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## STUDENT LEARNING ABROAD

### Paradigms and Assumptions

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The literature on study abroad has recently been growing exponentially. One estimate places the number of scholarly publications about study abroad during the past decade—books, dissertations, articles, chapters, monographs—at more than a thousand (Comp, Gladding, Rhodes, Stephenson, & Vande Berg, 2007), and commentaries about students abroad appear regularly in the popular press. Much of the literature focuses on student learning and development, with authors offering a wide range of views about the ways that students do or do not learn and develop through studying outside the United States. These authors often speak from their own experience as students, from their experiences teaching in or visiting programs abroad, or from conversations they have had with students who have returned to the home campus. Sometimes their views are grounded in popular wisdom. And sometimes they are informed by theories and supported by research evidence. A central purpose of this book is to sort through the literature and make sense of these various claims about student learning abroad.

One common view about studying abroad is that when students travel to and are “immersed” in a place different from home, they learn many interesting and useful things on their own, and do so rather effortlessly. Much of what we hear and read about study abroad encourages us to embrace this perspective. We have all talked with returning students who tell us that studying abroad has “transformed” them, or that seeing new and different things has “changed their lives,” or that being abroad has been “the best experience” they have ever had. Many students talk enthusiastically in

blogs and in online education abroad magazines about the things they have done and learned. On college and university websites and in institutional viewbooks, groups of U.S. students smile and pose in front of iconic study abroad images—the Eiffel Tower, the Sydney Opera House, the Roman aqueduct in Segovia, China’s Great Wall—conveying the message that they and their U.S. friends are learning happily and easily as they are exposed to the new and different. The common assumption that education abroad provides knowledge and helps students develop skills that they need in order “to compete in the globalized workplace” reassures parents; anxious about the spiraling costs of higher education, they are relieved to hear that studying abroad will make their sons or daughters more mature, as well as give them the knowledge and skills that will land them a good job after graduation or get them into a highly ranked graduate or professional school.

We are frequently assured, implicitly and explicitly, that our institutions are meeting a worthy goal in sending more and more students abroad. After all, with students learning valuable things abroad that they are not likely to learn if they stay at home, who would not wish to send as many of them abroad as possible? The Institute of International Education’s annual *Open Doors* report lists the U.S. colleges and universities that send both the largest number and the highest percentage of students abroad (Chow & Bhandari, 2010); the very simplest metric, the number of participants, is the primary marker of success here. Presumably mindful of the marketing advantages that annual institutional rankings confer, college and university presidents urge their faculty and administrators to send still more of their students abroad. Admissions and public relations staff boast that 20%, 40%, 50%—and, in at least one case, 100%—of their institution’s students are, or soon will be, studying abroad. What is all too often not addressed is whether core assumptions about student learning are warranted. In the press to expand, learning is simply a given.

Federal government funding programs provide tacit support for the assumption that students normally learn effectively and easily abroad, whatever the type of program in which they participate. Each year significant numbers of students receive generous federal funding to study abroad in the form of Fulbright Program travel grants, Gilman scholarships, and National Security Education Program scholarships. Most of the students who receive these grants or scholarships participate in programs that offer little intentional support for their learning, beyond formal classroom instruction. As this book goes to press, Congress is still considering passage of the Paul Simon Act, an ambitious scholarship bill whose principal goal, within 10

years of passage, is to quadruple the number of U.S. undergraduates who study abroad. Here again, the metric of success is a continuing increase in education abroad enrollments, not the extent to which students are learning through studying abroad.

Not all faculty and staff are convinced, however, that most students are more or less automatically gaining the sorts of knowledge, perspectives, and skills that are important for living and working in a global society, merely through being exposed to the new and different in another country. As annual enrollments continue to soar—data show that more than five times as many U.S. undergraduates now study abroad as did 25 years ago (Chow & Bhandari, 2010)—voices inside and outside higher education are persistently asking questions about what all of those students are in fact learning over there. Faculty and staff at home and abroad have long questioned whether coursework at study abroad sites is as academically rigorous as it ought to be (Bok, 2006; Engle, 1986; Hoffa, 2007; Vande Berg, 2003, 2009). Recent studies on language acquisition cast doubt on the traditional view that students typically make remarkable gains in second-language proficiency through studying abroad (Collentine & Freed, 2004; Freed, 1995; Segalowitz et al., 2004). Similarly, studies on culture learning have shown that students enrolling in most education abroad programs are, at best, making quite modest gains (Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004; Vande Berg, 2009; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Some commentators have observed that U.S. consumer culture is being transported abroad and that programs are being structured in ways that allow students to avoid meaningful engagement with the host culture. However, this approach undermines their ability or desire to learn about the host country or form relationships with their hosts (Citron, 2002; Engle, 1986, 1995, 1998; Engle & Engle, 2002; Ogden, 2007; Vande Berg, 2007b).

Other commentators ask if much of current study abroad practice offers experiences that differ from taking vacations to other countries and if so, in what ways (Gardner, Gross, & Steglitz, 2008; Woolf, Battenberg, & Pagano, 2009). When students return home excitedly sharing stories about the traveling they did and the friendships they formed with other U.S. students, skeptical faculty wonder why presidents and other campus leaders are urging them to send still more of their majors abroad (Engle & Engle, 2002; Vande Berg, 2003, 2004; Vande Berg et al., 2009). Doubts about student learning are compounded by reports that highlight student drinking and related forms of misbehavior abroad (Blankinship, 2010; Kowarski, 2010). Studies that question whether studying abroad typically helps students develop the

types of skills and perspectives that employers look for in prospective employees contribute further to a sense that students are not learning as the education abroad community has traditionally believed (Gardner et al., 2008; Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2008; Van Hoof, 1999). Considered together, the findings of these studies and reports offer the beginnings of a counter-narrative to the view that students normally learn effectively simply through studying elsewhere.

Various metaphors about learning abroad have entered the discourse during the past two decades, as faculty and staff seek ways to express the growing perception that students are all too often failing to engage with, and learn effectively in, the host culture. Perhaps the most common of these portrays education abroad as a swimming pool. Here, educators work to get students to learn in the host culture—whether they are learning academically, linguistically, or interculturally—by “throwing them into the deep end,” “immersing” them in the new culture through such practices as direct enrollment courses, language pledges, and home stays. The metaphor goes on to suggest that too many students fail to thrive in this “sink-or-swim” environment; it depicts them fleeing the deep cultural waters, leaving the pool as quickly as possible to avoid further unpleasant and threatening exposure to the new and unfamiliar (Lou & Bosley, 2009; Vande Berg, 2007a, 2009; Vande Berg et al., 2009). Another metaphor depicts students abroad as “colonials”; like elite British administrators in India during the Raj, today’s students all too often lead lives of ease and privilege, sitting comfortably on the veranda and observing the locals from a safe distance (Ogden, 2007). Still other metaphors depict education abroad as a “safety net” (Citron, 1996), with students living in highly protected U.S. American “ghettos,” taking their courses in English, and traveling in groups with other U.S. students, in “packs” or cultural “bubbles” (Engle, 1986; Ogden, 2007).

Returning students themselves sometimes report that they did not learn or accomplish what they had thought or had been told that they would (Zemach-Birsin, 2008), offering a counterpoint to reports by other students about being “transformed” through studying abroad. Liza Donnelly’s lampooning of education abroad in a recent *New Yorker* cartoon highlights what for many is an open secret: that students are too frequently treating their time abroad as something very different from a learning experience. The cartoon depicts a college student telling her roommate, “For my junior year abroad, I’m going to learn how to party in a foreign country” (2010, p. 64). In a recent *Chronicle of Higher Education* back-page essay, John Burness, a visiting professor at Duke University, expresses the kind of doubts about the aims

and outcomes of education abroad that growing numbers of faculty and staff are feeling:

I’ve talked with enough students from various institutions to develop a concern that the study abroad experience, in many cases, is not all it should or could be. As a very smart student now on a Marshall fellowship—someone who clearly appreciates the value of internationalism—told me last year, “For many students, study abroad is a semester off, not a semester on.” (2009, p. A88)

Increasingly cautious about traditional reports that study abroad transforms student lives and develops critical knowledge and skills, many faculty, staff, employers, and members of the general public are now questioning what it is that the rapidly growing number of U.S. students abroad are in fact typically learning through the experience.

### Three Paradigms

These two very different takes on study abroad—an optimistic and often enthusiastic view that students normally and naturally learn a lot of useful things, and a more skeptical and sober appraisal that too many of them are at this point not learning very well—have uneasily coexisted for decades. Conflicting aims for and claims about student learning have in fact been a feature of U.S. study abroad since at least the early 1960s (Hoffa, 2007), and it is clear that members of the study abroad community are now increasingly questioning whether study abroad “is all it should or could be.” We are in the midst of a long, drawn-out, and now accelerating reappraisal about how we conceive of learning abroad, and about the extent to which we should more systematically involve ourselves in our students’ learning.

This accelerating evolution from earlier to newer ways of framing study abroad recalls Thomas Kuhn’s (1962) description of a shift between “paradigms”—a transition from one “accepted model or pattern” to another, with the movement to the new paradigm occurring because it is “more successful . . . in solving a few problems that the group of practitioners has come to recognize as acute” (p. 23). Kuhn describes a successful paradigm shift, the eventual elimination of the old paradigm by the new, as a “scientific revolution.” The ensuing decades have shown that the dynamics Kuhn describes, the specific ways that a “community of practitioners” (p. x) comes to

embrace a new paradigm, powerfully account for major changes of perspective, belief, and practice that occur within academic disciplines as well as other domains, such as study abroad.

The concerns that the study abroad community is increasingly voicing about the aims, methods, and outcomes of study abroad are an expression of a classic paradigm shift; increasing awareness and complaints that students are not learning what they have long been assumed to learn represent what Kuhn (1962) calls “anomalies, or violations of expectation [that] attract the increasing attention of a scientific community” (p. xi). When such anomalies persist and begin to seem “more than just a puzzle,” and more and more members of a community turn their attention to solving them, “the transition to crisis . . . has begun” (p. 82). And once the search for answers to such persistent anomalies proceeds beyond the crisis point, a new paradigm emerges, one that “reconstructs” the field:

The transition from a paradigm in crisis to a new one . . . is far from a cumulative process, one achieved by an articulation or extension of the old paradigm. Rather it is a reconstruction of the field from new fundamentals, a reconstruction that changes some of the field’s most elementary theoretical generalizations as well as many of its paradigm methods and applications. . . . When the transition is complete, the profession will have changed its view of the field, its methods, and its goals. One perceptive historian, viewing a classic case of a science’s reorientation by paradigm change, recently described it as “picking up the other end of the stick,” a process that involves “handling the same bundle of data as before, but placing them in a new system of relations with one another by giving them a different framework.” (pp. 84–85)

Kuhn’s description of the “reconstruction of the field,” the dynamic by which one paradigm shifts to another, is epistemological—that is, he is describing the process by which a community of practitioners passes from an older to a newer worldview about the structure of knowledge, about its likely limits, and about how knowledge is learned and taught. This dynamic process includes profound shifts of perspective regarding the theoretical orientations we use to explain and understand phenomena, the core assumptions we accept about our field, and the research methods or tools that we use to create and assess knowledge.

The questions we are asking in this book frame the history of study abroad epistemologically. What does the education abroad community mean by “learning,” at home or abroad? When our students return home, what

do they know and understand, and what are they able to do, that they did and could not when they departed? How do they learn abroad? Does the process of learning abroad differ essentially from the process of learning at home? What is the proper role of educators in helping students abroad learn? In calling on Kuhn to help us respond to these and related questions, we are exploring the ways that the “bundle of data”—in the case of study abroad, theories about learning and teaching, assumptions about the aims and roles of educators and students, the goals and objectives of different program models, even the very nature of study abroad itself—has been and is being significantly reconfigured. Put differently, members of the study abroad community have responded and continue to respond very differently to the questions we are asking, according to which set of paradigmatic assumptions they have used or are using to frame learning and teaching abroad.

In an earlier discussion about changes in the study abroad field, Vande Berg and Paige (2009) described a shift from a traditional “teacher-centered” to a “learner-centered” education abroad paradigm and identified a number of historical developments that have contributed to this transition. These include the increasing importance of assessment in higher education, the impressive body of theoretical insights and research findings known as the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SOTL) and the increasingly important role that centers of teaching and learning are playing in disseminating these SOTL findings at universities in the United States and abroad (Robinson, chapter 10, this volume), and the coming-of-age of intercultural relations as a legitimate area of academic inquiry (for other earlier treatments of paradigm shifts in study abroad, see Vande Berg 2003, 2004, 2009; Vande Berg et al., 2009).

In assembling this volume, in reading and reflecting on the contributions of its authors, we have come to two new understandings about the ways that different assumptions about teaching and learning have shaped and changed study abroad over time. First, these shifting assumptions are not limited to the field of study abroad: Changing views of teaching and learning abroad represent only one manifestation of a much broader paradigm shift in the ways that theorists, researchers, teachers, and practitioners in many parts of the world are coming to new understandings about how learners learn, and about how educators can best intervene to help them learn. To be broad enough to take in all of the disciplines, traditions, and practices represented in this book, our paradigm shift needs, then, to be described in terms other than “teacher-centered” and “learner-centered,” terms that might suggest that its reach is more or less restricted to theory

and practice within the fields of education and study abroad. This chapter offers a different and more comprehensive language of paradigms for describing the profound changes occurring in the study abroad field.

Second, placed in historical perspective, we can now see that during the nearly 100 years of its existence, study abroad has evolved through three significantly different accounts of the nature of knowing and learning—from “positivism” to “relativism” and then to “experiential/constructivism.” There is nothing new about describing the history of the past century as a progression across three periods; it has long been commonplace in the humanities and social sciences to describe recent history as an evolution from traditional to modernism and then postmodernism (see, for example, Kegan, 1994). However, we most clearly owe our own framing of study abroad as a three-paradigm progression to four of this volume’s authors: Milton J. Bennett (see chapter 4) for his characterization of the evolution of intercultural relations as a progression from “positivism” to “relativism” and then to “constructivism”; David A. Kolb (see chapter 6), whose seminal work on Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) has strongly informed contemporary study abroad theory and practice and has led us to refer to the third paradigm as “experiential/constructivist”; Bruce La Brack (coauthor of chapters 8 and 11; personal communication, June 10, 2010), who describes the evolution of intercultural relations in the work of the cultural anthropologist Edward T. Hall, a founder of intercultural communications, as a three-stage progression from a “Traditional” to an “Ethnography of Communication” and then to a “Coordinated Management of Meaning” paradigm; and Douglas K. Stuart (see chapter 3), who in discussing Robert Kegan’s developmental model of human consciousness has helped us to understand why so many members of the study abroad community continue to embrace positivist and relativist assumptions in their work in spite of the convincing interdisciplinary evidence that supports the experiential/constructivist paradigm.

Important changes in study abroad theory and practice that we are now experiencing—innovations in the design and delivery of programs abroad; growing enrollments in nontraditional destinations; a growing willingness to award credit for experiential learning; increasing calls for assessing student learning; structured facilitation of student learning prior to, during, and after study abroad; the use of online technologies to teach and train students before and during study abroad—need to be understood, then, as more than events strung along a chronological chain, with earlier events preparing for or “causing” others farther down the line. Kuhn reminds us that change does not always occur incrementally, with each successive discovery refining

or improving those discoveries that preceded it. While a straightforward history of study abroad would represent the evolution of study abroad as chronologically ordered “facts” or “events,” our own approach to understanding these as more epistemological than historical, with ongoing shifts occurring within an unfolding progression of three paradigms, throws into sharp relief the nature and meaning of what Kuhn (p. xi) would call the “anomalies or violations of expectation” that have challenged and continue to challenge the study abroad community.

### Introducing the Chapters in Parts Two and Three

The authors in Part Two, “Foundations of Teaching and Learning,” speak to the ways that their disciplines have contributed to the convergence of our assumptions about teaching and learning around the experiential/constructivist paradigm:

- Douglas K. Stuart discusses the increasingly important role of developmental models for our understanding about how individuals learn—models that play an important role in the experiential/constructivist paradigm. Exploring the significance of Robert Kegan’s developmental model, he identifies parallels between it, on the one hand, and Bennett’s Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) and Hammer’s Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC), on the other.
- Milton J. Bennett begins with a three-paradigm account of the evolution of intercultural relations; then, grounding his DMIS in constructivism—as he points out, a core concept of the emerging third paradigm—he discusses the implications of each of the three paradigms for intercultural learning and development and characterizes the continuing presence of the three in current study abroad theory and practice as “paradigmatic confusion.”
- Mitchell R. Hammer discusses each of the five stages of his IDC, a revised version of the DMIS that he has published following his research on the original model. He summarizes applications of the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (the instrument that he and Bennett codeveloped in the mid-1990s, and that continues to play a prominent role in current research) in study abroad practice and argues that a growing body of IDI-based research seriously undermines what he calls the “global contact hypothesis.”

- Angela M. Passarelli and David A. Kolb introduce ELT, outlining its primary assumptions and describing both Kolb's Learning Style Inventory and his "learning spiral," a multilinear developmental model that, like the DMIS, continues to play a key role in disseminating experiential/constructivist assumptions into study abroad. They describe "deep learning," whether at home or abroad, as experiential, developmental, holistic, and dialectic.
- James E. Zull discusses recent neurological evidence that provides striking empirical support for Kolb's theories on preferred learning styles and the learning spiral. Emphasizing the importance of emotion in learning abroad, and linking the processes of learning in the brain to the learning spiral, he notes that "the challenges of study abroad cannot be met simply by studying more" (see page 163) and explores ways that educators can use this knowledge to adapt their teaching to the needs of different types of learners.
- Bruce La Brack and Laura Bathurst discuss the roles that two very different theoretical and research traditions, cultural anthropology and intercultural communication, have played in the emergence of "interventionism" in study abroad. Tracing what they describe as the largely diverging paths of these two traditions, they conclude by discussing how the two are coming to converge in current training programs.
- Victor Savicki opens with an overview of the history of psychology, showing how theory and research have over time become increasingly oriented around constructivist principles. He relies on a framework that distinguishes between the affective, behavioral, and cognitive dimensions of psychological experience; contrasting "learning by chance" and "learning by design," he suggests ways that educators can apply research findings in helping their students adapt effectively to living and learning abroad.
- Jennifer Meta Robinson discusses the development of SOTL as a growing movement in higher education in many parts of the world; she argues that the study abroad "learning community," whether working with students at home or abroad, will benefit by applying SOTL insights and evidence in program design and teaching.

The authors in Part Three, "Program Applications: Intervening in Student Learning," provide us with six important examples of study abroad programming that demonstrate the nature of teaching and learning within

the experiential/constructivist paradigm. These six "training interventions" appear in chronological order:

- Laura Bathurst and Bruce La Brack discuss the University of the Pacific's study abroad approach to training, the oldest continuously operating study abroad training program in the United States. Launched by La Brack in 1976, the program quickly evolved to assume its current form: pre- and post-study abroad courses, both offered for academic credit, and both required of Pacific's School of International Studies students. Pre- and post-IDI testing allow faculty to understand to what extent student learning outcomes are being met. This study abroad program is unique: The locus of learning is not abroad—as is the case with virtually all other programs—but on campus. Following their return to campus, students in the reentry course apply what they have learned, before and during the experiences abroad, to their lives at home.
- Lilli Engle and John Engle chronicle their development of the American University Center of Provence (AUCP). Active planning began in 1993; launched in Aix-en-Provence in 1994 and several years later in Marseille, the AUCP is arguably the first study abroad program designed in its entirety to help participating students meet clear learning outcomes. Before taking any other steps, the directors identified two outcomes, intercultural development and French language acquisition, to guide their choice and development of all elements of the program. Courses, housing, community engagement, a required intercultural relations course, and more—the entire program is designed to challenge and support students as they work to meet these predetermined learning outcomes. The directors have relied on pre- and post-IDI testing for more than 10 years to inform ongoing adjustments in program design and delivery.
- R. Michael Paige, Tara A. Harvey, and Kate S. McCleary describe the development of the Maximizing Study Abroad Program at the University of Minnesota. The project began in 1993, when Paige and other members of a project team conducted research on student learning, the results of which then guided their writing of three guides—for, respectively, students, instructors, and study abroad professionals—designed to support student learning of second-language and intercultural development strategies. From 2002 to 2005, the team conducted a research study that used the IDI and other instruments to assess



student learning. The results informed their development of an online course, first called Maximizing Study Abroad, and now called Global Identity; trained instructors at the University of Minnesota use the *Student Guide* to facilitate the language learning and intercultural development of many of the university's students abroad.

- Kris Hemming Lou and Gabriele Weber Bosley discuss their development of the Intentional, Targeted Intervention model, two online, elective, and asynchronous courses designed to support the intercultural development of Bellarmine University and Willamette University students who while abroad are organized into small learning communities. Intentionally focused, since 2003, on experiential/constructivist theory, Lou and Bosley teach students from their own campuses; students abroad as well as a number of international students studying on the two home campuses are eligible to enroll. Each of the courses begins with a required pre-departure and concludes with a required reentry program. For the past eight years Lou and Bosley have conducted pre- and posttesting and continue to use the results to guide improvements in course design and delivery.
- Adriana Medina-López-Portillo and Riikka Salonen discuss their participation, as members of the design and training team, in the development of The Scholar Ship, a shipboard education program whose goals and outcomes included the development of students' intercultural competence through the creation of a shipboard learning community. The team worked to align the learning outcomes with all elements of the program: courses, housing, excursions, counseling, and cocurricular activities. Even the operation of the on-board judicial system was informed by experiential/constructivist theories, including the DMIS and Personal Leadership. The team used the IDI in training faculty and staff, as well as students, and relied on the instrument in the pre- and posttesting of students during the two semesters that The Scholar Ship operated.
- Michael Vande Berg, Meghan Quinn, and Catherine Menyhart discuss the ongoing development of the Student Learning Program, which began in 2006 with two preparatory projects: a learning outcomes project, followed by the On-Line Pre-Departure Orientation project. The development of an intercultural course, the Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad, followed. The course focuses on three learning outcomes: increasing students' awareness of themselves as

cultural beings, enhancing their awareness of others in their own cultural contexts, and developing their capacities to bridge cultural differences between self and other. The seminar was launched in 2008 and the Council on International Educational Exchange now offers this elective course to students enrolled in most of its semester programs abroad. The authors, who have learned through IDI pre- and posttesting of students enrolled in the seminar that instructors need a lot of support to learn how to facilitate this experiential, developmental, and holistic course, devote considerable time and energy to training and coaching them.

### Three Master Narratives

Borrowing a concept from critical theory, we frame positivism, relativism, and experiential/constructivism as competing "master narratives." These narratives provide the members of the extended study abroad community—those who design and deliver programs and conduct research at those sites, other faculty and staff at institutions and organizations who simply "know things" about study abroad, the students who enroll in programs abroad, their parents, and employers who hire students who have studied abroad when they graduate—with a coherent account of the study abroad "world." Cultural communities do not normally reflect on their master narratives. We offer the narratives here because we believe that bringing them into awareness can help us understand the current state of study abroad practices and policies, and in the process shed light on how we have arrived at them.

It is important to note that although master narratives help us organize our lives into meaningful patterns, they can also limit our capacity to adapt to new conditions and take advantage of new opportunities. The social force of a particular narrative leads us to selectively perceive those things that tend to confirm its assumptions and to ignore, deny, minimize, and otherwise explain away things that fall outside it.

#### *The Positivist Narrative: Learning Through "Experience" and Basic Exposure to the New and Different*

Our students learn through being exposed to a world that is stable, unchanging, and profoundly material. This external and objective world is the primary agent of learning, and students come to know things through their physical senses, a universal process that is known as "experience." As a student experiences the ne-



and different abroad, he or she acquires significant fragments of these experiences as they imprint themselves on and are stored in his or her mind.

Because our students learn through the force of an outside agency—the physical environment—we need to make sure they have a reasonably good knowledge of the local language before they depart: The better their language abilities, the more they will be able to benefit from the broadening influences that the environment will give them.

It is in the nature of things that some human societies are superior to others in this paradigm. Through a process of natural selection, these “civilized” societies, most of them located in Western Europe, have come to dominate less advantaged groups. We wish to send our students to these privileged places so that they will acquire valuable knowledge through reading edifying works, visiting famous landmarks, and attending university lectures at the summits of human civilization. Our students acquire desirable social skills in such places as well, becoming more seasoned, refined, and cultivated as they come into contact with the types of sophisticated people who live there.

Before the students depart, we offer them tips about the ways that local people behave—“lists of dos and don’ts”—so that they can avoid making embarrassing social gaffes that could prevent them from taking full advantage of the experience.

Study abroad offers valuable ways to enrich and diversify the home campus curriculum: The disciplinary or interdisciplinary knowledge our students acquire abroad will supplement what they learn at home.

Students who have demonstrated on the home campus that they are academically serious and socially mature—the ones who have earned good grades and respected campus conduct policies—deserve to go abroad and will benefit from the experience. If they return home without showing evidence that they have acquired desirable knowledge and skills, we need to increase the minimum GPA, the number of semesters of language, or take other steps to improve our selection process so we can weed out those who are undeserving.

The positivist narrative reached its high watermark during study abroad’s formative decades; but while the European Grand Tour provides the signature program model for the narrative (Vande Berg, 2004), we can see, in beliefs and practices embraced by some educators today, that positivist assumptions are still to a significant extent informing the contemporary study abroad community.

### *The Relativist Paradigm: Learning Through Being “Immersed” in a New and Different Environment*

All cultures are equal: No single culture or perspective is inherently superior to any other. Each culture is also unique: Its members have over time responded differently to a common set of human needs and desires. However, the essential things that all humans share—our common humanity—is more important than any differences that we encounter in another culture, differences that might at first glance seem to keep us apart.

Our students often find it difficult, though, to deal with differences when they go abroad. They have trouble understanding that if they would simply “engage” with the new and different they would quickly come to discover the commonalities that bind them and the members of the host culture together.

Because we have learned that many of our students are unable to engage on their own while abroad, we take steps, whenever we can, to help them engage by “immersing” them in the new culture. We design programs, structure the student experience, so that they will spend as much time as possible engaged in the host culture and with host nationals. For example, we encourage them to study abroad for longer, rather than shorter, periods of time; to live with host families; to enroll directly in host university courses; to spend all of their free time with host nationals; and so on.

Students are normally “transformed” through studying abroad. We know this is true because our students themselves confirm it: When they return home, many of them tell us that study abroad has indeed “transformed” them or has “changed their lives.”

Because students are learning abroad in ways they will not if they stay at home, colleges and universities should send as many of them abroad as possible.

Students who are academically serious and socially mature—the ones who have earned good grades on campus and who have respected student conduct policies—are the types of students who will be transformed through the experience. It sometimes happens that students return home without having been transformed; in these cases, they have no one to blame but themselves.

As we bring the relativist narrative into awareness, we can appreciate the extent to which many of our current practices and policies are informed by relativist assumptions—and the extent to which the enduring force of those assumptions allows many members of our community to ignore, deny, minimize, or explain away the problems about student learning—the “anomalies,

or violations of expectation”—that we reviewed in the opening section of this chapter.

### *The Experiential/Constructivist Paradigm: Learning Through Immersion and Cultural Mentoring*

The world is no longer stable and unchanging: Now a learner individually creates and together with other members of his or her several cultural groups cocreates the world even as he or she perceives and experiences it. Learning does not occur as the environment imprints itself on the mind; it occurs through ongoing transactions between the individual and the environment, with humans the principal agents of their own learning.

The meaning of things is not “in” the environment; the environment “modulates,” but does not determine, what humans learn. The things that a learner “brings to” an event—habitual ways of perceiving and behaving that have been informed by genetic makeup, prior experience, and present needs and requirements—determine his or her cognitive, affective, perceptual, and psychomotor capacities and play a fundamental role in shaping his or her experience of what is “out there.”

When our students study abroad, they may learn things and learn in ways that they will not if they stay at home. Although disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning abroad is important, intercultural learning is foundational—among other things, it allows students to understand that new and different teaching and learning norms and practices are grounded in the values and beliefs of the local culture.

The primary goal of learning abroad is not, then, simply to acquire knowledge but to develop in ways that allow students to learn to shift cultural perspective and to adapt their behavior to other cultural contexts—knowledge that will allow them to interact more effectively and appropriately with others throughout their lives.

Intercultural learning is experiential, developmental, and holistic. The appropriate emblem for learning abroad is not a yard light equipped with a motion sensor that is tripped when a student enters the yard, so that he or she is suddenly bathed in the light of new knowledge. Learning is more like a dimmer switch. As the student enters a dark room, he or she needs to find the switch and begin to experiment with the effects of moving it up or down. Each student’s genetic makeup, previous learning experiences, and current needs and interests have equipped—“structured”—the student differently; the differing capacities of students as learners mean that each of them will experience, in unique ways, both the act of manipulating the dimmer switch and the very qualities of the room that are illumined through that act.

Students who learn well at home do not, therefore, necessarily learn or develop effectively abroad. Some of them come to the study abroad experience with the capacities to learn and develop effectively on their own in new and different cultural contexts—but most do not. Most students learn to learn effectively abroad only when an educator intervenes, strategically and intentionally.

Educators who intervene in student learning and development in these ways need to be trained to do so effectively.

When students return home without having learned and developed effectively, educators do not immediately assume that the students are at fault. Although this may be the case, they are also aware that adjustments in the program may need to be made so that future students participating in it will be more likely to succeed.

Unlike positivism and relativism, the experiential/constructivist paradigm is characterized by the efforts of theorists and practitioners to bring its assumptions into awareness. In this regard, then—the commitment to helping learners and teachers alike become conscious of and explicit about their teaching and learning assumptions—the third paradigm is profoundly different from the other two. Each of the authors in this volume is informed by and speaks from an experiential/constructivist worldview.

### **The Emerging Experiential/Constructivist Paradigm: Some Important Implications for Teaching and Learning Abroad**

Today an increasing number of programs are grounded in experiential/constructivist assumptions about teaching and learning. As we will see in Part Three, those educators who are developing such programs, and who are teaching and assessing students enrolling in them, understand the limitations of three key beliefs and practices from the positivist or relativist paradigms. The first concerns the nature of student learning abroad, the second the role educators play in supporting such learning, and the third their orientation to assessing it.

### *Moving Learners Beyond Habitual Ways of Experiencing and Behaving*

As we will see in chapter 2 (Paige & Vande Berg), recent research assessing and comparing the learning of students enrolled in experiential/constructivist, versus more traditional, programs helps us appreciate how difficult it is

for most individuals to get outside the worldviews that they have created and cocreated. Like all of us, students abroad experience the world in habitual ways, strongly informed by the cultural contexts in which they have lived. They do not begin to experience themselves and others differently, they do not begin to develop interculturally—gaining the capacities to shift cultural perspective and to interact more effectively and appropriately with culturally different others—simply by virtue of going abroad and crossing national (and sometimes linguistic) boundaries. Experiencing “the new and different” does not in and of itself change deeply engrained perspectives and behavior. As John Dewey (1897) began to discuss more than a century ago, and as recent research findings and theoretical insights from the disciplines and traditions represented in this book show, experience is simply not the same thing as learning. Rather, each of us learns through transactions between ourselves and the environment; what we bring to the environment—that is, our genetic makeup, our cultural makeup, and the ways that these have equipped and conditioned us to learn and to know—is ultimately more important than the environment in determining how we will experience it, and what we will learn from it.

### *The Limitations of “Immersion” as a Learning Strategy*

As we have seen, the relativist narrative holds that students learn effectively when educators take steps to “immerse” them in the host culture because this presumably increases the likelihood that they will engage with the new and different. Within the context of this paradigm, students are more likely to learn when educators manipulate the learning environment—through placing them in home stays, for example, or by directly enrolling them in host university courses. However, when viewed through an experiential/constructivist lens, we see that immersion in experience abroad will not, in and of itself, lead students to learn effectively. As the review of recent research in the next chapter will show, students do not simply and automatically learn when they are, for example, placed in home stays abroad. The extent to which they learn and develop through this familiar “immersion” strategy is a function of how relatively developed they are interculturally—which is, to say, of the ways that they perceive and experience cultural similarities and differences in their interactions in the home stay. The research record shows that other common immersion strategies that much of the study abroad community has for decades applied in developing programs are also in only limited ways predictive of student development.

Most students do not, then, meaningfully develop either through simple exposure to the environment or through having educators take steps to increase the amount of that exposure through “immersing” them. Instead, students learn and develop effectively and appropriately when educators intervene more intentionally through well-designed training programs that continue throughout the study abroad experience. Although the empirical evidence suggests that students who are “immersed” in a new culture do develop interculturally somewhat more than students who are simply left to learn on their own, the research also shows that the gains students make in programs that seek to “immerse” them are quite modest when compared with the gains students make when trained educators intervene, throughout the study abroad experience, to help them develop the capacities to deal effectively with crossing cultures.

The data, in other words, suggest three progressively greater “levels” of intercultural development. Within a positivist framework, in which students are presumed to learn through coming into contact with, or being exposed to, cultural difference, the research findings show that students develop interculturally, on average, little if at all. Within a relativist framework, in which students are said to learn through being “immersed” in cultural difference, students learn somewhat more than they do when they are left to their own devices—but the gains are not impressive. Only when students are learning within a context informed by experiential/constructivist perspectives—only when they are immersed in another culture and receive meaningful intercultural mentoring and opportunities for reflection on meaning-making—do most students develop to an impressive degree. Put differently, the data show that students learn and develop considerably more when educators prepare them to become more self-reflective, culturally self-aware, and aware of “how they know what they know.” In developing a meta-awareness of their own processes of perceiving and knowing, students come to understand both how they habitually experience and make meaning of events, and how they can use that newfound understanding to help them engage more effectively and appropriately with culturally different others.

### *Reports That “Study Abroad Transformed Me”*

What should we make, then, of student reports that they have been “transformed” through studying abroad? We as a community have traditionally placed a lot of value on such anecdotal reports about learning abroad, using them as evidence in order to assure ourselves and others that our students

are in fact learning effectively. It is tempting to accept such self-reports at face value—and not only because we hear this sort of thing from a fair number of students. It is also simply tempting to accept that a student has been “transformed” when she sincerely and enthusiastically tells us this is the case. However, there are at least three good reasons why we should respond cautiously when students tell us that study abroad has “changed their lives,” three reasons why we should not take such self-reports as “evidence” that they have learned as profoundly as their words suggest.

First, we do not rely on self-reports to assess student learning in other domains; why, then, do we do so where learning and development abroad is concerned? If a student at a home campus in the United States came to us complaining that she had received a B in, say, Advanced French, rather than the A she thought that she deserved, it is unlikely, to say the least, that we would simply conclude that the student deserved the A. No matter how sincere and enthusiastic she was in telling us that the grade did not accurately reflect her abilities, we would not pick up the telephone and call the faculty member in the French Department who had taught the course, and ask him or her to change the grade. If we did decide to call the instructor to inquire about the final grade, we might ask him or her to confirm whether it had been computed correctly, but we would not presume to ask that the grade be changed. We would instead assume that he or she had relied on some external standard or standards in assigning it. If the grade, for example, represented the average of all of the student’s work throughout the semester, then the standard might be the French grammatical structures, vocabulary, and functions that the instructor had covered in the course. If the final grade also reflected his or her assessment of the student’s oral proficiency in French at the end of the course—or, more specifically, the extent to which the student’s oral performance had improved by the end of the term, as measured through pre- and posttesting—then the external standard he or she relied on might be the American Council on the Testing of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) oral proficiency scale, and the instrument used in the pre- and posttesting, perhaps the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview, would also be based on the ACTFL scale.

A second reason we should be cautious when our students tell us that study abroad has “transformed” them is that self-reports are notoriously unreliable in the sense that an individual may not have enough knowledge about the topic being discussed to draw valid conclusions about it. Developmental theorists—including Jean Piaget (1952), Kurt Lewin (1951), David Kolb (1984; chapter 6 of this volume), William Perry (1970), Mary Belenky

(Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986), Milton Bennett (1993; chapter 4 of this volume), Mitchell Hammer (2009; chapter 5 of this volume), and Jack Mezirow (2000)—have been exploring the nature of “transformation” for decades and have provided us with theories that provide convincing explanations and descriptions about what the phenomenon is and how it develops (see Stuart, chapter 3 of this volume). Mezirow’s (2000) Transformation Theory, for example, offers useful insights about the ways that emotional responses to crises can serve as catalysts that lead to “frame shifts,” a developmental capacity that intercultural relations typically places at the core of intercultural competence. For Bennett (see page 102 of this volume), “The crux of communication . . . [is] the ability to transcend our own limited experience and embody the world as another is experiencing it”; for Hammer (2009), cultural adaptation is “the capability of shifting perspective to another culture and adapting behavior according to cultural context” (p. 209; see also chapter 5 of this volume).

When a student tells us that she has been “transformed,” she may be describing or sharing experiences that are deeply meaningful to her, perhaps sharing her sense that she has, for instance, gained greater self-reliance or independence while abroad. However, unless we have good reason to believe that she is reporting on a capacity to shift her frame of cultural reference—the developmental capacity to begin to experience events from the point of view of another person—then we should suspect that what she is describing is something other than “transformation,” as this concept is now framed within the context of developmental and intercultural theory. If we do discover, in talking with her, that she is in fact describing “transformation” as such theories define it, and if through testing her (with the IDI, for example) we conclude that she does seem able to shift her frame of reference in different cultural contexts to that of culturally different others, we will still not necessarily be in a position to conclude that “study abroad has transformed her.” That is, unless we had tested her at the beginning and at the end of her study abroad experience, using a valid and reliable instrument like the IDI, we cannot assume that she developed this core intercultural capacity through studying abroad.

Self-reports can be and sometimes are unreliable on a third count as well: The person making the report may not be telling the truth. In raising this possibility, we are not suggesting that students are simply lying—in the sense that they are “making it up”—when they tell us they have been transformed. We are, however, suggesting that a student who tells us that studying abroad has been “the best thing that has ever happened” to her

may, consciously or unconsciously, be exhibiting what testing experts call “social desirability bias”; that is, she may be telling us what she believes we want or expect to hear. Consider this: If just about everybody the student had ever talked with about study abroad had told her that the experience would change her life—if her institution, the instructors and staff organizing her experience abroad, and her parents embrace a relativist master narrative that frames learning abroad as “transformational”—then perhaps we should not be surprised when she returns to campus and tells us that she has, in fact, been transformed.

In saying that there are good reasons why we should respond with healthy skepticism to student reports about being transformed, we are not suggesting that students are not learning anything through studying abroad. This is clearly not the case. Faculty and staff who work with students while they are abroad or after their return home often find that they “know when and why study abroad fails or succeeds” (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009, p. 1), and the sincerity and enthusiasm of those students who tell us that study abroad has succeeded is unmistakable, strongly suggesting that some, perhaps even many, of them are learning, and understand that they are learning, through studying abroad. Anyone who attends an annual Forum on Education Abroad conference and listens to the formal presentations by recipients of the Forum’s Undergraduate Research Award will very likely come away understanding that some students learn very well indeed while abroad. We as a community have a bad habit, though, of leaping from that fact—that certain students learn a lot—to the untenable conclusion that most if not all students therefore learn a lot. What we are suggesting is that we, as a teaching and learning community (see Robinson, chapter 10), need to pay much more attention both to the ways we are framing the concept of “student learning” and to the sorts of evidence we are relying on before we conclude that students, in general, are “learning well abroad,” or that they are learning more “successfully” in one program rather than another.

The unfolding of the three paradigms that we have briefly described in this chapter has not occurred in anything resembling a neat and tidy historical chronology. Some members of the study abroad community are still working from positivist or relativist assumptions, even though increasing numbers of their colleagues are coming to embrace experiential/constructivist perspectives. And consistent with Kuhn’s theory of paradigm shifts, some faculty and staff were responding to anomalies within positivism well before most of their colleagues had even begun to consider examining or changing their own practices, while others had come early to the understanding that

relativism’s core study abroad assumption—that students abroad learn effectively through enrolling in programs that aim to “immerse” them in new and different experiences—was simply not working as well as predicted.

What these “early adaptors” understood, and what other members of the community are increasingly coming to realize, is that educators need to intervene in focused and intentional ways, throughout the study abroad experience, if most students are to learn and develop effectively and appropriately. The authors of this volume, representing a wide range of disciplines and traditions and study abroad programs, converge around the core perspectives of the experiential/constructivist paradigm, embracing and enacting the view that effective and deep learning (Fink, 2003; see also chapters 6 and 14 of this volume), whether students are at home or abroad, is necessarily experiential, developmental, and holistic.

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## WHY STUDENTS ARE AND ARE NOT LEARNING ABROAD

A Review of Recent Research

*R. Michael Paige and Michael Vande Berg*

In this chapter, we examine the research literature on student learning in study abroad programs. Our focus is on intercultural learning and development, but the key findings have generalizability to other outcomes such as language learning, engagement with global issues, and learning in the disciplines. Periodically, we refer to other learning outcomes as they pertain to intervening in student learning. The purpose of this review is to provide readers with an empirical foundation for the arguments being advanced in favor of intervening in the study abroad learning process. Two central questions are addressed in this chapter:

1. What is the impact of interventions on intercultural learning and development in study abroad above and beyond the impact of the study abroad intercultural experience itself?
2. What is the nature of the interventions that have the greatest impact?

These questions guide our inquiry, and the answers from the literature have enabled us to better understand the intervention-related factors that have an impact on student learning in study abroad programs. The studies also permit us to examine the competing assumptions of the immersion and intervention models of learning.

This review of the literature is targeted on intercultural interventions, which we define as *intentional and deliberate pedagogical approaches, activated*



throughout the study abroad cycle (before, during, and after), that are designed to enhance students' intercultural competence. Hence, this review does not discuss in depth all of the possible explanatory variables that can also have an impact on intercultural development, though we are cognizant of the fact that other variables play a role in student learning. These include *personal factors*, such as age, gender, prior intercultural experiences, and second-language proficiency. Also included are *contextual variables*, such as destination, attitudes of host nationals toward internationals, degree of cultural similarity and dissimilarity of the host to the home country, degree of cultural isolation from home country peers while abroad, and the overall psychological intensity of the intercultural experience (Paige, 1993). Instead, this review focuses on *programmatically factors* that we can design into our study abroad programs: program duration, intercultural coursework, cultural immersion opportunities, on-site and online cultural mentoring; planned intercultural contact; and regularly occurring reflection through journaling, written assignments, peer-to-peer feedback, and other mechanisms.

It should also be pointed out that we do not propose that this chapter serve as an exhaustive review of the study abroad literature over the past 50 years. For the broader historical perspective on study abroad, the reader is referred to the two-volume publication, *A History of U.S. Study Abroad* (Hoffa, 2007; Hoffa & DePaul, 2010), supported and published by The Forum on Education Abroad. For our purposes, most if not all of the relevant research literature regarding our two central questions on the nature and impact of interventions has been published since 2000. This is not to discount the importance of earlier, noteworthy studies such as Koester's (1985) large-scale survey of Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE) students, the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (Carlson, Burn, Useem, & Yachimowicz, 1990), and the Institute for the International Education of Students' 50-year retrospective survey of past participants (Akanke & Slawson, 2000; Dwyer, 2004). The emphasis of those and other earlier studies, however, was not exclusively on intercultural learning, nor was the focus on intervention as an explanatory variable. As Bennett (2010) points out in his review of intercultural learning in study abroad over the past 40 years, there certainly was considerable interest in developing such programs. But before 2000, well-designed research studies on how study abroad programs could affect intercultural learning were lacking. At that point in time, a body of knowledge that could guide study abroad design was badly needed.

Today, that situation has changed dramatically for the better. The research literature on this topic is growing rapidly. Study abroad itself has become a global phenomenon, and there is great interest throughout the world in providing programs that have a demonstrable impact on learning outcomes among secondary, tertiary, and professional school students. There is indeed an emerging accountability imperative within higher education institutions, private study abroad program providers, and youth exchange organizations that is translating into investments in research and program assessment.

Our understanding of intercultural learning and development derives in considerable part from the work of scholars and practitioners from the fields of intercultural communication, intercultural relations, anthropology, psychology, and intercultural education and training, many of whom have contributed to study abroad programming. The conceptual and empirical literature related to intercultural training is particularly salient to our interest in intercultural interventions (Landis, Bennett, & Bennett, 2004; Landis & Bhagat, 1996).

In conducting this literature review, we sought to identify research studies that meet several criteria. First, the study must adhere to rigorous research design and methodological principles. Second, the study must utilize instruments with demonstrated validity and reliability that measure key intercultural constructs. Third, the findings must be generalizable, providing a basis for comparisons across studies. Fortunately, the trend in study abroad research during the past decade has been oriented toward these criteria.

The Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer, 2007; Hammer & Bennett, 1998) is an intercultural instrument that exemplifies this trend. It has been shown to be a valid and reliable measure of intercultural competence (Hammer, 2011; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Paige, Jacobs-Cassuto, Yershova, & DeJaeghere, 2003) with a strong conceptual and theoretical foundation: Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS). Its use in research makes it possible to evaluate the many approaches to developing intercultural competence in study abroad and to determine what approaches are more or less effective, something that could not be done if every study used its own instrumentation exclusively. The IDI is also being used to help design programs and guide intercultural learning (see chapters 5, 12, 13, and 16 of this volume; DeJaeghere & Cao, 2009).

By way of contrast, the student self-report or evaluation at the conclusion of a program, a mainstay of study abroad, provides us with an important

narrative, a story, an account of what the students *feel* the program has meant to them. These narratives give voice to the study abroad experience. But they are ultimately unique to the student and lack generalizability because there is no external criterion with which to evaluate them (see chapter 1). Empirical research, of the type reviewed in this chapter, allows us to say, with increasing confidence, "This is what works if you wish to support intercultural learning among your students."

### Maximizing Study Abroad Research Project: Curricular and Online Interventions

We begin the review with an examination of the University of Minnesota's Maximizing Study Abroad (MAXSA) project. Sponsored by the university's Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition and begun in 1993, MAXSA has played a key role in advancing, as well as researching, intercultural learning and development in study abroad. The MAXSA project has included (a) textbook development (1999–2002), (b) research program (2002–5), (c) text revision (2005–9), and (d) study abroad course development (2002–present). In chapter 13, Paige, Harvey, and McCleary describe the MAXSA curriculum project in greater detail. For our purposes, we lead this chapter with the MAXSA project because it is one of the first with intervention in intercultural learning as an explicit and central element of its design.

The MAXSA research program (Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, & Hoff, 2005; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004), conducted between 2002 and 2005, set out to test rigorously the effectiveness of a new text designed to support language and culture learning: *Maximizing Study Abroad: A Students' Guide to Strategies for Language and Culture Learning and Use* (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2002). The text was used as the basis for an online course that was taken by one group of study abroad students, who were then compared with a second group of students who did not take the course. Change scores for intercultural development, second-language learning, culture learning strategies, and language-learning strategies were compared for these two groups.

#### Intervention

The intervention for the experimental (E-group) students was conducted primarily online. Following a one-day pre-departure orientation (which included learning about speech acts and being introduced to the *Students'*

*Guide*), the students had to complete weekly assigned readings on language and culture from the *Students' Guide* throughout the semester abroad plus biweekly reflection papers ( $n = 7$ ) pertaining to the students' responses to the assigned readings, their use of the *Guide* while abroad, and their open-ended reflections on their language- and culture-learning experiences. Students had an instructor to whom they sent their papers and with whom they could interact if they wished. On-site study abroad staff members, however, were not involved in the intervention.

#### Research Design

The research program utilized a true experimental design in which students ( $N = 86$ ), all of whom would be studying abroad for three months, were randomly assigned to either the experimental (E or intervention) group ( $n = 42$ ) or the control (C or nonintervention) group ( $n = 44$ ). By design, the C- and E-group participants shared the experience of studying abroad for a semester in a French- or Spanish-speaking country. What differentiated the two groups was the intervention.

Pre- and posttest administrations of four instruments were conducted for all of the research subjects. The study utilized the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998); the new Speech Act Measure of Language Gain (Cohen & Shively, 2002, 2002/2003); and research adaptations of the original MAXSA culture-learning and language-learning inventories, the Strategies Inventory for Learning Culture (Paige et al., 2002) and the Language Strategy Survey (Cohen, Oxford, & Chi, 2002). These are described in greater detail in chapter 13 of this volume and in Cohen et al. (2005).

#### Findings

Regarding intercultural development, the first finding was that the gain for all students of 4.47 points on the IDI was statistically significant. Thus, studying abroad, in and of itself, was associated with intercultural learning. The second finding showed that there was no statistically significant difference between the E-group and C-group on their intercultural development. The results of the qualitative post-study abroad interviews, however, showed that the E-group students felt that the MAXSA materials and assignments had given them a better understanding of culture in general and of their specific host culture in particular. Student after student provided examples of how the knowledge that they had gained about different cultural variables, such as communication styles, was helpful in navigating their daily interactions in country.

The language results showed, first, that the gain for all students between the pre- and posttest was statistically significant ( $p < .001$ ) on the combined “overall success” score of all 10 speech act vignettes. On 9 of the 10 vignettes, the gain in “overall success” from the pretest to the posttest was also statistically significant, at  $p < .05$  or higher. When the E- and C-groups were compared on the Speech Act Measure using categorical data (negative gain score, positive gain score, no change), the results were statistically significant ( $p < .05$ ) in favor of the E-group. The raw data results showed E-group students outperforming C-group participants ( $p < .05$ ) on three indicators (“appropriate level of directness”: all requests; “overall success”: meeting professor vignette; and “fit between vocabulary and level of formality”: meeting professor vignette). The language results indicate, then, that the MAXSA intervention did have a positive impact. From an intercultural learning perspective, it is encouraging that the E-group students gained more in handling these situations in which language and culture intersect than did the C-group students.

To summarize, the MAXSA research project provides us with findings that support the intervention hypothesis, though, as we will see, the gains in intercultural competence that the E-students made were modest compared with the gains of students enrolled in a number of the other research studies that we are describing in this chapter. MAXSA stands now as a pioneering effort that has served as an important foundation for intercultural interventions in study abroad.

### The Georgetown Consortium Project: Studying Immersion in Depth

The Georgetown Consortium Research Project (see chapter 16 of this volume; Vande Berg, 2009; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009; Vande Berg & Paige, 2009) is the most comprehensive examination of immersion and its impact on intercultural development and language learning yet undertaken in study abroad research. Over a four-year period, 2003–7, the researchers examined the experiences and learning outcomes of students on 61 different study abroad programs, using a comprehensive conceptual model consisting of 14 potential explanatory factors. As seen in the research findings, among the 61 programs, the American University Center of Provence (AUCP) was the only one with a comprehensive intervention strategy, one that included intensive cultural mentoring.

The Georgetown Consortium Research Project was carried out during the same years as the MAXSA study and explored similar questions: Does immersing students in the new culture abroad help them develop intercultural? Do particular aspects of the study abroad immersion experience affect intercultural development more than others? What types of intervention can enhance learning beyond that provided by the immersion itself? The MAXSA research project provided important evidence that study abroad participants were making only limited gains in their language and intercultural development even when they had specialized materials to guide their learning. The Georgetown Consortium Research Project broadened the analysis to include a wider set of immersion-related factors that might be influencing student learning.

It is more than mere coincidence that both studies focused on the factors influencing student learning outcomes in a study abroad environment and were conducted at about the same time. As we saw in the previous chapter, by the end of the last century the study abroad community was divided about the extent to which students were learning effectively abroad on their own, and the tension between those two camps was growing acute. By examining the degree to which immersion practices and intervention approaches were advancing student learning, these two studies were representative of a paradigm shift in which researchers, first singly and then in groups, began to focus on an anomaly (Kuhn, 1962, pp. 19, 82): that students immersed in the study abroad environment were not learning as well as expected. In both testing and challenging the immersion paradigm, these studies represent, then, an accelerating shift from the relativist to the experiential/constructivist paradigm.

#### *Research Design*

The Georgetown Consortium Project utilized a pre-posttest comparison group design with the instruments administered at three points in time: before, immediately after, and some five months after the study abroad program. Two research instruments were utilized for the learning outcomes: the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) and the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (Stansfield, 1991, 1996).

#### *Intervention*

The Georgetown study explicitly focused on the role of immersion and intervention in student learning abroad using the seven program design elements

proposed by Lilli Engle and John Engle (2003; chapter 12 of this volume). These were the program design elements or “defining components” they felt that educators needed to take into account to ensure that students would learn and develop interculturally. In the Georgetown Consortium study, these design elements were incorporated into the larger conceptual model of 14 predictor variables, operationally defined, and tested. The seven “defining components” were as follows:

1. Length of student sojourn,
2. Entry target language competence,
3. Language used in course work,
4. Context of academic work [In the study this meant whether students took classes with other U.S. students; host country students; non-U.S. international students; or a mixture of international, host, and U.S. students.],
5. Types of student housing [This meant being housed with other U.S. students, host country students, international students, or a host family.],
6. Provision for guided/structured cultural interaction and experiential learning, and
7. Guided reflection on cultural experience (2003, p. 8).

The research sample of 1,297 students included study abroad participants ( $n = 1,159$ ) and a control group of non-study abroad students ( $n = 138$ ).

### Findings

The findings provide very little support for the immersion hypothesis. Overall, the IDI gains were not statistically significant for those students in the 60 programs that lacked an intervention strategy—in particular, cultural mentoring. Their average IDI gain was only 1.32 points, and the non-study abroad students gained a mere .07 points. To put this in perspective, the IDI scale has a 90-point range and a standard deviation of 15 points. Clearly, neither students abroad nor those at home developed interculturally in this study. By contrast, the students enrolled in the AUCP program, the only program in the study with a comprehensive intervention strategy, made a most impressive average IDI gain of 12.47 points. When the AUCP data are included, the gain for the study abroad group as a whole increased to 2.37 points.

The study showed no support at all for two of the study abroad community’s preferred immersion practices: housing students with host families (thereby presumably providing the deeper social experience of a host country student) and enrolling them in host university courses (thereby presumably providing the academic experience of a host country student). The findings showed that of the four types of housing—homestays, living in an apartment or dorm with host students, living in an apartment or dorm with other U.S. students, and living with international students—only students who lived with U.S. students made statistically significant, though modest, IDI gains (3.37 points). The gain of students who lived with host families (1.07 points) was not significant. It is worth noting, however, that when students chose to *engage with* someone in the host family (“time spent with host family”), the gains were significant; those who spent 26–50% of their free time with their host family gained 3.37 points and those who spent 51–75% of their free time gained 4.95 IDI points.

Of the four classroom environments—direct enrollment in host university courses; courses designed specifically for U.S. students; courses designed specifically for international, including U.S., students; and a mixture of these three environments—direct enrollment courses fared the worst; the 349 students enrolled in these courses gained just .71 points on the IDI scale. By comparison, those studying with other international students gained 4.99 points.

One of the Engle and Engle (2003) defining components, program duration, was significantly correlated overall with IDI gains ( $F = 2.65$ ;  $p = .037$ ), but the gains were quite modest. Program length mattered the most for students who studied abroad for a semester (13–18 weeks): they gained a relatively small 3.4 points on average. Yet this group gained more than those who studied for shorter or longer periods of time. This study indicates that another preferred immersion practice—program duration—does not predict intercultural development as clearly or dramatically as many members of the study abroad community have traditionally supposed.

Of the seven Engle and Engle (2003) variables, the one the Georgetown Consortium study shows to be most predictive of intercultural development is cultural mentoring, that is, “guided reflection on the students’ cultural experience.” Students were asked how often they had received cultural mentoring on-site, either individually or in groups. For both individuals and groups, as cultural mentoring increased in frequency from “never” to “very often,” the intercultural gains increased (from .83 to 5.02 for group mentoring and from .78 to 5.47 for individual mentoring). Except for those who

did not receive any mentoring, these intercultural gains were statistically significant at or near the .05 level. In fact, analysis of the findings has revealed that the group of students who received the most individual and/or group mentoring made greater IDI gains than any other group.

The practice of providing cultural mentoring on a regular basis, throughout the study abroad experience, is not supported by the assumptions of either the positivist or relativist paradigms. It is, however, a central feature of the experiential/constructivist paradigm, which, as we will see in discussing other research studies in this chapter, predicts that students abroad learn most effectively—and appropriately—when educators take steps not only to immerse them, but to actively facilitate their learning, helping them reflect on how they are making meaning from the experiences that their “immersion” is providing.

In contrast to cultural mentoring, participation in guided/structured experiential activities was not significantly related to either the intercultural- or language-learning outcomes. This finding seriously challenges the immersion hypothesis; it suggests that providing students with experiential learning opportunities alone is insufficient for intercultural learning to occur. Finally, pre-departure and on-site-arrival orientation programs, long a staple of study abroad programs, did not show a statistically significant relationship with intercultural or language learning.

The Georgetown Consortium study gives us a tantalizing hint at the power of reflection and the importance of guiding the learning process. Regardless of the other characteristics of the study abroad program, the student, or the setting, it is clear that cultural mentoring makes a difference. The consistency of the cultural mentoring finding for both intercultural development and language proficiency is striking. What the Georgetown Consortium study does not tell us is how to structure interventions designed to support intercultural learning. Those insights come from several studies that we now discuss.

### **The American University Center of Provence: Comprehensive, On-site Intercultural Intervention**

The pioneering efforts being undertaken at AUCP, begun in 1994 by Lilli and John Engle, are particularly important to this inquiry for three major reasons. First, the program directors from the very beginning were quite systematic and deliberate in facilitating linguistic and intercultural competence. These outcomes are at the core of what are now two AUCP programs,

one in Aix-en-Provence, and the other in Marseille (see chapter 12). Second, these AUCP programs provide us with an important example of the numerous ways that intercultural competence can be facilitated on-site. The MAXSA project showed that online language and intercultural interventions can contribute to student development in those areas. The AUCP program allows us to see how intercultural interventions can be structured on-site. Moreover, the Georgetown findings showed that cultural mentoring supports intercultural development, but not how. AUCP provides answers to the question of how such learning can be organized and delivered by professional staff on-site. Third, AUCP staff have conducted rigorous research about student learning on their programs for a number of years, the results of which (see chapter 12; Engle, 2009; Engle & Engle, 2004) are directly relevant to this chapter.

### *Intervention*

AUCP promotes French-language competence and intercultural competence, among other things, through intense cultural immersion, a French-only language pledge, and ongoing cultural mentoring. For cultural immersion, students participate each week in a series of community-based, experiential learning activities called French Practicum (see chapter 12). Student learning is supported by a 15-week intercultural communication course, French Cultural Patterns (Engle & Engle, 2004; see chapter 12). In the words of the directors, “The leading program components here—consistent use of French, coursework, required intercultural contact, guided cultural reflection, individual housing—are intended to combine to form a synchronized, harmonious whole” (Engle & Engle, 2004, p. 221). In chapter 12, Engle and Engle discuss the three defining orientations that guide the AUCP intervention model: (a) challenging and supporting the students, (b) utilizing a holistic program design (drawing on and integrating into the program a wide variety of learning approaches), and (c) mentoring for intercultural competence. With respect to the first, students are regularly challenged by being deeply immersed in the culture and using the French language at all times, both of which, as Paige (1993) points out, can be very stressful. On the other hand, the program staff provides continual cultural mentoring on-site, space in the intercultural course for discussions of intercultural issues, and culture content to help the students better understand their experiences.

### *Research Design*

Since 2002, AUCP has been systematically researching its own semester- and year-long programs with pre- and post-program administrations of the Test

d'Evaluation de Français for French language proficiency, and the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) for intercultural competence. The early IDI results (Engle & Engle, 2004) were impressive, and the more recent findings (Engle, 2009) even more so.

### *Findings*

In the first AUCP research report, Engle and Engle (2004) found that for the 187 AUCP students in the sample, intercultural competence increased during the one-semester program. In their article, the authors use “percentage of achievable progress” (AP) to report the IDI results. For all students, the average gain was 36% of their AP. Of these students, 25.6% ( $n = 48$ ) gained between 50% and 100%, 26.7% ( $n = 50$ ) gained between 30% and 49%, and 25.1% (47 students) gained between 10% and 29%. Only 27 students (14%) declined during a semester. In the first study of full-year students ( $n = 25$ ), Engle and Engle reported that the students achieved 28% of the AP in the first semester and 40% of their remaining AP in the second. Based on their research, Engle and Engle conclude, “Two factors lead to the clear development of cross-cultural competence in the American student group: as much direct, authentic contact with the host culture as possible, and skillful mentoring which guides, informs, inspires, and stimulates the experiential learning process” (2003, p. 232).

At the 2009 Forum on Education Abroad conference, Lilli Engle (2009) presented AUCP research findings for the period 2002–8. For students in semester-long programs, the average gain on the IDI was a striking 11.97 in Aix-en-Provence ( $n = 414$ ) and 10.81 in Marseille ( $n = 73$ ). Moreover, as the program has developed, the IDI gains have increased. In chapter 12, Engle and Engle report that the average gains between fall 2006 through spring 2011 were 13.43 points.

In terms of intercultural development, these gains translate into movement away from ethnocentrism and into ethnorelativism. Of the students in Aix-en-Provence and those in Marseille, 39.3% and 35.9%, respectively, had reached the Acceptance level of intercultural development at the end of one semester, a notable accomplishment. The results are even more impressive for students in yearlong programs, with 57.6% attaining Acceptance. These are among the largest IDI increases that have been reported. These intercultural gains far exceed those of the Georgetown Consortium students (average IDI gain excluding the AUCP students = 1.32) or those of the MAXSA intervention group students (average IDI gain = 3.82). The AUCP research

has provided important evidence to support Engle’s (2009) conclusion that “program intervention brings results.”

### **Willamette University-Bellarmino University: Intentional and Targeted Online Intervention**

Gabriele Weber Bosley (Bellarmino University) and Kris Hemming Lou (Willamette University) have developed the Bosley/Lou Intentional, Targeted Intervention (ITI) model, an intercultural intervention approach that combines in-person pre-departure and reentry seminars with in-country intercultural programming conducted online (Lou & Bosley, 2008; chapter 14 of this volume). Two of the unique features of the ITI approach are that it is being used with both international students in the United States and U.S. students abroad, and that it utilizes student learning communities in which students contribute to the learning of their peers. Here we look first at the features of the intervention and then at the research findings.

#### *Intervention*

The ITI model (chapter 14) begins with a pre-departure orientation that brings U.S. students together with each other, and an arrival orientation at Bellarmino and Willamette for international students that serves the same purpose. Students learn key intercultural concepts, work in groups to develop their ethnographic skills, and develop greater cultural self-awareness by examining their own core values. The orientation sets the stage in terms of group learning processes and substantive intercultural content for the in-country phase. While abroad (the U.S. students) or in the United States (the international students), online learning communities of three to five students are created on the basis of having similar pretest IDI results, with some groups consisting of a mix of U.S. and international students. On a weekly basis, the students participate in activities designed to increase their engagement with the culture, doing relevant readings assigned for that week and writing reflection journals about their experience. Every week, each student in the group gives the others feedback on his or her online journal entries. This process of continual reflection on one’s own and others’ intercultural experiences is based on Kolb’s (Kolb & Kolb, 2005; chapter 6 of this volume) learning theory and is central to the ITI Model. Not only are the students reflecting on their own experiences, but they are also giving and receiving feedback. There are two versions of the model: one that features a course



instructor, based at Bellarmine or Willamette, who reviews the journals and provides online feedback to the students; and one that does not rely on an instructor.

The program concludes with a postprogram workshop following the U.S. students' return to the Bellarmine and Willamette campuses that brings all the students back together and explores aspects of reentry, including the transferring of skills and knowledge acquired by the U.S. students abroad, to their home environment.

### *Research Design*

Lou and Bosley (see chapter 14) provide detailed information regarding their research program. They utilized a pre-posttest research design with the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) serving as the measure of intercultural competence.

### *Findings*

The average IDI gains of 144 U.S. and international students who to date have participated in the instructor-guided ITI program is 8.08 points. When the data for students participating in the non-instructor version of the ITI are included, the gain drops to an average of 6.65 points. This difference between the instructor-guided and noninstructor versions becomes even more striking when we examine the international student results. Those who had an instructor ( $n = 29$ ) gained 10.17 points on the IDI, whereas those who did not ( $n = 29$ ) gained only 1.94 points. At least in the case of international students, the presence of an instructor has proved to be a critical variable in the success of the model.

### **University of Minnesota Duluth: On-site, In-country Intervention**

The intercultural intervention examined by Pedersen (2010) is an in-country, semester-long Psychology of Group Dynamics course that utilizes a multifaceted intercultural pedagogy. The students are participants in the academic year Study in England (SIE) program offered by the University of Minnesota Duluth; they take this (elective) course during their first semester.

### *Intervention*

The course features the following intercultural elements. At the beginning, students take the IDI (Hammer, 2007). The instructor gives them individual

feedback about their IDI results; that is, they learn about their "primary orientation" on the intercultural continuum, and the instructor then encourages them to use that knowledge to continue their intercultural development. The course also provides intercultural content, a variety of interculturally relevant classroom activities including group projects, outside-of-class cultural immersions, and guided reflection through written assignments and journaling. Students thus are exposed to and reflect on culture in numerous ways, both inside and outside of class. This intercultural pedagogy model is based on a grounded, constructivist theory of learning that Pedersen (2010) describes as "a process of creating our own knowing and meaning . . . primarily from experience" (p. 73).

### *Research Design*

The researcher employed a pre-posttest control group repeated measures design that included three groups of students: (a) those in the 2006–7 SIE program abroad who took the intercultural course ( $n = 16$ ), (b) those in the 2006–7 SIE program who did not take the course ( $n = 16$ ), and (c) those who stayed on campus in 2006–7 but who had expressed interest in the SIE program. All three groups took the IDI at the start of the academic year, and 9 to 11 months later.

### *Findings*

There are two major findings of this study. First, SIE students in group one, who took the intercultural course, on average gained 11.56 points, whereas students in group two, who had studied abroad but who were not enrolled in the course, gained only 1.22 points. Students in group three, who remained on campus that year, gained 1.43 points. The gain for group one was statistically significant, as were the differences in gain scores between group one and groups two and three. Clearly, the intercultural course had a major impact. Second, the impact was greatest for those students who had not traveled abroad before (IDI gain = 24.9 points). As Pedersen (2010) points out, this group moved "from a denial/defense worldview to just above the mid line of minimization" (p. 76). This finding is consistent with Hammer's (2005) research finding that the major intercultural shift of AFS students in that yearlong program was from Denial or Defense to Minimization.



## AFS Intercultural Impact Study: The Effects of a Youth Exchange Intercultural Experience

AFS Intercultural Programs is an international organization best known for its one-year programs for high school-age students from the United States and elsewhere who have the opportunity to study in any of more than 50 countries. The organization has a long research tradition, and during the past decade it has commissioned two impact studies pertaining to intercultural competence, one an assessment of AFS participants in the 2002–3 program (Hammer, undated) and the other a long-term, follow-up assessment of participants who had been in AFS programs from 1980 to 1986 (Hansel, 2008; Hansel & Chen, 2008).

### *Intervention*

The aforementioned studies are of special interest because the essence of AFS intercultural intervention is long-term immersion in another culture (10–12 months) that includes living with a host country family (the homestay experience). As Hansel (2008) puts it, “The AFS Program is first and foremost a program of experiential learning. AFS provides the participant with a direct experience in another culture” (p. 5). In effect, AFS programming relies heavily on long-term immersion and close contact with host culture members by means of the homestay. It is a classic example of the immersion model.

### *Research Design*

In the study of AFS students abroad during the 2002–3 academic year, Hammer (undated) utilized a pretest, posttest, and post-posttest control group design. The sample included students who had been abroad for 10 months and lived with host families ( $n = 1,500$ ), and a control group of “student friends” ( $n = 600$ ) who had not studied abroad. Intercultural learning was assessed using the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998), the Intercultural Anxiety Scale (Gao & Gudykunst, 1990), student journals, and the perspectives of the student’s own and host families.

In the long-term impact study (Hansel, 2008; Hansel & Chen, 2008), a posttest control group design was implemented. The sample consisted of AFS participants who had been in one-year or summer programs in 1981–82 ( $n = 1,920$ ) and a control group of high school peers, nominated by the AFS group, who had not been abroad ( $n = 511$ ). The IDI and the Intercultural Anxiety Scale were the primary assessment instruments, which allowed

the researcher to compare the 2002–3 and 1981–82 groups. They were also able to address the question, “Would the gains hold up over the years?”

### *Findings*

Hammer (undated) found that the students in the 2002–3 group on average gained 2 points on the IDI during their 10 months abroad. On further analysis, he discovered that the greatest changes occurred among those who had begun the program at the earliest, most ethnocentric levels of intercultural competence: Denial, Defense, and Reversal (DD/R). They gained an average of 8 points, which moved many to the beginning of Minimization. Those who had begun in Minimization (M) or in the ethnorelative orientations of Acceptance and Adaptation (A/A) stayed where they were. The author reports, “Essentially, the DD/R group ‘caught up’ with the M group on all measures at the completion of the program. These results were maintained six months later (post-post test)” (p. 4). In total, 61% of the AFS participants scored in Minimization on the post-posttest. The author also found that intercultural anxiety was reduced from pre- to posttest and that this reduction had not changed at the time of the post-posttest. It is encouraging that both the gains made on the IDI and the reduction of anxiety, as shown by the post-posttest results, were still maintained after six months.

It appears that the long-term/homestay type of intervention provided by AFS is quite effective for those who are the most ethnocentric initially, but far less so for those who are in Minimization and beyond. This finding suggests that something more is needed, such as a more structured and intense form of cultural mentoring, if further intercultural development is to occur.

The findings from the 1980–86 group are similar (Hansel, 2008; Hansel & Chen, 2008). Hansel and Chen report, “The AFS returnees are somewhat more likely than the controls to be in the M group, while controls are somewhat more likely than returnees to be in the DD/R group” (Hansel & Chen, p. 6). Approximately 65% of the returnees were in the M group, compared with 59% of the control subjects, while 29% of the returnees were in the DD/R group, compared with 36% of the control subjects. Minimization, then, represents the largest intercultural orientation for both groups, though it is slightly smaller (61% versus 65%) for the long-term returnees. Interestingly, more than 33% of those in the long-term group studied abroad again in college; for those who did study abroad, compared with peers who did not, their IDI score in this study was higher, their intercultural anxiety

score was lower, and they outperformed their peers on a number of other measures, such as language fluency.

### CIEE: Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad

CIEE has been offering its semester-long Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad (“the Seminar”) as an option for students in CIEE semester-long programs since 2008 (see chapter 16 of this volume). The CIEE Seminar represents a comprehensive intervention strategy for intercultural learning that includes the On-Line Pre-Departure Orientation Program; deep immersion experiences in the host culture; and regular, structured opportunities for reflection on those experiences.

#### *Intervention*

The CIEE Seminar on Living and Learning Abroad is the first study abroad program to systematically utilize what Hammer (see chapter 5) refers to as IDI Guided Development. The concept here is to tailor student mentoring and guidance to the level of intercultural development, at the beginning of the Seminar, and to use that information to support learning that is developmentally appropriate and relevant to each student. This is a challenging pedagogy for the CIEE Resident Directors (RDs) who teach the Seminar. Accordingly, they receive intensive preparation before they begin to teach the course, including completion of the IDI and individual feedback sessions about their own intercultural development, and ongoing coaching during at least the first two semesters that they teach it. By the time the RDs are serving as Seminar instructors, they are very familiar with the intercultural development continuum and with learning activities that are useful for students at different levels. However, unlike the approach used in the University of Minnesota Duluth Psychology of Group Dynamics course abroad, students are not given their individual IDI results at the beginning of the course.

The core content of the Seminar includes culture-general and culture-specific materials. As the course has evolved, in response to student suggestions and RD observations, there has been an increasing emphasis on applying culture-general concepts specifically to the local culture. This has been accomplished, in part, through the use of *Cultural Detective* materials (Saphiere, 2004; see chapter 16), a reliance that contributes to the students’

understanding of subjective culture, cultural literacy, and their ability to bridge cultural differences.

#### *Research Design*

The research design is a straightforward pre-posttest design that uses the IDI (Hammer, 2007) for assessing intercultural learning. To put the Seminar intervention in a broader perspective, CIEE data are then compared with data from many of the other studies using the IDI that are reported in this chapter.

#### *Findings*

During the pilot semester of the Seminar in fall 2008, students on average gained 4.03 points on the IDI. Analysis of data from 13 Seminars conducted in spring 2011, however, showed students gaining, on average, 9.0 points on the IDI. Vande Berg, Quinn, and Menyhart (see chapter 16 of this volume) attribute the increase in student intercultural competence primarily to the preparation, training, and ongoing coaching of the RDs who are teaching the course.

The CIEE case offers important lessons. First, a course specifically designed to foster intercultural development can have a positive and meaningful impact on student learning. Second, the Seminar demonstrates that for this type of course to be successful, the cultural mentors, be they faculty or professional staff, need a great deal of preparation and support to learn how to facilitate it. This is a specialized course that requires faculty to support the development of intercultural competence by taking into account the learning needs and capacities of students, both individually and in a group. As we have seen here, when instructors are well prepared, the results are striking.

### Westmont in Mexico Program: A Holistic Approach to Intercultural Learning

The Westmont in Mexico (WIM) program (Doctor & Montgomery, 2010) provides an important example of intervening in learning abroad through the entire study abroad cycle, from pre-departure to reentry. Begun in 2004 by Westmont College, WIM is a three-semester program that includes a three-month pre-departure course, one semester in country, and a three-month reentry course. The program is grounded in Bennett’s (1993) theory

of intercultural development and Sanford's (1966) pedagogy of challenging and supporting learners.

### *Intervention*

The WIM intervention is multifaceted. First, during the time that students are in Mexico they take courses in Spanish (language, composition, or literature) that are determined by their existing level of Spanish at the time of arrival, as well as a Mexican history course. Second, they live with Mexican families in homestay placements throughout their stay and thus have the opportunity to experience language and culture in a naturalistic setting. Third, they may select from a variety of elective courses, including some that focus on various aspects of Mexican culture. Fourth, they are required to participate in the WIM seminar, the centerpiece of the intervention. In the manner of the CIEE program, there is an RD, in this case a Westmont faculty member, who teaches the seminar and serves as a cultural mentor. The course is tailored to the individual student's needs and level of intercultural development. Students can use English in the seminar and are encouraged to treat it as a place to discuss their engagement with the host culture, for example, in their homestays. In addition, instructors give students other assignments to gather cultural information and discuss what they are learning in the class. In principle and practice, the WIM seminar links experience with reflection to support intercultural development.

### *Research Design*

The WIM research program utilized a pre-posttest comparison group design. WIM students ( $n = 52$ ) and non-WIM students ( $n = 18$ ) comprised the sample and were drawn from programs that ran between 2004 and 2009. The non-WIM students were participants in other study abroad programs. All of the research subjects completed the IDI (Hammer & Bennett, 1998) before and after their study abroad programs.

### *Findings*

The 52 WIM students gained a statistically significant and very impressive 14.4 points on the IDI. Interestingly and contrary to the Georgetown Consortium Project results, the gain for men (18.41) was higher than for women (13.32), and both groups had nearly identical Time 1 scores. The students' 18 non-WIM counterparts gained only .7 points, with women gaining 2.83

points and men declining 4.86 points. The authors also reported that while all students had started, on average, at low Minimization, 43% of the WIM students progressed to the ethnorelative stages, whereas none of the non-WIM students progressed beyond Minimization. Among all WIM students, 33.8% showed no change, 53.8% moved forward developmentally, and 7.7% moved backward. Only 16.7% of the non-WIM students made progress; for the remainder there was either no change or decreased progress.

The WIM approach shares a number of similarities with the AUCP model, in particular, deep cultural and language immersion, intensive cultural mentoring on-site, and a course in which students can reflect on their intercultural experiences. Both programs are showing quite striking results in intercultural development and are providing important evidence regarding the value of a comprehensive intercultural intervention.

### **University of the Pacific: Comprehensive Intervention for Intercultural Learning**

The University of the Pacific (see chapter 11 of this volume) has provided academic coursework to support intercultural learning in study abroad programs for more than 35 years. The work done there by Bruce La Brack and his colleagues has had a profound influence on the study abroad field. This was the very first intervention to systematically link pre-departure with reentry coursework for the purpose of both framing and reinforcing the study abroad experience (La Brack, 1993). These courses have set the standard for pre-departure and reentry programs.

### *Intervention*

Two features of the University of the Pacific's intervention are particularly important. The first key feature is the innovative pre-departure and reentry courses, both of which incorporate core intercultural concepts and are sequenced developmentally. When these were originally developed, a focus on intercultural learning in study abroad was uncommon. La Brack's identification and development of intercultural content and methods, including his successful efforts to get these courses offered for academic credit, represented important innovations that have over time come to have a wide-reaching impact on the field of study abroad. Coming at a time when study abroad work was typically positioned at the margins of the academy, his work, grounded in anthropology and the growing field of intercultural

communication (see chapter 11 in this volume), gave the courses credibility and helped bring intercultural coursework and study abroad into the mainstream.

The second key feature is the integration of the university's intercultural courses into the institution's broader curriculum. This integration has assured that learning is framed not only during study abroad but also at home, where students can apply understandings gained abroad to the diversity that surrounds them in the context of the disciplines they are pursuing. This is particularly the case in the School of International Studies (SIS), which requires all SIS undergraduates, as a part of their academic program, to study abroad for a semester and to complete the two intercultural courses.

Faculty members are well prepared to teach these Pacific courses through participating in courses at the Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication, auditing for a semester the course they are going to teach, and participating in peer mentoring with a faculty member who is already teaching the course.

### *Research Design*

The Pacific research program uses a pre-posttest comparison group design. The intercultural intervention sample consists of SIS students, all of whom are administered the IDI (Hammer, 2007), first within several weeks of the beginning of their studies, and then again shortly before the end of their senior year. The two comparison groups are (a) University of the Pacific seniors who had studied abroad but were not in the SIS program and (b) seniors who had neither studied abroad nor been SIS students.

### *Findings*

According to earlier research (see chapter 8 of this volume; Sample, 2010), the students' intercultural gains are very impressive. SIS students gained 17.46 points, a statistically significant gain ( $p = .000$ ). Their pretest mean IDI score of 92.13 placed them in early Minimization, while their posttest mean score of 109.60 located them toward the end of Minimization and on the cusp of Acceptance. Their non-SIS counterparts who studied abroad did not fare so well. Starting with a pretest score similar to that of the SIS students, they had a far lower posttest IDI mean score of 95.90, a difference that is also statistically significant ( $p = .004$ ).

Sample (2010) reports data collected for a sample of SIS students ( $n = 53$ ) between 2007 and 2010. The IDI average change score of 19.78 points

for this group is statistically significant ( $p = .000$ ), one of the largest seen in the literature. Comparison of this average IDI gain with that of a random sample of University of the Pacific seniors ( $n = 35$ ) who averaged 91.31 points of gain provides important evidence that intercultural competence is not simply a function of human maturation or of being a college or university student.

It is important to keep in mind that these results, unlike results in the other studies we have discussed, represent gains made not merely across a semester or a year of study abroad, but over a three- to four-year period. What they show, though, is that intercultural gains are much stronger when study abroad is integrated into the curriculum, as is the case with students enrolling in the SIS. Intercultural learning is deeply embedded and facilitated throughout the curriculum, and this is clearly making a meaningful difference in the learning and development of students.

### **Related Studies of Intercultural Professional Development**

A number of studies related to professional development provide additional support for the power of an intercultural intervention. DeJaeghere and Cao (2009) report the results of an in-service teacher development program designed to enhance intercultural competence. The school district used the IDI for both a baseline assessment that would serve as the basis for designing subsequent professional development activities, and pre- and posttest assessments. As the authors explain, "The district initiative sought to relate specific school professional development to the school's intercultural developmental needs" (p. 440). Beginning in 2003, teachers participated during the first year in a wide variety of intercultural training sessions and in the subsequent years in four half-day workshops annually. These activities constitute the intervention; the average IDI gain over a 2.5- to 3.5-year period was 6.90 points, statistically significant at  $p = .001$  ( $n = 86$ ). The authors conclude that

intercultural competence can be developed through district and school-based professional development programs, in which the DMIS and the IDI serve as a process model to guide intercultural development. Given the variance in the change in teachers' intercultural competence, school leaders and trainers should be careful to provide developmentally appropriate training that supports teachers' learning. (p. 437)

Altshuler, Sussman, and Kachur (2003) report on an intercultural training program designed for pediatric residents ( $n = 26$ ) working in an urban U.S. hospital serving a very diverse clientele. Participants were assigned to one of three groups. Intervention group one received didactic cultural content and had a behavioral rehearsal working with culturally different patients, group two participated only in the behavioral rehearsal, and group three received no intercultural intervention. At the conclusion of the training program, those who were in group one (didactic plus rehearsal) had lower ethnocentrism scores (Denial, Defense, Minimization) and higher Acceptance and Adaptation scores than those in the other two groups. Contrary to expectations, those in group two (only the behavioral rehearsal) showed a small decrease in Acceptance and small increases in Denial and Defense. In effect, the rehearsal-only model represents an immersion approach without any accompanying cultural mentoring and cultural content to support the learning. We concur with the authors' conclusion that "providing a cognitive framework for cultural differences would promote a greater understanding of such differences and enhance trainees' ability to learn specific communication skills around cultural issues" (p. 400).

Koskinen and Tossavainen (2004) utilized study abroad in England combined with cultural mentoring to increase the intercultural competence of Finnish nursing students. Based on DMIS-oriented content analysis of oral and written materials produced by the students during the program, the authors found that the students' experience of difference ranged from Defense to Acceptance. One very important finding was that "the students adjusted better and learned more in the placements where they had a named nurse mentor and regular meetings with a nurse teacher than in the placements where they practised without such support" (p. 117). The authors conclude that

the host tutors and mentors are probably the key persons in encouraging the students to cross the inevitable language barrier. . . . The tutors and mentors should adopt strategies that encourage direct client encounters and reflect openly on the problems aroused by the inter-cultural differences. (p. 118)

Marx and Moss (2011) discuss the critical importance of cultural mentoring and how it works to support intercultural development in the detailed ethnographic case study of one student, Ana. "Ana's program had several important components: opportunities for mentoring and guided cultural

reflection; credit-bearing coursework related to cross-cultural issues, and opportunities for intensive immersion into the local culture" (p. 38), including her internship within a school. The data included pre- and posttest completion of the IDI; 400 hours of participant observation; and five "in-depth, open-ended" interviews with a mentor. The data revealed that participation in the program positively influenced Ana's intercultural development, and that having a cultural mentor and guide who was able to provide "a safe space for Ana to engage in the critical cultural reflection necessary for the development of cultural consciousness" (p. 45) proved crucial. The authors conclude that "[the] role of cultural translator and intercultural guide needs to be built into a study abroad experience and should be played by someone who is trained in providing support for intercultural development" (p. 44).

### Intervening in Intercultural Learning Abroad: Lessons Learned From the Literature

We summarize this review by identifying some of the most important lessons learned from the literature:

- *Cultural mentoring and the cultural mentor.* The significance of cultural mentoring and the value of having a cultural mentor cannot be overstated. This conclusion is supported by many of the studies in this review, including the Willamette-Bellarmino ITI study, which shows a very wide difference in IDI gains between a first group of students enrolled in an intercultural course taught online by a faculty member and a second group enrolled in the same course without active faculty intervention. As the CIEE findings show, effective cultural mentoring means engaging learners in ongoing discourse about their experiences, helping them better understand the intercultural nature of those encounters, and providing them with feedback relevant to their level of intercultural development. Cultural mentors need to be trained in order to become skillful in providing support and knowledgeable about culture, the process of intercultural adjustment, and the ways in which learners characteristically react to cultural differences. As Paige and Goode (2009) point out, those who work with sojourners do not always possess those intercultural skills and knowledge. The preparation of cultural mentors, whether they are faculty, in-country professional staff, or others, is an essential part of student success in study abroad.

- *The provision of cultural content.* Study after study demonstrates the importance of providing learners with cultural content such as value orientations, communication styles, nonverbal communication, conflict styles, and ways of learning. This knowledge enables them to become more culturally self-aware and more observant of cultural patterns different from their own. Understanding the process of intercultural development is another key component of cultural content because, as Engle and Engle (see chapter 12) suggest, it enables students to chart their progress and direct their learning in order to gain greater intercultural competence. Cultural content anchors the intercultural experience by serving as a foundation for reflection and learning.
- *Reflection on intercultural experiences.* Providing opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences is an essential element of an intercultural intervention. As Passarelli and Kolb (see chapter 6) argue, it is through ongoing reflection that students make meaning of their intercultural encounters. They begin to challenge their own cultural assumptions, consider other cultural perspectives, and shift their frame of reference to the particular cultural context. Many of the interventions described in these studies incorporate journaling and other forms of writing to stimulate the reflection process. Thinking through situations with peers and instructors enables students to bounce their ideas off others. Cultural mentoring and the provision of cultural content drive and support reflection.
- *Engagement with the culture.* Although these studies demonstrate that immersion in another culture, in and of itself, is not as powerful as immersion plus reflection, engagement with the culture is still at the heart of the study abroad experience. Becoming involved with another culture brings abstract cultural concepts to life. Seasoned intercultural trainers are well aware of how difficult it is to discuss culture in pre-departure orientations; many students simply lack sufficient experience with diversity to make sense of these concepts until they are actually in country. Many of the interventions in the studies we examined build opportunities for engagement with the culture into the program such as internships, service-learning projects with host culture counterparts, and studying with host country students in regular courses in the target language. These can be effective as long as a cultural mentor is working with the students to help them process their experiences in such culturally challenging activities and contexts.

- *Intercultural learning throughout the study abroad cycle.* The research on study abroad suggests that the most effective programs are those that work through the entire study abroad cycle. A number of the interventions examined in these studies, including those in MAXSA and in Willamette-Bellarmine, provide for learning before, during, and after study abroad. Pre-departure orientations and readings begin the process and provide cultural frames for continued learning. In-country intercultural programming brings culture concepts and theories to life through cultural engagement and reflection. Reentry programs support study abroad, reinforce earlier learning, and help students make sense of their experiences, particularly with respect to their educational and occupational futures.
- *Online versus on-site intercultural interventions.* The MAXSA and the Willamette-Bellarmine ITI studies have demonstrated that online interventions can have an important impact on intercultural learning. The AUCP, University of Minnesota Duluth, and CIEE studies, among others, provide evidence that on-site interventions can be even more powerful. It appears that intervening online has less of an impact than intervening through a mentor at the site. That being said, the evidence shows that both forms of intervention can in fact support meaningful intercultural development.
- *Comprehensive intercultural interventions.* Several of these programs—WIM, AUCP, and University of the Pacific—make the case for comprehensive interventions for intercultural learning to be fully realized. When intercultural development is woven into the fabric of the larger educational experience, the study abroad experiences take on greater significance than they otherwise would.

It is our hope that the programs and findings discussed in this chapter can serve to inform those working in study abroad, and that through their ongoing efforts they can more effectively support their students' intercultural learning and development.

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## PART TWO

FOUNDATIONS OF TEACHING  
AND LEARNING