

ASSESSING TRANSFORMATION OF THE SELF IN HIGH IMPACT LEARNING: METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Originating in the contexts of Freire's (1970) cultural literacy circles and the stories of women returning to community colleges (Mezirow, 1978), the generative framework of transformative learning theory (Taylor & Cranton, 2012) has recently found wide application in U.S. tertiary education in general and in high impact learning experiences in particular (e.g., study abroad, international service learning and practica, etc.). Scholars and practitioners interested in experiences that have a profound impact on an adult's sense of self and his or her relationships to the broader world, however, struggle to operationalize the theory in such a way that transformative outcomes associated with high impact learning experiences can be effectively measured and documented. At the same time, calls for accountability in higher education and the need to document student learning outcomes associated with high impact learning experiences have become increasingly prevalent, setting the stage for a methodological exploration of Transformative Learning (TL) theory as an approach to program evaluation in the international education community.

In operationalizing TL theory, we used Hoggan's (2016) taxonomy to connect the self-constructive dimensions of the theory with the 17 scales of the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory or BEVI (Shealy, 2016). After theoretically mapping BEVI scales to five of Hoggan's TL components, we generated a TL score for each dimension of transformation - Self, Epistemology/Capacity, Ontology, and Worldview - by adding the related BEVI scale scores. To test our operationalization of TL theory with BEVI scales, we completed a correlational analysis for each of Hoggan's constructs, measuring the statistical relatedness of each set of BEVI scales to each other with a data set of over 2000 participants. Subsequently, we piloted this analysis method with sample data to determine the method's usefulness in identifying when and for whom transformative learning occurred. Finally, we designed a visual report mechanism for this quantitative BEVI data that highlights meaningful change in constructions of the self from pretests (T1) to posttests (T2) in evaluation studies of high impact international programs.

To leverage a more contextually rich understanding, we also cross-walked TL theory with elements of various VALUE rubrics of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (Rhodes & Finley, 2013), which are gaining traction in many U.S. institutions as measures of student learning. We hypothesized that the operationalization of TL theory through the VALUE rubrics could provide a means of identifying and making sense of transformative outcomes in qualitative data from high impact learning experiences. We then created a coding manual based on our alignment of the rubric elements with Hoggan's TL taxonomy, and applied these a priori codes to a sample set of qualitative data that included interviews and reflective writing.

In this presentation, after highlighting results of the quantitative and qualitative methodologies we piloted, we will discuss implications of these two operationalizations of TL theory for current scholarly literature on high impact programs in international education, focusing on both methodological and theoretical issues that arose in the course of this project. Directions for future research include validating the quantitative operationalization by gathering targeted qualitative data from participants who are identified by the BEVI as having experienced transformative learning, experimenting with qualitative methods of data collection that would best elicit evidence of transformation, and applying these methods to better understand learning outcomes in a variety of program types and cultural contexts.

Exploring Identities of International Education Practitioners

Overview: During summer 2016, 163 international education practitioners responded to a survey exploring their professional identities. The researchers developed a framework of four archetypes to represent a non-exhaustive comparison of international education practitioner identities. The four archetypes of international educator identities include: The Best Practice Implementer; The Revolutionary; The Hybrid Practitioner; and The System Nudger. In the survey, each respondent was asked to read the archetype descriptions and rank order the archetypes according to which most closely matched the respondent. Open-ended questions captured data on why the respondents chose the archetype they did; what dilemmas, challenges, and ethical concerns they face in relation to their archetype; and how they navigate those challenges. Demographic information including years in the field, degree level, job title, sector of international education, professional affiliations, etc. was also gathered. The researchers utilized Qualtrics for data collection, designing a survey that was published to various professional listservs (SECUSS-L, NAFSA Knowledge Communities, etc.) to reach a broad spectrum of professionals across sectors of international education. Data collection is completed and data analysis is underway.

Research Questions:

- What is the “ideal” practitioner in International Education?
 - Which of four proposed archetypes do international educators most identify with? Why?
 - What dilemmas, challenges, and ethical issues do international education practitioners face as related to the archetype they identify with?
 - Do the archetypes represent different career stages for international educators?
 - Are there differences in practitioners’ identity by sector, management/non-management, years in the field, or other demographics?
- Given the findings regarding archetypes, dilemmas, challenges, and ethics, what are the implications for graduate education in the international education field? and What are the implications for the professional development of current international education practitioners?

Data Analysis: This research utilizes mixed-methods data analysis methodologies. Mixed methods allows the researchers to collect qualitative and quantitative data and provided the researchers with a foundation to explore and explain results with more depth. Mixed methods research also enables researchers to make connections between data to produce a more complete analysis of the research phenomenon.

Quantitative data analysis is used to explore correlations between practitioner archetypes and several key variables such as current position/title, length of time in the field, management status, organization type, sector, population served, location, and degree attained. Quantitative data is analyzed using R programming, an open-source statistical environment. Survey responses were extracted from Qualtrics into a .csv file and data were cleaned to ensure accuracy and usability. Open-text responses for titles were reviewed and re-categorized to allow for correlation analysis by grouping similar responses. For example, Director of Education Abroad, Director of Study Abroad and Director of Off-Campus Programs were collapsed into one category. Data were then imported as a .csv file into R. An analysis using a Pearson correlation coefficient was conducted to evaluate the relationship between archetypes and the above listed variables. Conducting this correlation allows researchers to explore significant relationships between variables. R is then utilized to test the significance of the correlations.

The process of qualitative analysis is a simultaneously systematic and intuitive process for analyzing large amounts of text to elicit meaning. Content analysis is used to identify recurring themes in the text and sort those themes into emergent categories that provide new understanding of the phenomenon being studied. In particular, content analysis, using a process including open coding, axial coding, and closed coding allows exploration of how study respondents make sense of their professional worlds. Content analysis in this study focuses on describing the reasons practitioners identify with particular archetypes, the dilemmas and ethical issues they face in living up to the archetype, and the implications for graduate education and the professional development of practitioners.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis is in the final analysis stage. Preliminary findings from both will be presented at the Research Symposium. Findings from the qualitative and quantitative analysis will be cross-analyzed for further connections between the data to present a more complete analysis of international education practitioner identities. This data will be able to be included in the publication that will follow the Research Symposium.

Significance of the study: There are no other studies in this field that employ a similar framework to explore practitioner identities in international education. This study contributes a framework of practitioner identities, which can be utilized in myriad ways for future research. This offers insight for professionals in the field and managers of international education practitioners. Beyond the individual impact level, there are also implications for graduate education programs with a focus on international education. We expect this study to yield: better understanding of the international education profession; better understanding of the identities and priorities of international educators; better understanding of the challenges facing international educators; and recommendations for graduate education and professional development in international education. Overall, this study contributes to a better understanding of practitioner identities in international education.

Everything changed: Experiences of international students affected by home country crises

As the population of international students studying in the United States increases, so too does the number of students affected by crises in their home countries. These students face a number of unique adjustment issues and may require additional support from administrators and others at their institutions, but are often overlooked simply because they were not present at the site of the disaster. Research suggests that when international students are exposed to traumatic events such as natural disasters, wars, or sexual assaults, they may experience acute stress, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and other reactions.¹ Negative effects of crises could lead to a lack of retention and a drop in international student enrollment at US institutions.

This qualitative, phenomenological study explores the reactions and needs of five international students studying at two public universities in the western United States while large-scale crises occurred in their home countries. Research aims were to explore how international students are affected by home country crises, how they cope, and how they perceive support at their institutions. A series of document collection procedures and three semistructured interviews were conducted with each participant via video chat software over a three month period. A variety of factors may influence how an individual reacts to a crisis situation, so this study used a maximum-variation sampling strategy in order to explore crises in Brazil, Iraq, Libya, the Philippines, and Ukraine.

Findings indicate international students experience a significant amount of stress and that various factors influence their ability to cope and their perceptions of social support during home country crises. The findings show how comments about a crisis caused unintended harm for some students, what information seeking strategies students used during crises, and how different factors influenced the perception of support. This study also provides a fresh look at the coping process as a continuous undertaking for these students. Five implications for professionals developed from the data: assist students with contacting home, be cognizant of language, use trustworthy information sources, provide counseling alternatives, and create early support systems. If higher education administrators intend to support and retain these international students, they must be prepared to closely examine their own practices and develop new strategies. Administrators may need to restructure support systems currently in place at their institutions in order to provide better service to this population. Moreover, researchers must continue to examine the realities of international students affected by home country crises so that administrators may adapt to the support needs of their students effectively and efficiently.

By adding student voices to the literature, this research begins to fill a gap and allows professionals to work toward a better understanding of and increased support for these students. The international students in this study showed impressive bravery and resilience as they faced challenges that many people may never experience. Their stories indicate that administrators in higher education have much to learn about the experiences and needs of international students. With this realization, though, comes the recognition that as much as these students might tell administrators about their experiences, they may never truly know what it is like to be a Ukrainian, Libyan, Brazilian, Iraqi, or Filipino far from home when a crisis occurs.

¹ Schwitzer, A. M. (2003). A framework for college counseling responses to large scale traumatic incidents. *Journal of College Student Psychotherapy*, 18(2), 49-66. doi: 10.1300/J035v18n02_05

Directors of International Offices and their perspectives on Intercultural Competence

This qualitative case study focuses on Directors of International Offices and their perspectives about intercultural competence (IC). IC receives much attention in the fields of Higher Education and International Education, but there seems to be a gap in the literature as it relates to Directors' perspectives. This study brings Directors' voices into the discussion in response to the following research questions: (1) How do Directors of International Offices define IC? (2) What personal and professional factors have influenced their IC (as self-reported)? (3) What types of formal and informal training have they received on IC? (4) How does their definition of IC influence their interactions with others and how they lead?

Five Directors participated in one-on-one interviews designed to gather data about their backgrounds, definition and development of IC, and application of IC in their current work. Participants' responses were coded and categorized using open coding and were used to generate the theory about how Directors define, develop, and apply IC. The findings of this study indicate that IC is an important and critical part of Directors' work and connect with two major themes. The first theme is related to changes in student demographics and the second is related to the roles that Directors play in campus globalization or internationalization efforts. Several participants mentioned that their institution is now experiencing a more diverse student body or an increase in the numbers of international students. As a result, faculty and staff are more likely to consult with the International Office to obtain advice on how to navigate cultural differences or Directors are asked to provide trainings about specific student populations or IC topics. Directors also manage or oversee many of their institution's globalization or internationalization programs and initiatives and a number of participants were asked to help create or provide support as a program or initiative was being developed. Participants mentioned their involvement with at least one major program (or more) and indicated that IC or global skills was a part of campus culture. In fact, most institutions had a global skills component as a graduation requirement, which speaks to the institutional commitment regarding IC. As part of their connections to these campus programs and initiatives, Directors are called upon to help students prepare for or navigate their overseas experience and to assist faculty who are leading service learning projects or study abroad programs. This work can be time consuming, but IC enables Directors to engage in the process and ask strategic questions about these programs and initiatives.

As much as Directors indicated that they found their work to be very rewarding, they also mentioned that the work is not without challenges. The number one challenge they faced was time and how their administrative commitments left little time for deep reflection on IC or space to create new programs or resources related to IC. Other challenges included limited resources and finances and having a small staff. These challenges suggest that there is more to be done to address these barriers and support Directors in their work. As Directors are maneuvering through this "ever-changing...shifting ground" (Participant D, p. 26), IC provides them with a toolkit to understand and respond to cross-cultural situations and crises and to communicate effectively with a variety of individuals. Individuals aspiring to become a Director may find this study useful for identifying possible gaps in their knowledge and experiences and areas where they can be intentional about developing the IC skills which Directors identified as important for their effectiveness.

The Role of Heritage-seeking in the Study Abroad Destination Decision-making of Minority Students

Research shows that study abroad is associated with academic, intellectual, cultural, and employment benefits and that students from minority backgrounds are less likely to participate in study abroad. This study explores the role that heritage-seeking may play in increasing minority student participation in study abroad. Szekely (1998) defines study abroad for heritage-seeking as “selecting a study abroad venue because of family background – national, religious, cultural, or ethnic. Choosing a venue because of some level of familiarity or resonance [...]” This motivation for study abroad is especially relevant for minority students, who may travel to a region where they are among the majority for the first time in their lives. The concept of heritage-seeking as a motivation to study abroad in a particular destination is not new to the field of international education (e.g., Brux & Fry, 2009; Comp, 2008; Kasravi, 2009; Lane-Toomey & Lane, 2013; Morgan et al., 2002; Van der Meid, 2003), however, previous research that examines this topic remains primarily anecdotal and casestudy oriented. This study aims to apply quantitative analysis to the hypothesis that heritage-seeking represents a prominent factor in study-abroad destination choice among minority students. Specifically, it seeks to answer the following research question: “Do students in minority ethnicity groups choose to study abroad in regions of the world that represent their cultural heritage?”. It is hypothesized that Asian American students are significantly more likely to study abroad in Asia when compared to students of other ethnicities. Similarly, Hispanic students are expected to be more likely to study abroad in Latin America, and African American students are expected to be more likely to travel to Africa. This line of research is relevant considering the creation of programs in non-traditional study-abroad locations may lead to an increase in minority participation in study abroad (e.g., Brux & Fry, 2009; McClure et al., 2010; Van der Meid, 2003).

The current study makes use of the Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOSSARI) dataset, which was collected by the University System of Georgia (USG) between the years 2001 and 2008. This dataset contains information about students at schools in the USG who studied abroad during this time period, and includes information about students’ ethnicities and study-abroad destinations, among other information. The analysis presented herein makes use of this additional data to control for factors aside from ethnicity that may influence the region in which students studied abroad. These factors include: a student’s socioeconomic status (operationalized as reception of a need-based grant), academic achievement (operationalized as SAT score), institution type (research university, comprehensive university, or state college), gender, and major field of study. In total, 2,674 minority students studying abroad in six different regions (Latin America, Europe, Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East/North Africa, and Multi-region programs) are included in the analyses presented herein. Table 1 in Appendix A displays descriptive statistics for each ethnicity group.

Given that the outcome of interest contained six regions, multinomial logit regression was employed (see Appendix B). Europe was employed as the reference region, as it was the most popular destination for all ethnicity groups (Table 1, Appendix A). Results (Table 2, Appendix A) indicated that ethnicity is significantly related to study-abroad region (Mixed ethnicity served as the reference group. A sensitivity analysis indicated that the results presented here hold even when these students were excluded from analysis and Hispanic ethnicity served as the reference group.). Generally speaking, after controlling for other factors that may influence region selection, Hispanic students were significantly more likely to study abroad in Latin America ($p < 0.05$) when compared to students of mixed ethnicity, Asian American students were more likely to study abroad in Asia ($p < 0.001$), as were African American students in Sub-Saharan Africa ($p < 0.001$). Notably, no ethnicity group was significantly more likely to study abroad in the Middle East/North Africa or in multiple regions, a result that may be expected given that these regions do not correspond with the ethnicity groups included in this study. It is important to note that African American students were also significantly more likely to study abroad in Latin America ($p < 0.01$), possibly reflecting the large population of African descent in this region of the world (Jiménez Román & Flores, 2010).

The results of this study confirm the hypothesis put forth by researchers who suggest that the expansion of study-abroad programs to non-traditional study-abroad locations, such as Africa or Latin America, may encourage more minority students to study abroad. Given that these students continue to be underrepresented in study abroad (Institute of International Education, 2015), institutional outreach to this population may serve not only to equalize access to international experiences among undergraduates, but also to increase the proportion of students studying abroad in general, a prominent goal for many institutions (Altbach & Knight, 2007). In considering the expansion of study abroad to non-traditional regions, issues important for consideration include not only cost, but also safety and security in these new locations.

Following Their Gaze: Learning from Student Photo Narrations of International Experiences

Background: A guiding principal of higher education institutions in the U.S. is the preparation of students for global societal interaction (Kehl & Morris, 2008). Greater cultural understanding and the role of the U.S. in broader contexts are desired outcomes of international programming in higher education (Henthorne, Miller, & Hudson, 2001). One way that higher education institutions seek to equip students for effective global citizenship is through offering study abroad experiences (Norris & Gillespie, 2009). Previous studies have demonstrated the potential for international experiences to develop the necessary global mindset for effective global citizenship (Douglas & Jones-Rikken, 2001). However, this is difficult to assess from a trip of short duration (Kehl & Morris, 2008). Scant research has leveraged students' photos as tools for such information.

Research Aims & Questions: The purpose of this study was to reveal students' developing global mindset by exploring how they described their identity and cultural experiences using their photos. This study sought to inform university short-term international trips by exploring the following questions: 1) How do university students experiencing a short-term international study trip author their identity, position, and future action within the global community, and 2) How do university students' photo narrations reveal university students' ongoing construction of a global mindset during and after a short-term international trip.

Method

Theoretical Framework: Grounded in social constructivism, Gee (1999) defined cultural models as a "totally or partially unconscious explanatory theory or storyline" (p. 44), invoked to make sense of complex encounters. Focusing upon the cultural models that make meaning of global encounters, the global mindset framework characterized by reflexivity, criticality, relationality, and social imagination was adopted (Lilley, Barker, & Harris, 2014).

Data Collection: This descriptive qualitative study took place during a semester at a land-grant university. University students participating in a short-term (10-day) international trip during the university's spring break (10 days) consented to participate in this study. Each participant was given a photo journal guide that instructed them to take at least 6 photos each day: 3 photos that documented what they were learning and 3 photos of what interested them in that day. Within six weeks after returning from the trip, participants each collated their photos into a personal digital file which they individually narrated to the researcher while showing their photos. Following photo narration protocol (Wang & Burris, 1997), the only prompt used during this time was "Show me your photos and tell me about your trip. I want to hear your story."

Analysis: Transcripts were inductively analyzed. Informed by the theoretical frameworks, this coding included a focus on the participants' cultural models when composing their storylines – individual and shared (Gee, 2004), and the construction of their global mindset as indicated by their voicing of critical thought, reflexive identity, and imagined social justice action (Lilley, Barker, & Harris, 2014).

Results & Discussion: The storylines garnered during the photo narrations exposed the students' authoring of their global mindset – revealing their critical thought, reflexive interaction, and imagined social action. Their critical interactions with their encounters on this trip emerged in their photo narrations as they described how the contents of their photos caused them to ponder. Further, their narrations revealed a reflexive interaction with their experience expressed in their frequent articulation of emotion through the photovoice experience. All these narrations culminated into an expression of how each was determined to live their lives in response to their trip. Many of the students noted that they were determined to take a conservation stance with less focus on material things. The data further revealed the interplay of the students' gazes as they experienced this short-term international trip.

Significance: Whereas studies have shown the efficacy of international trips for nurturing a global mindset (Lilley, Barker, & Harris, 2014), there is scant work that leverages students' photography for insights into their global mindset construction. This study explored how leveraging students' photo-taking on a short term international trip over spring break (10 days) using photo narrations, could provide insights into the students' critical and reflexive thoughts and imagined actions – their constructing of a global mindset. It is anticipated that this information can inform further studies focused on the impact of leveraging students' ubiquitous digital photography during trips on enhancing students' global mindset – the core aim of higher education international trip programs with a view of global citizenship.

International Graduate Students' Experiences with English and the Impact of Globalization

U.S. higher education has invested heavily in understanding the challenges of learning English and supporting language acquisition for international graduate students (IGSs) from nations where English is not their first language (Jin & Liu, 2014; Kanno & Cromley, 2013). What is often underexplored, however, is what IGSs feel about English and its growing importance (Cho, 2004). Working off this notion, I decided to conduct a qualitative study that explored IGSs' relationships with and values of English. In analyzing these dynamics, the study also aimed to show how participants' responses reflect the worldwide growth of English-language learning and its significance to global economic and political systems.

The paper's framework merges Bourdieu's (1991) ideas on official languages with theories of globalization. The economic and political transformations stimulated by globalization have resulted in what Bourdieu calls "a unified linguistic market" (p.45), in which English dominates. English is presented as a necessary skill to participate in global economies and knowledge networks, compelling non-English dominant nations to promote the language to their citizenry (Shin, 2016). As Rossi (2007) notes, however, we live in a heterogeneous world where an individual's interaction with English is impacted by the cultures and knowledges they already carry. The framework, therefore, suggests that participants would have similar responses informed by globalized understandings of English as well as differences that reflect the lived experiences and cultural backgrounds of participants.

For my research, I conducted a qualitative study at a U.S. Research I institution. I decided to focus on international graduate students who were studying the language at the university's English Language Institute (ELI). I wanted to work with IGSs as they are often an underrepresented sample in research on international students – often around their personal and professional histories (Kim, 2016). Working with the ELI, I recruited four IGSs; each participant was from a different country of origin and academic program. I conducted semi-structured interviews to learn more about their relationships with and values of English. The transcripts from these interviews compose the data analyzed for this research.

The findings reveal that each participant had a dynamic and lifelong relationship to English. Students encountered English and pressure to learn it in formal education, professional environments, and community settings, and rarely questioned this reality in interviews, very much reflecting Shin's (2016) research on English. When it came to the language's value, participants demonstrated agency in determining its meaning. The language allowed IGSs for example to connect to different cultures, and to advance professionally, however, it was expressed as only part of the other knowledges and languages they carried. In general, these responses reflected the theoretical framework and also introduced this notion of resistance that Rossi (2007) suggests.

This study adds to existing research by making space to understand the fuller dimensions of the experiences of international graduate students with the English language, and how such experiences reveal IGSs to be complex actors navigating a globalized world. The study also shows the importance that globalization frameworks have in understanding the realities and situations of international students. The research of course has its limitations – primarily in the limited number of participants, and depth of the interviews. Additionally no questions were posed that explored the impact of social identities such as race and gender. There is much room to continue research on IGSs that can address limitations and offer more insight into English's impact globally. These include but are not limited to regional foci (e.g. IGSs from South Asia), longitudinal studies, and how other areas of social identity influence IGSs' view of English.