

Intentional Intercultural Learning and Assessment

Two Coordinated Workshops for APUAF Presented by Milton Bennett & Lilli Engle

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These days, very few exchange or study abroad programs fail to claim “intercultural learning” as a participant outcome. Thanks to a long history of research and workshops on the topic at NAFSA, FORUMEA, IAIE, and other professional organizations (including APUAF), the importance of intercultural learning is now well established. However, there still is wide variation among programs about exactly what “intercultural learning” means, how it should be pursued, and how it could be assessed. These two workshops will explore limitations affecting the definition, implementation, and assessment of international exchange learning goals in general, with particular focus on how to make intercultural learning a more intentional and measurable outcome.



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AM Workshop

Why Does Intercultural Learning Seem So Clear, Yet Remain So Elusive?

Faculty and administrators of international education exchange programs are used to working within limitations of time, money, and local resources (e.g. host families and native students). These limitations are usually blamed for the discrepancy between stated learning goals and actual programming.

But there is a deeper limitation operating in all educational programs, including international exchange. It is the limitation of vision – specifically, the vision afforded by a particular knowledge paradigm. For instance, a knowledge paradigm that supports behaviorist theories of learning (*positivism*) does not support the more phenomenological approaches of intercultural learning (*constructivism*). If a program is designed according to positivist principles, yet claims more constructivist outcomes, it creates an incoherent condition called “paradigmatic confusion.” In that condition, no amount of effort will allow goals to be met.

The morning workshop will explore how paradigms can limit the implementation of intercultural learning. But more importantly, it will show how the intentional use of appropriate paradigms can make a program dramatically more coherent and powerful in achieving its goals. Participants will have an opportunity to discuss their own programs in this light and to consider benchmarks in coherent programming.

Presenter: Milton J. Bennett

Dr. Milton J. Bennett founded and directs the Intercultural Development Research Institute located in Hillsboro, Oregon and Milano, Italy (<http://www.idrinstitute.org>). He is also an adjunct professor of intercultural communication at the University of Milano-Bicocca and a consultant on the topic to corporations, universities, and exchange organizations in Europe, Asia, and the US. Dr. Bennett studied physics and cognitive psychology as part of his BA degree from Stanford University, has an MA in psycholinguistics from San Francisco State University and holds one of the first Ph.D.'s in intercultural communication (University of Minnesota). He recently completed a revised version of his textbook, *Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication* with the subtitle, *Paradigms, Principles, and Practices* (Intercultural Press, 2013). An Italian version of the book should be out this year (Franco (Franco Angeli Press, 2015).



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PM Workshop

Designing Qualitative Assessment Questionnaires for Effective Intercultural Programs

Conceived for faculty and administrators who are close to the students' lived experience abroad, this workshop offers a simple, sure way to reverse-engineer program excellence, validate results, and bring real educational value to "student satisfaction" thanks to the collaborative, intentional design of in-house qualitative assessment questionnaires appropriate to intercultural learning. Participants will discover the proposed method of targeting and formulating questions and engage in the process of designing qualitative assessment questionnaires that highlight student learning, respect intercultural complexity, and consider the essential elements of student engagement necessary to a "successful" experience abroad.

Based on the research and methodology published in the Winter 2013 edition of Frontiers entitled "The Rewards of Qualitative Assessment Appropriate to Study Abroad," this workshop examines and implements an approach to designing in-house qualitative assessment questionnaires able to reflect and to guide program success in interculturally appropriate and intentional ways.

Following a brief recap of the research and the method, participants engage in a reflective process geared to identify the many valuable learning outcomes potentially available to students studying abroad. Inspiration from the domains of educational theory, emotional intelligence, and intercultural competence will guide the formulation of viable learning objectives. Working collectively, in pairs, and in small groups, participants will examine the writing of realistic and inspired mission statements, identify program goals, and consider the choice and educational purpose of related program components. Focus throughout is brought to bear on the coherent intentionality of program design relative to the desirable learning outcomes. Worksheets presenting a model and examples for program-specific reflection are made available to participants for use during the workshop and beyond. Establishing the essential role of assessment in the ascending spiral of program excellence, participants will leave the workshop with a clear, practical ability to identify a wide variety of valuable learning outcomes specific to their programs and to formulate the assessment questions that effectively validate that learning.

Presenter: Lilli Engle

Lilli Engle is Founder/President of the American University Center of Provence (AUCP) in Aix-en-Provence & Marseille, France. Lilli has spoken and written openly in defense of intercultural learning in study abroad since 1993. She completed an MA and all Ph.D. coursework at UCLA, is a founding member of the Advisory Council of the Forum on Education Abroad, the founder/director of one of France's largest and well-known language schools.