

Tower Bridge on the River Thames in London

EDUCATION

Short-term programs are an ever increasing part of international education. But how do they fit into the overall picture for education abroad?

View over the Djurgard Bridge, Stockholm, Sweden



Panoramic canal view at Rialto, Venice, Italy



Oxford University's famous library the Radcliffe Camera



Aqueduct of Segovia, Spain



ABROAD

BY
JANET
HULSTRAND

ON THE FAST TRACK



E DUCATION ABROAD IS FAST BECOMING a desirable part of the college experience for U.S. students. With initiatives like the “Year of Study Abroad” as declared by Congress for the year 2006, education abroad is bound to become even more popular in coming years. But with every field, there are always new trends and with those trends, come new challenges. One of the most significant developments in education abroad

today is the rise in the number of short-term education abroad programs being offered by U.S. colleges and universities. Although the standard length study abroad programs, like a semester or year abroad, continue to remain popular among students to gain the greatest benefit of studying abroad by living overseas for an extended time period, more and more students are opting to study abroad in shorter spurts. Often, these short-term programs take the form of between semester or summer educational trips abroad. And sometimes, short-term programs incorporate volunteering or work abroad (including internships) as well. As with every trend, people often wonder, “how



long will this trend last?” and is “it just a trend” or is it a development in the field that will change it permanently to some degree? The law of supply and demand dictates that as long as students are interested in studying abroad for a shorter length of time than a semester—which has certainly been the case in recent years—then international educators must continue to supply these opportunities to students. By evaluating what’s happening in education abroad nowadays, one thing seems certain: short-term programs are here to stay for the foreseeable future.

The numbers explain it all: both the total number of U.S. students studying abroad and the percentage of students participating in short-term education abroad programs are up dramatically in the past 10 years. According to the *Open Doors Report 2005: International Students in the United States*, the number of U.S. students studying abroad during the academic year 2003–2004 was at an all-time high of 191,321 (as compared to 76,302 in 1993–1994). Of those students, 56 percent participated in programs of less than a semester, as compared to about 48 percent in 1993–1994. The *Report* concludes that “...short-term programs have played an important role in increasing the popularity of study abroad, offering international study opportunities to students who might otherwise have been unable to afford to participate in traditional-length programs.”

This accurately characterizes at least part of what’s happening, but professionals in the field know that the trend is both complicated and multifaceted. And while educators agree that opportunities for students to study abroad are invaluable, they also agree that the quality of study abroad programs can vary widely, and that the need for quality control is essential: the latter has been cause for concern, and sometimes for lively discussion within the field.

A Longer History Than You Think

It may surprise you to learn that the existence of short-term education abroad programs is not all that new. “Indiana University’s first short-term study abroad program was established in 1879,” says Kathleen Sideli, associate dean for international programs and overseas study at Indiana, and adds, “At large public institutions...

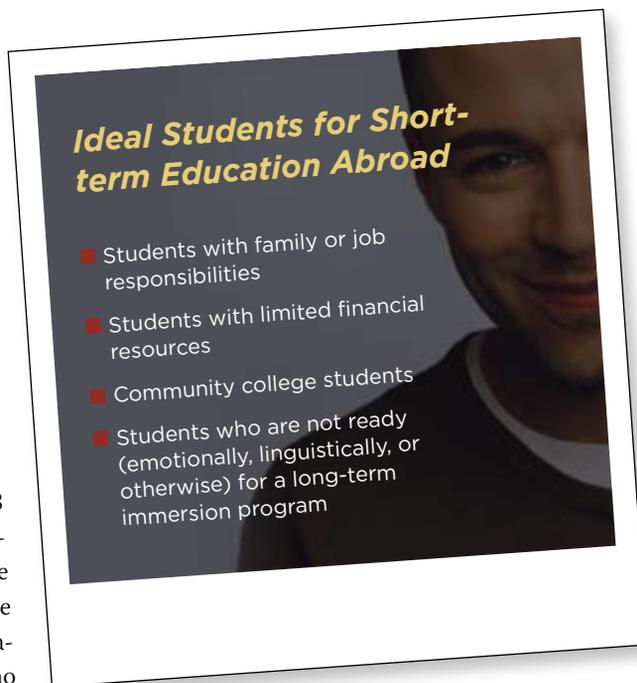
short-term programs have always been a part of what we do...with professional schools, large science programs, and large graduate programs, in order to integrate study abroad into the curriculum, shorter-term programs fit the degree requirements better.”

But while short-term programs may have existed in some schools for more than a hundred years, data collection efforts have lagged behind. As chair of NAFSA’s Section on U.S. Students Abroad (SECUSSA) Data

Collection Committee from 1998–2002, Sideli was involved in efforts to bring data collection in the field up to date. “What we discovered was that people were leaving out entire populations in their counting,” Sideli says. “For example, one large state institution discovered there were 300 students participating in faculty-led programs each year, which only came to light when they required that such programs register with the study abroad office for purposes of getting insurance coverage...So it’s a two-pronged thing.

Yes, short-term programs are becoming more popular, but many of the faculty-led programs that have existed forever and were operating independently out of academic departments were also flying under the radar.”

Of course it’s not only at large, public institutions that short-term programs have been going on for some time. Minnesota’s St. Olaf College and other small, private liberal arts schools began offering short-term domestic and international off-campus programs at the same time they adopted the 4-1-4 calendar (with a January interim course), in the late 1960s. At Worcester Polytechnic Institute in Massachusetts, bold curricular changes in the early 1970s led to a project-enhanced curriculum and the development of experiential, project-based programs both in this country and abroad. Not surprisingly these schools have, over the past 30 years, developed exemplary models for education abroad programs and have become leaders in the field.



THE YEAR OF
STUDY ABROAD

NAFSA will be hosting an online discussion forum during June based on the topics discussed in this article. A number of the international educators interviewed for the article will be participating in the forum. You can join the discussion at www.nafsa.org/talkyosamay.

REAL STUDENT STORY

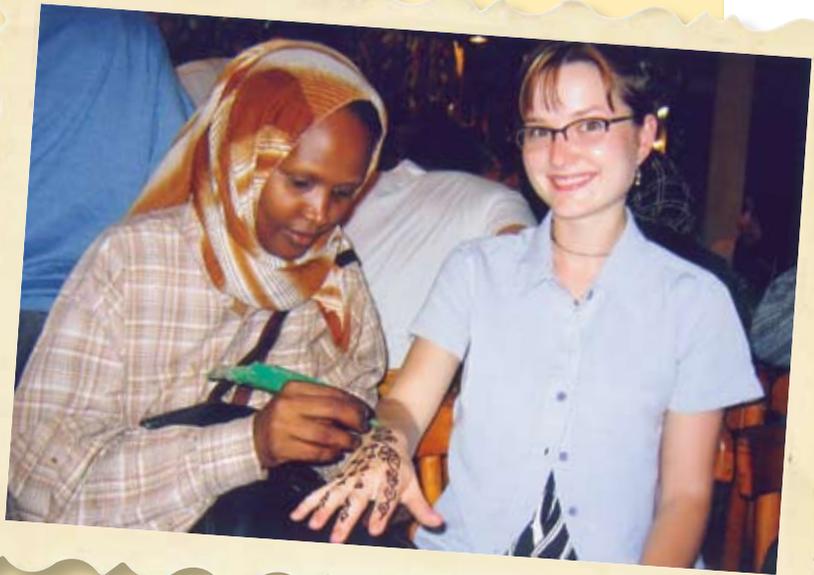
Rachael Dettman

AS A FRESHMAN, Rachael Dettman traveled with one of her University of Minnesota professors to Germany for a two-week midterm program studying agricultural markets. An additional week spent doing independent study of the flower markets in Amsterdam helped her refocus her career plans. "I wanted to explore what that industry was composed of...and I learned that that's not what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

While the experience didn't settle the issue of what she did want to do, it did help propel her toward her eventual academic goals. "I began to get interested in agriculture policy, so I took a couple more classes in that area, and in international development. That's what led to my second study abroad."

Rachael's decision to go to Germany had been based primarily on her enthusiasm for the professor who was leading the group. But two years later, she was ready to seek out the type of international experience she knew she needed. "I wanted to go to Africa, I didn't want a classroom experience, I wanted something more hands-on, more independent." She went to the U of M's Learning Abroad Center, described the kind of experience she was looking for, and was lucky to find a match in the Study Project for Amity Among Nations (SPAN), which was accepting students for independent research projects to be carried out in Ethiopia that year. Rachael ended up researching a grain grown only in that country.

Rachael graduated springing the spring of 2005, and is now pursuing her master's degree in applied economics. "It became clear to me that if you really want to be successful in international development, you need to dedicate yourself to that country. Ethiopia is a wonderful country, with lots of wonderful opportunities, but I realized that I wasn't willing to live that far away from my family...I realized that I



Rachael Dettman getting a henna tattoo in Egypt. She traveled there while studying in Ethiopia.

wanted to work on something that still affected the world, but I want to do it stateside."

Looking back on the experience, Rachael says the most important thing she learned was "about myself," and adds, "I think that's the most invaluable thing that anybody can possibly learn on a study abroad. When you remove yourself from your comfortable, protected bubble, you learn a lot about what's important to you, what really makes you tick, what your passions really are, and how you deal with stressful situations." It also gave her a more acute sense of just how fortunate U.S. citizens are: "Compared with what 80 percent of the world's population has to deal with, not getting your paper done on time...it puts the world in perspective. And it makes you realize how little you know."

How Short is "Short-Term"?

While there may not be a complete consensus on just what constitutes a short-term program, there does seem to be a general sense that the definition has been changing in recent years. In the introduction to NAFSA's *Guide to Short-Term Programs Abroad*, published in 2002, editors Sarah Spencer and Kathy Tuma note that the definition of a short-term program "has changed significantly over the last 50 years," and add that "they are now considered one- to eight-week programs...usually faculty-directed and sponsored by a home institution or a consortium." The *Open Doors Report* seems to dovetail with this definition: the breakdown of statistical data regarding duration of study in their narrative summary is between "programs of less than a semester," and programs of a semester or a year.

Worcester Polytechnic Institute's unique, three-term academic calendar allows them to plan all their off-campus programs for a standard eight weeks, the same length of time as a regular term. Natalie Mello, director of global operations for the institution's Interdisciplinary and Global Studies Division, points out that this is long enough "that the students are really not just tourists. They're really starting to get some insight into the culture, they're starting to feel like they're part of the community." Since Worcester students are deeply involved with local people and institutions through the hands-on, experiential projects they are engaged in, they are also integrated into the life of the local community in a way that students in more traditional courses are not.

Rising Demand for Short-Term Programs

“I think the push for short-term programs is coming from different angles,” says Robin Melavalin, director of the Global Education Opportunities Center for the Colleges of the Fenway, and director of study abroad at Simmons College, one of six member colleges in the Boston consortium. “I think it’s coming from students who couldn’t take a long time away for a variety of reasons... I think it’s coming from faculty, who also can’t necessarily take a long time away from responsibilities both at work and at home—and who want to share their international experiences with students. Also, institutions are realizing that this is possible, and although it’s a lot of work, it’s worth it.” Melavalin points to a couple of other reasons that may account in part for the growing popularity of short-term programs. “Students have different learning styles,” she says. “Sitting in a

classroom, listening to lectures and doing homework assignments doesn’t meet the needs of all of our students. So, pedagogically, short-term travel courses are an exciting option.” Melavalin adds something else that should not be lost sight of: “Short-term programs are fun to organize, they’re fun to teach, and they’re fun to participate in... [they’re] very exciting!”

Some schools have developed unique ways of introducing students to the benefits of studying abroad. At Arcadia University, non credit-bearing spring break programs provide opportunities for freshmen and transfer students to participate in one-week “preview” programs in London, Scotland, Spain, and Italy. “It’s an escorted trip: faculty and staff go with them,” explains David Larsen, vice president of Arcadia University and director of its Center for Education Abroad. “We charge the students \$245 and we pick up the rest of the expense.” The first preview program was offered in London about 15 years ago, and had a dynamic effect. “This was the program that really turned around participation in study abroad at our university,” Larsen says. “Before the program started we had four or five students a year studying abroad. This year we’ll have nearly 200.”

Key Elements to Create and Maintain Successful, High-quality Short-term Education Abroad Programs

- Unassailable academic integrity
- Integration into the curriculum
- Affordable program design
- Good predeparture orientation and preparation
- Faculty buy-in and participation
- Interaction with the host community
- Incorporation of local language
- Opportunities for cultural enrichment, and a faculty leader trained to provide on-site interpretation and support
- A safe and secure environment
- Competent, experienced staff
- Delivering what you promise (meeting student expectations)
- Opportunities for guided reflection
- Balance in program activities
- Maintenance of a strong, healthy group dynamic
- Opportunities for debriefing, reflection, reintegration upon return to the campus

Internationalization Initiatives Spurs Growth in Programs

Today government and private sector funders are also encouraging schools to internationalize, and in turn, administrators have given their institutions of higher learning a mandate to do so. Of course this is a positive trend, though it needs to be backed up with institutional support. In NAFSA’s annual workshop, “Developing and Administering Quality Short-Term Education Abroad Programs,” one of the main agenda items deals with how to secure sufficient budgeting for new programs. Kathy Tuma, associate director of international and off-campus studies at St. Olaf College, and one of the leaders of the workshop says, “You’ve been given the mandate: now how do you get administrators to put their money where their mouth is?”

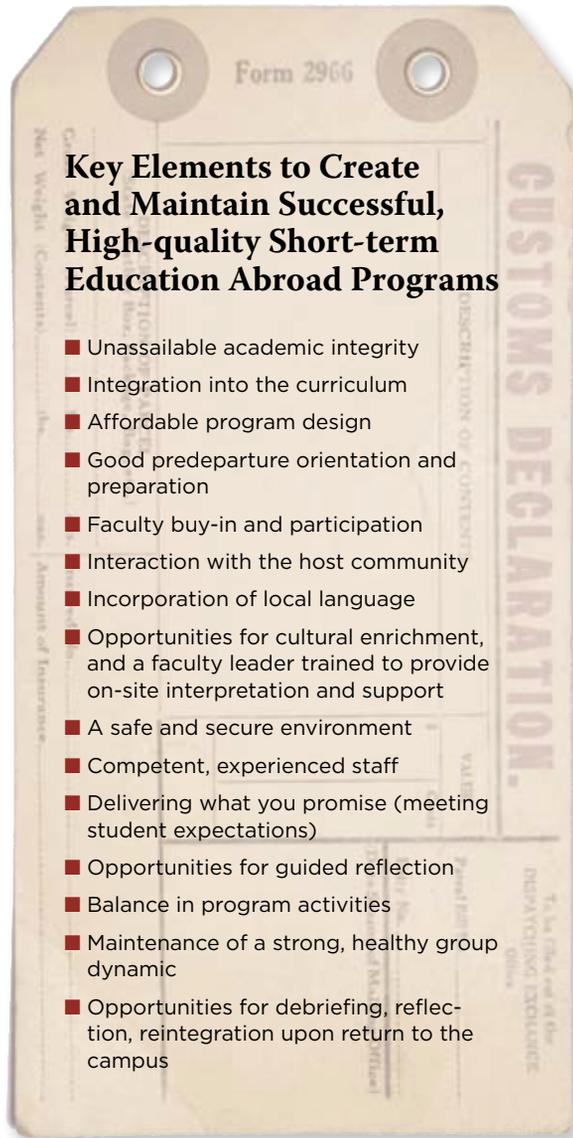
This is an ongoing challenge, even at schools where international programs are well-established. At the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota, the growth over the last few years in student demand for short-term programs, as well as faculty proposals for new course offerings have outpaced the growth of the administrative resources needed to manage them. Sarah Spencer, assistant director of

international education reports that St. Thomas had 15 proposals for new January programs for 2007. “But with our current resources we can only support 10. So our faculty committee had to select which of the 10 we would offer.” Spencer adds, “Education abroad professionals have a great responsibility to have proactive liability management as well as to monitor the academic and intercultural quality of programs. We have to be very mindful of that.”

Not “One Size Fits All”

Not only is the number of short-term abroad programs being offered rising, but also the diversity of programs available is increasing as well. U.S. students now have literally thousands of short-term programs available to them. Obviously this number includes a variety of program types, durations, and qualities, so there is something for every student. It’s personalization of education abroad in shorter timeframes than a traditional semester or academic year abroad.

“Particularly in the last five years, there’s been an increase in short-term models,” Spencer says. “Traditionally we had a January term. Now we have summer programs, we have eight-day on-site



“Most, if not all of us in the field agree that longer-term programs provide the most in-depth learning experiences for students,” says Melavalin. “But having said that, not all students can go, and not all students were going...a lot of students were left out because they could not go, for a variety of reasons.”

graduate programs, and we have what we call spring embedded programs within our semester programs, that incorporate an on-campus component with a shorter off-campus part.” Jim Citron, dean of overseas studies at Lexia International, a program provider, has noticed an increasing interest in developing embedded programs as well. “More and more people are offering short courses, or a component of a course that’s offered overseas,” he says. Coming from a background in experiential education, Citron finds this model “ideal,” noting that “good experiential learning has a preparation phase, then the experience, and then the debriefing.” As program director of a service-learning program he created and directed for Endicott College, Citron designed a fall semester course that includes a month-long service learning project in Mexico during January. “But it’s really a year-long commitment, involving many hours of predeparture preparation and post-return debriefing, from the time the students apply until they turn in their papers the following March.”

As for diversity of content, Spencer says, “I think the faculty ideas are actually endless.” At St. Thomas, an interdisciplinary embedded program offered in spring 2005 had a team of students from three different departments working together on a service learning project in Mali, West Africa. “The mechanical engineering students were doing the work, the communications students were taping everything, and the French students were translating,” Spencer explains. In one of St. Thomas’s January programs, a professor takes students to Spain, where they study Moorish architecture in a math course titled “Arabesques and Mathematical Symmetry.” At Simmons College, a communications course offered last year will culminate in a book written by the students (*Women to Women: Young Americans in South Africa*), to be published this spring. And Sideli, when asked for a few representative samples of programs offered at Indiana University, says, “The list is so long! We have a service learning program in Athens; a new program on Black Paris, focused on the rich African American experiences in Paris in the early twentieth century; last year we had a group of students who went to Guyana to study race relations...” Equally fascinating course titles and descriptions can be found on many campuses throughout the country. Spencer sums up the variety of short-term programs available in a word: “Amazing.”

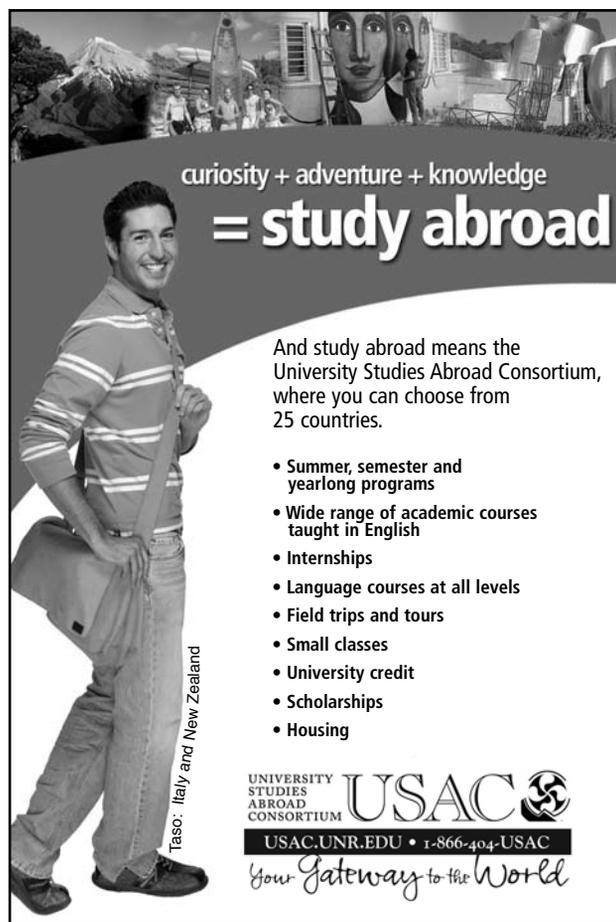
Benefits Beyond Expectation

There has been a good deal of debate within the field over the value of short-term programs when compared with long-term programs. “Most, if not all of us in the field agree that longer-term programs provide the most in-depth learning experiences for students,” says

Melavalin. “But having said that, not all students can go, and not all students were going...a lot of students were left out because they could not go, for a variety of reasons.”

Sideli agrees. “I think it’s a different population [going on short-term programs]. The academic year numbers aren’t dropping, they’re dropping as a percentage of the whole, but...we’re getting more and different students studying abroad, who wouldn’t have studied abroad before.”

According to Jessica Teague, program manager and assistant to the executive director of the Lincoln Commission, “We would all probably say that we’d rather have students going on long-term rather than short-term programs...you can’t gain ground on language learning unless you really put in the time, for example... But in terms of increasing numbers, and building awareness—and being very realistic—we know that short-term programs are the best way to get the ball rolling.”



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Most study abroad professionals have also encountered the phenomenon of the student who is interested in study abroad, but not ready—emotionally, linguistically, financially, or for other reasons—to take the plunge and participate in long-term programs. “A lot of times students who aren’t ready for a complete immersion program...can start with a short one, get their feet wet, discover what an amazing experience it can be, and then want to do something longer. I’ve seen that happen in case after case,” Citron says. Melavalin concurs, saying, “I see it as an appetizer.” Especially for students coming from families where they may be the first generation to go to college, and may have traveled very little, if at all, short-term programs can offer a first, successful step out into the world, with the benefit of extra support provided by faculty and students from their home campuses.

In other situations, students may need encouragement to consider taking on the challenge of longer-term programs. Tuma is concerned about some of the reasons students at St. Olaf may be attracted to short-term programs. “Many students are now double majoring or triple majoring, or concentrating on a lot of other things that look good on a resume, and they have sort of worked their way out of having the time to do a semester or a year-long program....Many of our students have come to us having already studied abroad or traveled abroad. They’ve gone on family vacations, they’ve gone with their French class to Paris for a week...so their impression of international travel is these small, cocooned experiences. I think for many of them the idea of striking out for a whole semester, being independent, having to learn in a whole new educational system is very intimidating.” At St. Olaf, where 99.5 percent of the students fit the profile of the traditional undergraduate student, there is a long tradition of off-campus study as a central element in the undergraduate experience, and 80 to 85 percent of the graduating class has had at least one off-campus experience. The challenge in a setting like this, according to Tuma, is not “getting [our students] to think about study abroad, it’s just almost expected that you’ll do something off-campus. We only have the problem of how long they can do it.”

The Right Fit

Jim Citron notes the importance of helping students find the right fit. “I always talk about choosing the right program for them, whether it’s going to be a short program or a long program...I tell them the green zone is our comfort zone, where we spend most of our life; the yellow zone is the discomfort zone, where you feel a little bit off-balance; then there’s the red zone, which is the panic zone. I try to challenge students to figure out where their yellow zone is, and tell them that’s where they should study. You don’t want to force people so far outside of their comfort zone that they’re going to have a failed experience...but you want an experience that’s still enough of a challenge to provide the best opportunity for learning.”

In addition to the obvious benefit of opening the doors of opportunity wider for previously underrepresented student populations, short-term programs offer other advantages too. Melavalin points to “the opportunity for students to learn together with and from their peers and change together,” and Sideli points out, “Short-term programs are the ones that get the faculty going with the students... and that type of intellectual engagement is very exciting.”

Debunking the Myth on Short-Term Programs

Perhaps one of the most widely-held assumptions regarding short-term education abroad programs is that they offer students in programs with rigid degree requirements the only opportunity they have to participate in study abroad. According to Lynn Anderson, director of curriculum integration at the University of Minnesota’s Learning Abroad Center, this is a myth. “People sometimes assume that the only way to get students abroad in some of the professional programs, or the more tightly sequenced undergraduate programs, is to kind of tuck in a short-term program. That’s just not the case. Short-term programs definitely have a place in providing a range of opportunities to all students, regardless of major, and there are some excellent short-term programs out there: but the assumption that it’s the *only* option for students in technical or professional programs is not accurate.” She adds “I say [this] with such confidence because this is a comprehensive university. I’m not speaking from the perspective of a liberal arts college, where we’ve only got a piece of the pie. It’s all here, and we’ve dealt with every challenge.” Anderson speaks with some authority: both institutional and grant-funded initiatives at the University of Minnesota over the past six years have resulted in a highly successful, four-campus, university-wide effort to integrate study abroad into the curricula of all majors. These efforts focused on dealing with some of the disciplines traditionally regarded as the ones most difficult to integrate study abroad experiences into—business, technology, and nursing. The effort has produced a successful, replicable model that is now being used by other schools across the country in what Sideli has called “a landmark project.”

While no one disputes the value of getting students abroad for as long as is feasible, sometimes some of the most important things that can be learned on education abroad programs can happen in a surprisingly short period of time. “A lot of people are pointing out that what really makes the impact is how deeply a student can reflect on what’s happening to them,” Sideli says. “Some students can spend a semester abroad and not reflect at all, but just kind of go through the motions.... So a lot of people in the field now are trying to figure out, how can we help students create these moments of reflection?” The experience of Sideli’s own daughter, a veteran of three education abroad programs—a semester program in Spain, a six-week study of AIDS in several European cities, and a 10-day service learning program in Ecuador—provides a case in point. Although all three programs were beneficial, “For her it was the 10-day experience in Ecuador that was life-transforming.”

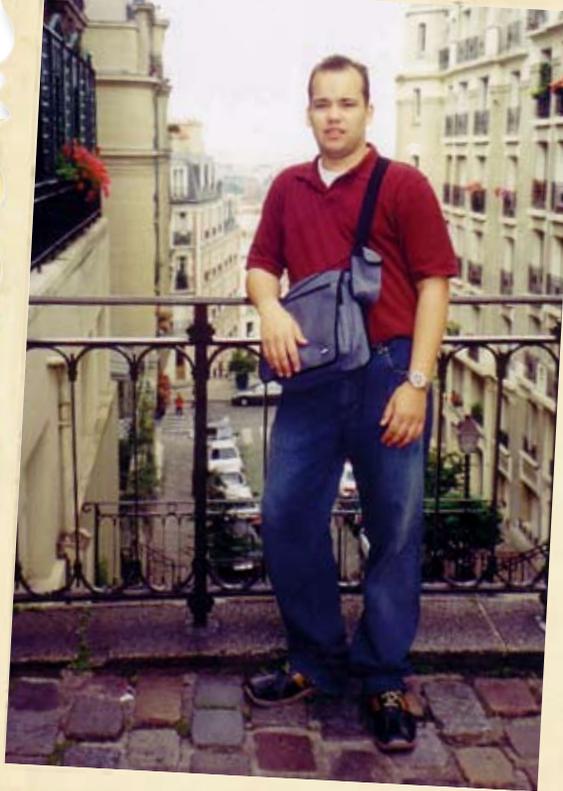
REAL STUDENT STORY

Michael Diaz

WHEN MICHAEL DIAZ SHOWED UP in Hunter College's Education Abroad Office in 2002, he was almost ready to quit. "I was seriously considering leaving school altogether and trying to find some type of job, any job." The experience of living in Russia as a foreign exchange student during high school had given Michael a taste for travel: he wanted to take a year off between high school and college to backpack through Europe, but had been dissuaded from his plan by his parents, guidance counselors, and friends. However, his first three semesters of college were not satisfying, "and my grades suffered as a result." Feeling unfulfilled, he decided to look for an education abroad opportunity "hoping I could use [it] as motivation for me to remain in college."

It worked. "My whole outlook towards college and life changed," Michael says. "I had to vastly improve my grades to meet the G.P.A. requirement for study abroad. But instead of letting the added stress defeat me, for the first time in my life I used it as fuel to work harder and better, and I did it without the help of my parents or teachers."

Michael chose to participate in a one-month American literature course, "Paris through the Eyes of Travelers." It was a positive experience, though not a perfect one. "Although I was happy just to be there, I still couldn't prevent myself from believing that all of my romantic notions of Paris and European life would come true in just one month," Michael says. Toward the end of the month, the stress of frantic traveling during his free time, his school workload, and "not being able to meet the kind of people I had set out to meet because of my limited language skills," mounted. "Fortunately, I was able to turn to my writing, something I had always done intermittently but never as



Michael Diaz in Paris while studying abroad.

seriously and as often as I did during my month in Paris."

After the course was over, Michael returned to Hunter, ready to buckle down. He graduated in 2004, with a bachelor's degree in English and political science, and is now back in France, employed as an English teaching assistant in Rennes. What was the most important thing he learned from his education abroad experience? "I had survived my first sojourn into the world relatively on my own. I also learned how to deal with the realities of being a foreigner, and the stresses that creates. Most importantly, I learned that though my character may bend, I do not break. This has been a lesson I have kept with me ever since, and will keep with me for as long as I live."

Beating Challenges

Like a traditional educational trip abroad, students need adequate preparation for shorter programs as well. Education abroad professionals need to make sure that they understand the differences in preparation for short-term versus longer programs and in many cases, they will need to prepare students using a shorter timeline.

"It raises a different set of questions about liability," Melavalin says. "One challenge for us is to prepare our faculty and our students as much as possible for their site...but although we prepare them, and they prepare themselves, the reality is that things do happen." However, she adds, "Most of the potentially challenging situations with short-term programs can be either prevented or lessened with good predeparture preparation."

As chair of the SECUSSA Health and Safety Committee from

1999 to 2003, Larsen worked with a group of professionals to develop standards of good practice for health, safety and security issues for U.S. students seeking an educational experience abroad. "I would encourage anyone who's organizing a short-term study abroad program to look at the guidelines we developed," Larsen says. (Guidelines are available online at www.nafsa.org/safetyguidelines) "What we tried to do was to put forward a set of statements that get people thinking about what really the most critical things are: the need for a communications plan, the need for an emergency response plan, the need to know what you're going to do before the crisis arises. Also the need to help students understand that they're responsible for their own behavior, and then to hold students responsible for what they do. These are tough things for people who aren't used to it." Larsen adds that faculty members can look to

their education abroad offices, but also to various aspects of student affairs on their campuses for help in thinking through and planning for how to handle these issues. "How the judicial system works, how the health care system works. When it's appropriate to intervene when you think a student is in trouble of some sort. These are responsibilities that people take on when they take a group of students overseas that are very, very different from teaching in a classroom." Larsen also points out that it's also important for program administrators to work with the host institutions abroad. "It's a very important set of concerns. What we're engaged in now is trying to ensure that overseas program hosts understand... why we're asking the questions we are and why we're looking after students the way we do." He adds, "The sort of expectations American students have in terms of being looked after on campus are not mirror images of the kinds of expectations students in

other countries have. We have to talk to our overseas colleagues about this."

Other issues are unique to short-term programs, too. "There is a group management issue from the faculty member's perspective and individual and peer responsibility from the students' perspective," Melavalin says. "Before departure I do an orientation about diversity so that the group can begin, before they get to their destination, to think about the other members of their group as diverse people...When groups of students travel together, there are going to be some people whose parents are paying for [the experience]. Other students had to take a second job to pay for it themselves, and are very tight on funds. These people will be sharing meals together. How do you split the bill? It's good to have some of those conversations beforehand so that there are some basic understandings in place that help reduce the potential for conflict."

Another concern among many educators

is the limitations of the "island program," in which students travel in an isolated group with their peers, and faculty from their home institution, and have very little contact with the local population. There are many ways to tackle the challenge of integrating students into local life: one of the best is through service learning, internship, and other volunteer programs. Teague notes that service-learning programs are in the forefront of new developments in the field. "We're hearing a lot about service-learning programs and it is so exciting." Not only do these programs get U.S. students involved with people in the communities they are studying, Teague says, but "A short-term experience may be just the thing to solidify a person's hunger for and respect for difference. It shakes you out of your little orbit...that's what the overseas experience, and the experiential learning, or service learning component offers: the patience, the pure grit of living in discomfort and disorientation, and sometimes poverty." Teague notes that the poverty part of the equation is not always necessary to make for an intense learning experience, however. It may be "challenging enough to find a taxi driver on the outside of an airport, with foreign currency in your hand, and you have no clue of the value of the coinage."

Back to Campus

Undoubtedly, short-term education abroad programs can open up a student's eyes to the world in a new way. For many, this can be not only an enriching experience, but also a life-changing one in that they see themselves differently as a member of a global community. But can a short-term experience abroad have such an influence on a student that they internalize their experience and change the way they interact with students on their home campuses once they return? Many international educators say "yes."

"The impact is wonderful," Larsen says. "Students who go abroad on short-term programs come back and talk about going again. We are now developing courses that embed periods of overseas study in the regular course curriculum so that more and more students


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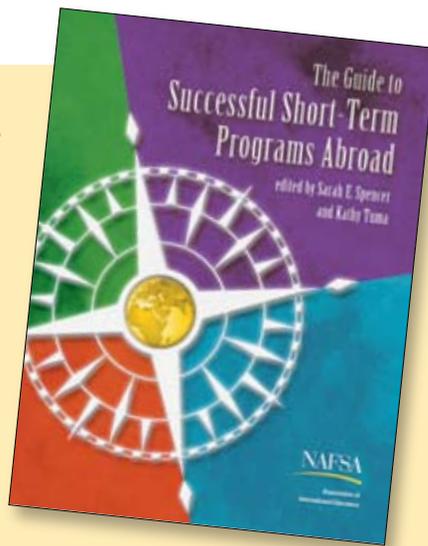
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NAFSA's Guide to Short-Term Programs Abroad

is practical guide for practitioners who direct and administer short-term programs, the book was edited by two experts with considerable experience in the field, Sarah Spencer, from the University of St. Thomas, and Kathy Tuma, from St. Olaf College. Readers can use the tools provided in the book to build successful short-term programs tailored to their own institutions. To order, call toll free 1.866.538.1927 or 240.646.7036.



can participate." At Worcester Polytechnic, students returning from study abroad experiences participate in a program called Global Ambassadors through which their energy is "unleashed" as they talk to fellow students, to trustees, to visiting dignitaries, and to potential donors about their experiences abroad. "It's done wonders in terms of recruiting other students," Mello says, adding, "I think they also bring back a very different perspective into the classroom when they've been out in the world," citing examples of the knowledge they gain in everything from technical engineering issues to the practicalities of currency exchange, to the greater awareness and maturity brought about by the experience of having been through culture shock. Sideli agrees. "I think students come back to campus with a wider perception, I think they're better students." Melavalin adds, "They come back generally clearer about what they want to study, and they understand what they're being taught much more deeply."

Envisaging the Future

Short-term programs are becoming integrated into education abroad at large—now and for the years ahead. "I don't think right now you could do education abroad without having a short-term model," Spencer says, adding, "I think there's room for all different models at the table, and I think it's imperative that we support all those different models: it's also imperative that we make whatever model it is the best quality, both academic and intercultural, for the faculty and students involved." Larsen agrees, "An

increasing interest in short-term programs abroad is going to be a component of many colleges and universities going forward," he says. "It's part of education in the twenty-first century. I think it's extremely important that we do it right, and that we do it a lot."

And while the positive energy, the new insights, and the enthusiastic sharing of knowledge gained by both faculty and students on study abroad programs is a won-

derful addition to any campus; and while the country as a whole benefits in sending students abroad, in the end the most important result is seen in one student at a time. "You know, Congress talks in terms of national security and economic security, and yet it's all about the individual student," Anderson says. "We talk about these important increases in numbers, but the power of it is in seeing each individual student as they go abroad, and as their world view is expanded, and they better understand the U.S. place in the world, and get a different perspective on their discipline, and on life...That's what it's all about. And all this numbers stuff just means we're getting lots of individual students to have these experiences." **IE**

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