

Short-term faculty-led courses abroad: *from observation to engagement*

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overview

- Context
 - Institutional imperatives
 - What studies have shown
- Inventory of structural elements
- From observation to engagement

CONTEXT

Context

- Outcomes assessment is no fad.
- Over the past decade, the number of U.S. students studying abroad has increased by over 150 percent.
- Most study abroad is now short-term.

Open Doors 2008 (2006/07)

Institutional type	Short -term	Mid-length	Long-term	Total S.A
Doctorate	55.7%	39.8%	4.4%	141,810
Master's	60.8%	34.8%	4.4%	54,114
Baccalaureate	42.2%	52.9%	4.9%	36,966
Specialized	70.8%	28.5%	0.6%	6,611
All	55.4%	40.2%	3.7%	241,791

Open doors 2008 (<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/?p=131560>)

Institutional imperatives

- Short-term faculty-led courses offer new possibilities.
- Serve more students
- Engage more faculty members
- But...

Institutional Imperatives

“Many institutions perceive these types of credit and noncredit short-term programs as the quickest and most efficient way to “internationalize.” Unfortunately, these programs are often *ad hoc* ventures that are designed and led by faculty members, campus internship and volunteer offices, or others who may have little or no experience with accepted standards for designing and managing education abroad programs.” (Whalen 2009)

Faculty involvement: the upside

- Faculty influence students and shape future generations of leaders through teaching and mentoring;
- Faculty bring international perspectives into their research and often establish long-lasting connections between their U.S. home institution and their partners abroad; and
- Faculty share their knowledge and experience with the wider campus community and the community at large.

(O'Hara. 2009),

Faculty-led: the Challenge

- “...But how much meaningful academic and cultural learning can take place in a four-week period as students surf and snorkel their way along Australia’s Gold Coast, listening to their American professor lecture on a bus, and stopping to pet kangaroos at the next wildlife refuge?” (Chieffo and Griffiths. 2006)

What studies show about length of stay

- Dwyer 2004. The longer the better
- Anderson, et. Al. 2006. (pre- post., small, mixed)
- SAGE. 2008.

There is a positive and statistically significant relationship between duration and three of the six global engagement factors: philanthropic donations, political civic engagement (domestic), political civic engagement (international).

However, in the context of the large sample size in this study, the practical importance of these relationships is minimal, as 1% or less of the variance is explained by duration.

Practically speaking, duration with respect to global engagement does not matter.

INVENTORY OF STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

Keep the faith

“Among practitioners of study abroad programs, there is an unwritten understanding that crossing cultures is one of the most meaningful educational experiences available to college students. Likewise, the closer this process comes to cultural [immersion], where the student lives as a participant in the host culture, the more meaningful it is.”

(Stimpf 1996: 11)

The institutional challenge

How to design and administer programs in our institutional setting consistent with this lofty goal. *Some Keywords:*

- Cultural integration
- Partnerships
- Participation
- Immersion
- Engagement

Inventory of structural elements

- Faculty role
 - Planning and design, Logistics
 - Intensive on-site presence
 - Preparing faculty members
- Sites
 - Single site, Multi-site
- Content presenters
 - Home Faculty
 - Guests from Host site
- Language classes
 - Immersion
- Residence plan
 - Home-stays, residence halls, hotels
- Co-curricular components
 - Service learning
 - Engagement-oriented assignments
- Research components
 - Design , execution by home group
 - Partnership design and execution
- Reflection components
 - Journaling
 - Essays
 - Digital story-telling
- Pre-departure program
- Return opportunities
 - Presentations, performances

FROM OBSERVATION TO ENGAGEMENT

From observation to engagement

Observation	Engagement
Hotels	Home stays
Multi-site; complex ground –air schedule	Single site with excursions
English only	Language study, immersion
Content delivered exclusively by home professor	Partnered presentations and interactions
Reflection activities optional	Reflection component(s) required
Research determined solely by home agenda	Research agenda determined in partnership
Observation-oriented assignments	Engagement-oriented assignments
Unprepared faculty	Prepared faculty

Home-stays

- Some is better than none
- Creates an opportunity to hear a second perspective on the local elements of the course. Monuments, etc. look different to the locals.
- Language practice
- Negotiating mealtimes, curfew, etc., is real engagement.

Sites

- Logic says that, other factors being the same, the more sites you visit, the fewer the opportunities for engagement with local people and institutions. And the more time is spent on planning; the more logistical support the faculty member will require once on site.
- With many sites on the itinerary special planning is required to create the conditions for experiential cultural learning

Engagement tasks

- Drop offs
- Active inquiry (go, find out, interact, come back and report)
- Partnered debates, presentations, focused discussions, etc.
- Partnered research design

Preparing Faculty

- Respect for expertise of faculty member
- Capitalize on what they know
- Consciousness
 - of intensive role of course leader (24/7)
 - of multiple constituencies (parents, administration, business office, participants, colleagues)
- Assist in task (syllabus) design for engagement
- Old hands, new blood

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