after the book was written: "The Security Gap," "The Trade Gap," "The Culture Gap," and finally, "The Bad News from Our Elementary and High Schools." Today, we might also include "The Funding Gap."

The cycle of federal action for international and foreign language studies tends to be reactive rather than proactive. For example, the National Defense Education Act was created by Congress in response to the launch of the Sputnik satellite by the Soviet Union; the National

Security Language Initiative-Youth was created in response to the breakup of the Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries; and military language and area studies programs following World War II. (Lambert, 1984) Other national programs have been more proactive and farsighted such as the legislation introduced by the freshman Senator from Arkansas, J.W. Fulbright, in 1945 that created the flagship international exchange program in cooperation with other nations through the binational commissions. The 1988 report, “Educating for Global Competence” from the Advisory Council on International Educational Exchange, chaired by Thomas Bartlett, was a clarion call to establishing significant guidelines and recommendations to the field of international education nationally. Another notable program established in 1991 is the National Security Education Program created by legislation introduced by then Senator David Boren. Its focus is on critical languages and nations underrepresented by more traditional exchange programs.

Pre-University Preparation

The education of globally competent citizens begins with the schools. In the best circumstances, it begins in elementary schools with language immersion programs. While there are many examples around the country where immersion schools exist, Eugene, Oregon can be cited as one model which hosts French, Japanese and Spanish elementary and middle school programs. The Eugene International High School offers French and Spanish immersion programs along with the International Baccalaureate degree. Eugene also hosts Oak Hill School a private K-12 school which teaches French, Mandarin and Spanish and has a curricular emphasis on cultural competence through its many activities, programs and exchanges. Building upon knowledge, skills and experiences from earlier grades can be a tremendous asset by the time students reach university level. The Portland (OR) Public Schools are host to immersion

programs in Japanese at three schools; Spanish at three schools and Mandarin at two schools. Dual immersion programs in Spanish are available at seven institutions.

Through the many programs such as the National Security Language Initiative for Youth, the American Field Service, Rotary International, Youth for Understanding, and the institutional partners with the American Councils on International Education, the United States is making strides in preparing young Americans to engage in learning about the languages and cultures of the world through exchanges. Students who participate in language and culture studies come to our universities with an added advantage. (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, Paige, 2009)

Growth in Numbers

The Institute for International Education's Open Doors report (IIE, 2013) shows steady progress in the growth of numbers in U.S. students studying abroad. The report indicates a 3.4% growth in numbers in 2011-12 over the previous year for a total of 283,332. While that number is slightly more than one-third of the number of international students studying in the United States, it represents steady growth over the past decade. In 2001-02, Open Doors reported that the number of U.S. students abroad was 160,920. Clearly, progress is being made in the total numbers of U.S. students going abroad.

Over the decade spanning 2001/02 to 2011/12, shifts in the duration of study abroad have tended toward shorter stays abroad. This trend can be partially explained by costs, both opportunity and real, and by curricular constraints of the home institution. The largest decrease in percentages of duration appears in academic year abroad programs which fell from 7.8% in 2001/02 to 3.2% in 2011/12. However, that decrease in actual student numbers indicates that in 2001/02 12,551 students spent an academic year abroad; and in 2011/12 the actual number

decreased to 9,066. The actual number of students spending a semester abroad in 2001/02 was 62,759 (39%) while in 2011/12 that number was 99,166 (35%), and increase of over 36,000 students. The table below illustrates the shifting percentages in study abroad duration categories.

DURATION OF U.S. STUDY ABROAD, 2001/02 - 2011/12											
PERCENT OF U.S. STUDY ABROAD STUDENTS											
Duration of Study	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Summer Term	34.4	32.7	37	37.2	37.2	38.7	38.1	35.8	37.8	37.7	37.1
One Semester	39	40.3	38.1	37.5	36.9	36.3	35.5	37.3	35.8	34.5	35.0
8 Weeks or Less Academic Year	7.3	9.4	8.9	8	9.5	9.8	11	11.7	11.9	13.3	14.4
January Term	6	5.6	5.7	6	5.4	6.8	7.2	7	6.9	7.1	7.0
Academic Year	7.8	6.7	6	6	5.3	4.3	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.7	3.2
One Quarter	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.1	3	2.5
Two Quarters	0.5	0.4	0.5	1.3	0.9	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.4	0.5	0.4
Calendar Year	0.5	0.5	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Other	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.5	1.3	0.1	0	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3
Total	160,920	174,629	191,321	205,983	223,534	241,791	262,416	260,327	270,604	273,996	283,332

U.S. university students generally continue to study in traditional locations with four of the top five destinations in Western Europe, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and France. The People’s Republic of China is showing growth having moved into the top five category in 2011/12. It is notable, however, that since 2001/02, European destinations as a region have declined from 63.1 percent to 53.3 percent in 2011/12 of the total students studying abroad. In

actual numbers, there were 101,542 students in Europe in 2001/02 and 151,056 students in Europe in 2011/12. Africa, Asia and Latin America all showed percentage and actual student number gains in the decade ending in 2011/12. Oceania and North America showed slight declines in percentages, but registered small increases in actual numbers of students. From this simple analysis, we can see that while the percentages of students going to a particular region for credit-bearing study, there are no declines in any region in the ten years observed and that can be seen as a positive development. (IIE, 2013)

Numbers and destinations matter, and the incremental gains in these variables indicate an increasing acceptance of the value of overseas experience. The increases in overall numbers of U.S. students abroad and the diversification of where they study are significant developments in the process of instilling global competence, but we must now ask several questions, the first of which is: what is global competence? Second, how is global competence measured? Third, who benefits from the knowledge, skills and experience these students acquire through study abroad? Fourth, what are the various modalities of education abroad programming; and fifth, are there mechanisms by which international educators can optimize the study abroad experience to produce graduates that can operate in different cultural contexts, not only in different countries, but in the United States as well?

What is Global Competence?

Competency embodies a cluster of skills, abilities, habits and character traits and knowledge a person must have to perform effectively within a certain environment. (Forum, 2011) Global and intercultural competency are defined as the ability to relate and communicate effectively when individuals involved in the interaction do not share the same culture, ethnicity,

language or other common experiences. Global Competency has been described in various ways though each seems to have the following three dimensions:

- An affective dimension, meaning that there is a positive disposition to other cultures and values;
- An active dimension meaning that there is an ability to communicate effectively in another language; and
- An academic dimension meaning that there is deep knowledge of world geography, events, political systems, history, health issues, climate issues and economics.

(Reimers, 2009)

Developing global or intercultural competency can be accomplished in a number of ways. Here we can borrow a term advanced first by the developmental biologist Hans Driesch in the late 19th century and later applied by Ludwig von Bertalanffy to General Systems Theory: equifinality, the principle that in open systems a given end state can be achieved by potentially many different means. The development of globally competent citizens can be and is being achieved by different means and modes. The challenge before the international and foreign language education communities is how best to make the various modes work effectively together to achieve optimal results, recognizing that all students need not be regional or language specialists (though students should not be dissuaded from becoming specialists) but, at the most basic level, they do should have the ability to relate and communicate effectively with individuals different from themselves. This assertion can be made whether working in another country, culture, or most certainly within the culturally diverse United States. One can also see the potential for these skills as useful in working across disciplinary and occupational fields.

In a February 2013 article in The Christian Science Monitor, Jeffery Cornwall raises several interesting points regarding the global engagement of small and medium sized businesses in the United States. First, 95 percent of the world's population lives outside the borders of the United States, yet only 13 percent of small to medium sized businesses in the U.S. are engaged in export as opposed to 31 percent of European Union businesses of the same size. The United States International Trade Commission (USITC) found that small business owners identified lack of knowledge of foreign markets, lack of language skills, and cultural differences as impediments to developing global strategies. (Cornwall, 2013) His recommendation: get a passport and travel.

An earlier article in The Christian Science Monitor also addressed the need for globally competent students acknowledging that while CEOs believe there is significant value in language and cultural competence, that opinion is not shared by recruiters and employers. (Kaufman, Johnson, 2005)

What do employers value in hiring graduates? In their thorough study published in 2007, Trooboff, Vande Berg and Raymond identified several personal qualities and skills which employers valued that were derived from the "intercultural/global competence" criteria they were asked to rank. Those qualities were "listening and observing well," "adapting to change," "working well under pressure," "analyzing, evaluating and interpreting well," and "working effectively outside one's comfort zone." The authors also point out that employers are not convinced that study abroad necessarily enhances those qualities and skills. The article then offers a series of recommendations for further research: designing programs and experiences that contribute to the learning outcomes that employers value; carry out research that can validate the skills and outcomes derived from studying abroad; and give students the skills to articulate their

learning abroad beyond the place and culture specific experiences. (Trooboff, Vande Berg, Raymond 2008)

Modalities of Education to Develop Global Competency

As international educators identify learning outcomes that contribute to global competency, we look to the various modes of on- and off-campus education. The first and most central modality is the curriculum. Through the curriculum and all its diverse offerings, international and foreign language education has made major strides in providing students with significant opportunities to explore the sciences, social sciences, humanities and professional fields in the context of their home culture and, increasingly, the context of other cultures. Innovative integration of curricula across disciplinary boundaries show great promise in addressing the three dimensions of global competency discussed earlier. The University of Rhode Island's International Engineering Program is an excellent example of integration of the engineering disciplines with language study and liberal arts courses to provide students with the skills, experience and knowledge to work in the complex global marketplace.

The University of Minnesota's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition made a major contribution to the field through its development of the Maximizing Study Abroad guide which provides strategies and activities through guided exercises that raise students' awareness for language and culture learning.

Oregon State University has developed a unique program modelled on a dual degree concept that permits a student to earn a second Bachelor's degree in nearly every major offered by the University. This program, initiated in 1994, now has 329 alumni and increases its

enrollment with each passing year. To earn an International Degree a study must fulfill four basic requirements in addition to the major requirements:

1. A minimum of 32 additional quarter credits in internationally focused classes that relate to the major;
2. Fourth year language proficiency;
3. A minimum ten week international experience which can be through a study abroad program, international internship or directed study; and
4. A final thesis.

The most common majors subscribing to the International Degree are Biology, Business Administration, Political Science, Nutrition and Anthropology. Top languages are Spanish, French, Japanese and German.

A second modality of international education is, perhaps, one that attracts the most attention: academic study abroad. While study abroad has seen a steady increase in overall numbers of students over the past decades, we have also seen that the duration of study has shown a tendency toward shorter sojourns abroad. As noted earlier, though the percentages of students opting for shorter term programs is increasing, the absolute number of students in all durations (short-term, semester and academic year) is increasing.

With increased attention on study abroad, there has been increased focus on learning outcomes. While there has been much recent research dedicated to learning outcomes in study abroad, there are two major research projects which examined the question of what students learn as a result of the international study experience. The Georgia Learning and Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOSSARI) examined six learning outcomes

factors measured against students who studied abroad and those who did not and concluded that five of the six were statistically significant and produced positive results. The Learning

Outcome Factors were:

1. Knowledge of verbal resources (not statistically significant between the two groups)
2. Sensitivity to cultural context
3. Knowledge of self as a cultural being
4. Functional knowledge of cultural practices
5. Knowledge of world geography
6. Knowledge of global interdependence

The Georgetown Consortium Project (Vande Berg, 2009) contributed significant research in contrasting study abroad students with control group students in a number of variables. Perhaps the most important contributions of this study were the findings that interventions in student learning were necessary to accomplish certain learning outcomes. The presence or absence of a cultural mentor seemed to make a significant difference in a student's learning while abroad. The study also concluded that interventions such as a pre-departure orientation with a cultural component showed higher oral proficiency gains; students who had studied the target language (in high school and/or university) between five and fourteen semesters showed higher intercultural gains than those who studied language for fewer than five semesters; and students who studied content courses in the target language or target language courses advanced more in their intercultural progress than those who did not.

International internships are becoming more widely available and accepted as a mode for acquiring experience abroad and developing global competence. There are increasing numbers of third-party providers offering international internships, and many university campuses work

with providers to place students. The number of “in-house” international internship programs are relatively fewer. The University of Pennsylvania offers a wide range of internships during the summer term. Penn’s internships do not award credit.

The Oregon University System initiated an international internship program in 1996 with the significant support through a federal grant from the Peace Dividend funds which allowed it to develop a wide network of internship placements, staff advisors on the OUS campuses, develop training programs for students and faculty, and maintain quality control. The OUS program known as IE₃ stands for International Education, Experience and Employment. It has successfully operated as a self-supporting program since 2001 when the federal grant funds ended. It is worthwhile noting that the OUS program requires students to receive academic credit from their home institution in the system and bases the credit award on a predetermined contract/agreement with a faculty member, time on the job, and a final project following completion of the internship. Internship placements are for a minimum of ten weeks and can take place during any of the four academic quarters. Students are encouraged to precede their internship with a study program in the same country.

In addition to the Oregon public institutions (seven) the IE₃ program includes the University of Alaska-Fairbanks, Lane Community College, Linfield College, Concordia University (OR), the University of Washington, the University of Montana, the University of Utah, Western Washington University, and Central Washington University. The IE₃ program served nearly 200 students during 2012-13.

Service learning and volunteering are gaining popularity and credibility as a means to contribute to the international learning process and to local communities abroad. These are short-term means to expose students to the issues and needs of different countries and cultures,

but carry with them the perception of “fly in and fly out” all the while perpetuating an attitude that we, as Americans, have so much to offer the world.

Finally, gap year programs are seen as opportunities for students between high school and university to go abroad and participate in study and activities that can prepare them for university study. Gap year proponents claim many of the same benefits of the experience as university level study programs.

Conclusion

We have examined various modalities of international and foreign language education, a couple exemplary programs, and a small sample of research that has been undertaken. It becomes clear that each modality of international and foreign language education standing alone is insufficient to reach our goal of developing globally competent citizens. It is a fabric that is woven of many threads that creates stronger and more effective ways of maximizing the remarkable learning opportunities that education abroad, in all its manifestations, offers. Until recently, international and foreign language educators have had a tendency to see one modality or another as the embodiment of creating a globally informed and competent citizen. Recent studies and creative programs illustrate the robust opportunities of utilizing the various modalities of curriculum, academic study abroad, interventions, and conducting further research.

How do we encourage the various modalities and structures to work together? First, institutions must develop the recognition that integration of the curriculum, both on-campus and off-campus, is essential to education for global competency. Language courses applied to disciplines must be seen as an important development in training proficient second language speakers who have the functional ability to communicate. Second, the interventions suggested

by The Georgetown Consortium Project and the University of Minnesota's Maximizing Study Abroad Project should be implemented on a much wider basis so that students on programs of any duration can take full advantage of the learning opportunities presented. Moreover, attention to the structured reflective process during and following the experience abroad should be an absolutely essential part of the learning process. Third, learning opportunities that utilize the various modalities of international and foreign language education should be developed as has been done with the University of Rhode Island International Engineering Program and the Oregon State University International Degree Program.

Significant progress has been made over the past decades in terms of how we approach international and foreign language education. However, we continue to acknowledge that important and creative work is yet to be done. A starting point will be the creative combination of the modalities discussed above.

Universities in the United States tend to be divided into disciplinary units and often collaborate very little with other disciplinary units. The higher education model has been slowly evolving to break down those organizational boundaries, yet departmental membranes need to become much more permeable for the kind of creative programs we see at the University of Rhode Island and Oregon State University. Universities must incentivize inter-departmental collaboration if we are to truly reach a higher goal of educating globally competence students.

In addition, integrating the university's role in educating for globally competence is congruent with the goals and missions of other organizations, yet relatively little attention is given to linking the university more closely to the private sector, K-12, non-governmental organizations, and service organizations. These linkages are rarely explored, but show great promise for support and communication when undertaken.

Reducing, or better yet, eliminating perceptions of education abroad as an “add-on” to the university experience is essential. From the existing research, it is clear that many of the attributes, skills and experience that employers are seeking can, at least in part, be ascribed to the education abroad learning process. Remembering that global competency is comprised of three main dimensions- affect, action and academic- provides a strong foundation for moving forward with our task in a complex and resourceful environment.

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