

Alignment and Accountability

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Designing Qualitative
Assessment Questionnaires

for Effective Intercultural Programs

APUAF Workshop, Paris - June 2015

Collective Exercise N° 1

Examining questions for end of program
qualitative assessment questionnaires:

The question is useful and
appropriate to study abroad

✓ Yes or No

Definitions

Qualitative Assessment/Evaluation

The collection and use of subjective personal input (opinion, judgment, interview, etc.) to measure effectiveness.

Quantitative Assessment/Evaluation

The collection and use of objective data, using a valid and reliable assessment instrument, to measure effectiveness.

Reconciliation of Opposites

Consumer contentment
or
Educational challenge

Reconciliation of Opposites

IIE/NAFSA survey of assessment practices

(120 universities accounting for 50% of students going abroad)

- 95% documented student satisfaction
- Only 40% measured gains in language proficiency
- Fewer than a third assessed academic achievement or personal development
- Fewer than 10% measured career-related outcomes
- Just 15% assessed gains in intercultural proficiency.

“From this sampling it is clear that the majority of the profession is far from engaging in serious outcomes research beyond the question of student satisfaction” (IIE/SECUSSA, 2000).

Reconciliation of Opposites

Forum on Education Abroad -- State of the Field Survey 2011

Table 1

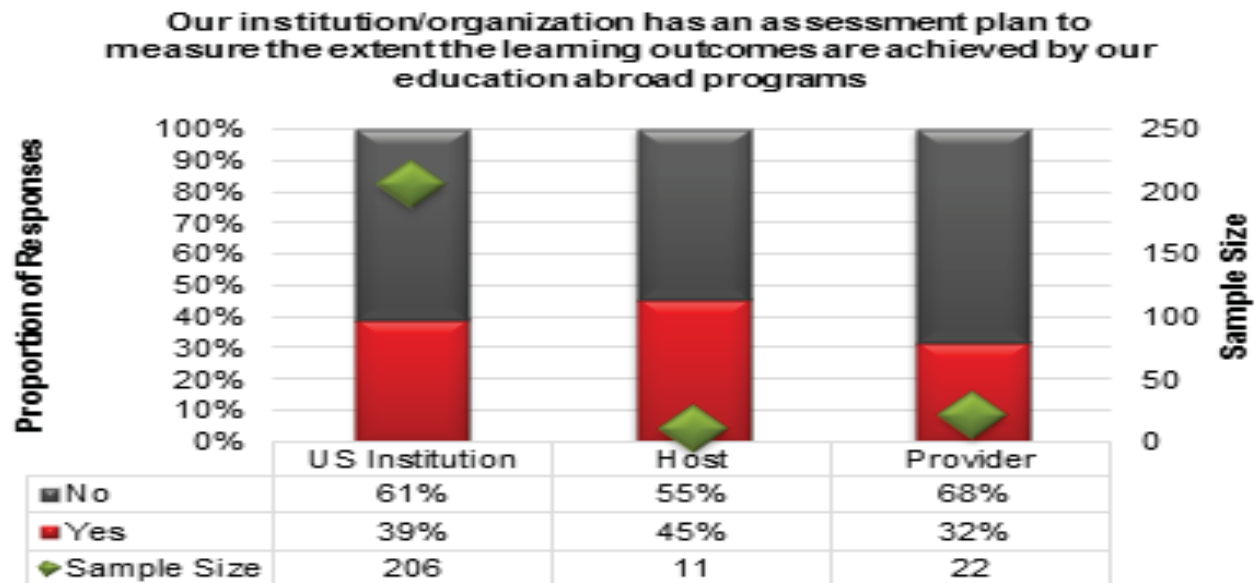
Top concerns	2011 ranking	2009 ranking	2008 ranking	2006 ranking
Cultural integration of students**	1	-	-	-
Adequate preparation of students	2	5 (tie)	5	4
Helping students maximize their experience	3	7	4	9
Program costs and rising costs	4	1 (tie)	1	3
Need for better funding	5	1 (tie)	3	6
Health and safety*	6	3	*	*
Academic quality	7	5 (tie)	2	1
Need for institutional funding for international education**	8	-	-	-
Assessment of learning outcomes**	9	4	-	-
Curriculum integration	10	-	6	2

* There was a separate question asking about health and safety concerns in 2006 and 2008.

**These items were added to the 2011 survey; they did not appear in earlier surveys.

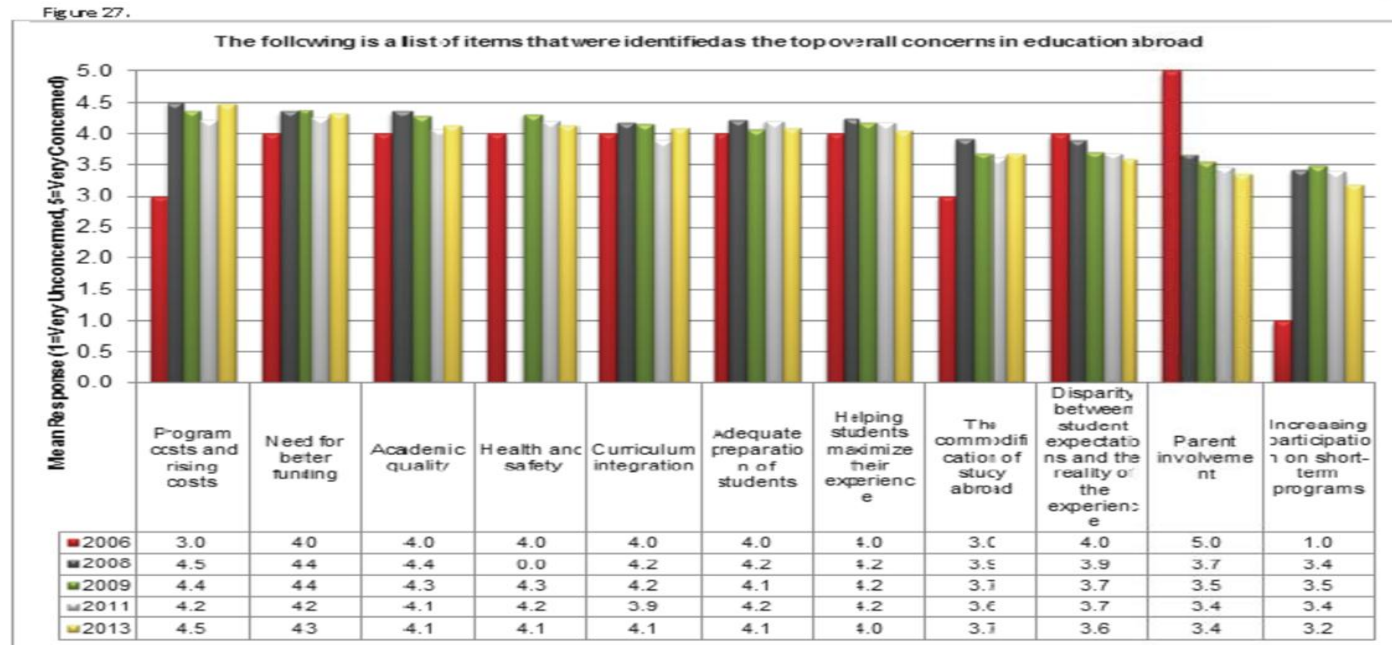
Reconciliation of Opposites

Forum on Education Abroad -- State of the Field Survey 2013



Reconciliation of Opposites

Forum on Education Abroad -- State of the Field Survey 2013



THE FORUM ON EDUCATION ABROAD

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Reconciliation of Opposites

Satisfaction-based questionnaires often simply refer students back to their own

pre-departure expectations

Reconciliation of Opposites

Students are asked to examine the quality of their term abroad through the lens of

accepted American standards*

*of teaching style, internet access, staff availability, housing convenience

Reconciliation of Opposites

Difficult choice

Cater to home-based, client-centered expectations?

or ...

Reconciliation of Opposites

Stretch the limits

of an educational experience **by its very nature**
and purpose different from that at home

Reconciliation of Opposites

Student interest and **satisfaction**
are essential to program survival

Reconciliation of Opposites

Today's challenge

Bring more **appropriate criteria** to the consideration of "satisfaction"

Reconciliation of Opposites

Criteria more in keeping with
the ideals of intl. education*

*Founded on the **rigors, risks, and rewards** of authentic intercultural experience

Assessing “Quality” in a Cross-Cultural Context

Outside the ethnocentric sphere of accepted cultural norms, what value or meaning do the following qualitative terms carry?

Assessing “Quality” in a Cross-Cultural Context

The instructors were **effective**

The program was intellectually **challenging**

I am **satisfied** with my study abroad experience

Assessing “Quality” in a Cross-Cultural Context

To avoid the pitfall of ethnocentric judgment, questioning takes on another form...

Assessing “Quality” in a Cross-Cultural Context

Asking for specific indications of how the students benefitted from the experience the program intentionally structured for them

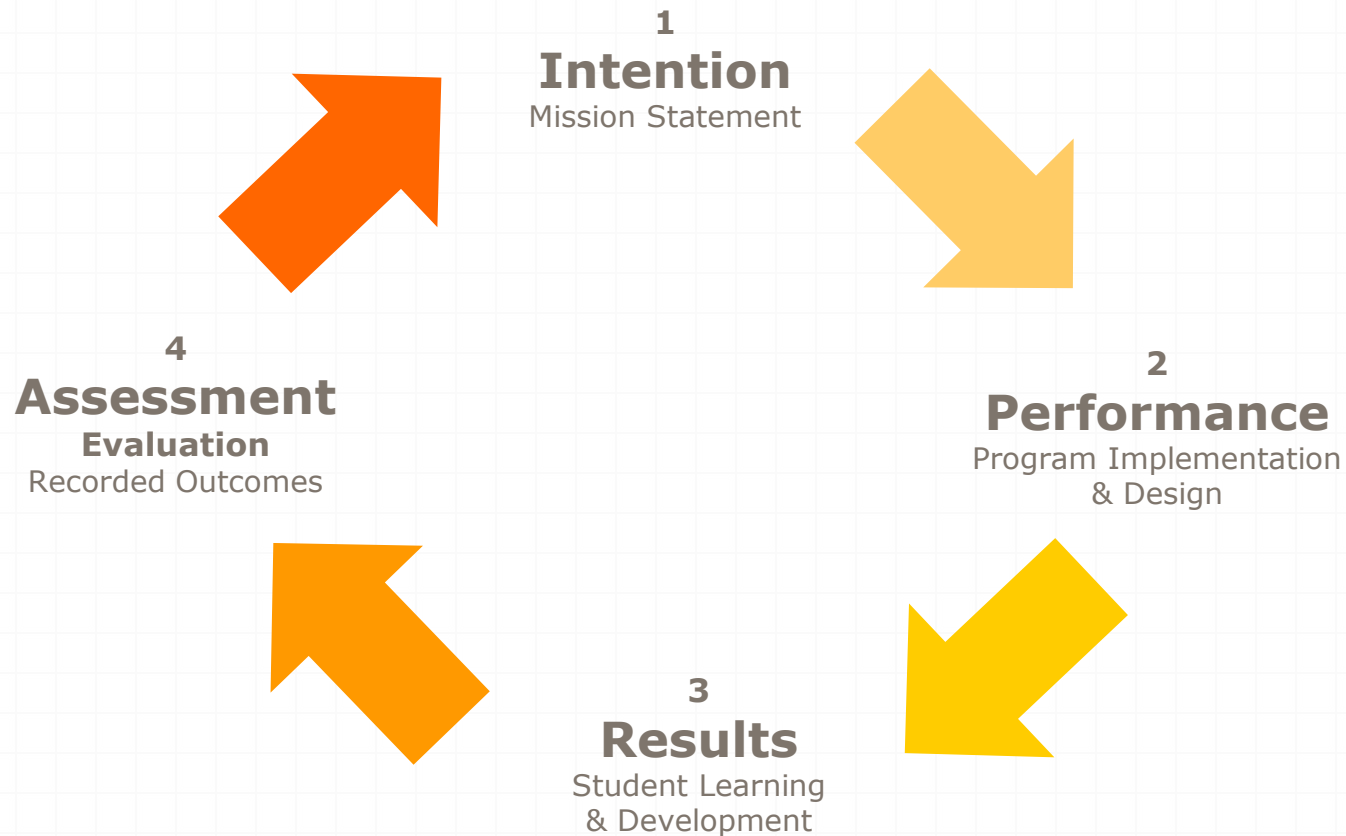
Aligning Actions and Ideals

Clarity

of mission and purpose

is key

Aligning Actions and Ideals



Aligning Actions and Ideals

The choice and formulation of questions
set the criteria for qualitative judgment
based on the educational goals of
the individual program

Engaging a Process

- Confirm the program's mission statement
- Consider and list overall learning goals
- Define program components
- Articulate what each component intends to achieve
- Evaluate cross-cultural challenges per component
- Establish criteria of student engagement

Part I: Defining Mission, Goals & Program Design

Define:

goals
components
and challenges

Part II: Aligning Components, Goals, Challenges & Questions

Targeting goals and outcomes

By implementing this component, what did the program hope **to achieve?**

Part II: Aligning Components, Goals, Challenges & Questions

Action Verbs

To encourage...

To provide...

To develop...

To establish a link...

Part II: Aligning Components, Goals, Challenges & Questions

Echo the **objectives**
in question form

Remember, questions serve to assess to what extent the program succeeded in realizing its goals

Part II: Aligning Components, Goals, Challenges and Questions

Question:

To what extent did the academic program establish a link between the course content and the study abroad location?

Part II: Aligning Components, Goals, Challenges and Questions

Identify

Adaptational challenges

Weighing in the balance specific program content and projected level of student preparedness

Part II: Aligning Components, Goals, Challenges and Questions

Echo the challenges in question form

Challenge: Adapting to a different teaching style

Question: To what extent were you able to adapt to the more lecture-based teaching style of your host national professors?

Part III:

The Ideal Student Component

Targeting abstract student goals

What would the goals
of an **ideal student** be?

Part III:

The Ideal Student Component

List the general abstract student goals

- o Learn the host language
- o Cultivate friendships...

Part III:

The Ideal Student Component

Targeting behavior

What would the ideal student
with this goal **actually do?**

Part III:

The Ideal Student Component

Action Verbs

- o Engage host nationals in conversation whenever possible
- o Read local press, watch local TV

Part III:

The Ideal Student Component

Echo ideal student goals
in question form:

In order to maximize my learning of the host language, I *(check all that apply)*

- Engaged host nationals in conversation
- Read local press
- Watched local TV

Recap

The ideal questionnaire has at its core
a clear vision of what the program is trying to achieve.

Its questions reflect:

Intention: The goals of an ideal program

Performance: What that ideal program should do or provide

Results: What are the ideal outcomes

Evaluation/assessment: What does the ideal student* gain from the experience and how?

*Criteria for the ideal student:

motivation, attitude, investment, academic performance, personal growth

Recap

Evaluating the questions themselves:

- In what way is the question/answer **meaningful to the program or to the home university?**
- Does the question **elicit the judgment of an empowered-consumer?**
- Are **program goals and desired outcomes inherent in the question?**
- Is the **responsibility of the student implicated in the evaluation** of the experience?
- Are the **standards of evaluation cross-culturally sensitive** or weighted by US standards or expectations?
- Does the question **invite criticism or negativity** or simply leave room for student comments?

Questions: Overall Program

Example I – Consumer-based questions

- How do you rate the program?
- Any suggestions for improvement?
- Any elements of the program that you would change?



Example II – Ethnocentric questions

- Program staff members were accessible
- Each portion of the program built upon previous portions
- Communication about program changes, activities, etc. was timely and clear.



Questions: Overall Program

Example III – Goal-based questions

- Evaluate the amount of growth you experienced
- in the following areas:
- Understanding of different cultures
- Different perspective on American culture
- Greater understanding of the US in world affairs and history
- Different perspective on your ethnic heritage
- Understanding of your faith
- Self-awareness
- Maturity and self-confidence
- Interpersonal skills and the ability to adapt
- Intellectual development in the liberal arts



Sliding scale from 1-5 (from Great Growth to No Growth and Not Applicable)

Questions: Academics

Example I – Consumer-based questions

Rate this professor

- Helpfulness
- Clarity
- Easiness
- Hotness



Example II – Ethnocentric questions

Rate each course according to the following criteria:

- Quality of the course
- Appropriateness of exams/assignments
- Level of difficulty as compared to home university course



Questions: Academics

Example III – Goal-based questions

- The program cultivated my ability to perceive the influence of culture on myself and others.
Strongly agree / Agree / Not sure / Disagree
- The program facilitated my ability to interpret meaning within a specific cultural context.
Strongly agree / Agree / Not sure / Disagree
- The program motivated me to observe my own behavior and modify it in culturally appropriate ways.
Strongly agree / Agree / Not sure / Disagree



Questions: Housing

Example I – Consumer-based questions

- Should we continue to use this housing situation?
- Would you recommend that we retain this family in the future?
If not, why not?



CBQ

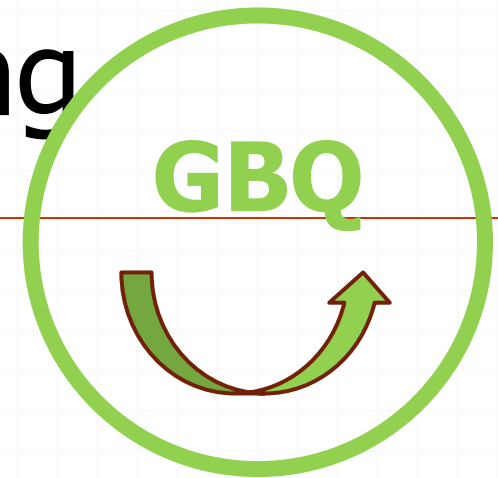
Example II – Ethnocentric questions

- On a scale from one to ten, ten being the highest, how would you rank your host family?
- What were the positive and negative aspects of your stay with this host family?



ECQ

Questions: Housing



Example III – Goal-based questions

- My homestay enhanced my learning about the culture
- My homestay family included me in their daily life
- My homestay family provided a forum for discussion and sharing

Strongly agree / Agree / Not sure / Disagree

Collective Exercise N° 2

Recognizing

- ✓ Consumer-based questions
- ✓ Ethnocentric questions
- ✓ Goal-based questions

Mission Statement

WHY

do we do what we do?

Goals

Start with WHY

Simon Sinek – TED Talk

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sioZd3AxmE>

Collective Exercise N° 3

Mission Statement and Overall Learning

- Identify program type
- Declare mission statement
- Confirm overall learning goals

Developmental Model

Progression of Levels & Challenges

- 6 Cultural Integration
- 5 Cross-cultural Engagement
- 4 Cross-cultural Encounter
- 3 Cross-cultural Contact
- 2 Cross-cultural Exposure
- 1 Educational Tour



1. Educational Tour

Student-Learning Objectives

- o Enjoy and understand academic subject-matter within a living context
- o Experience international travel
- o Cultivate curiosity and observational skills
- o Discover differences in food, dress, artistic expression, societal organization
- o Demonstrate civility and cooperation in a group-travel context
- o Adhere to foreign laws and regulations
- o Self-control
- o Trustworthiness

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2. Cross-cultural Exposure

Student-Learning Objectives

- o Draw relationships between in-class subject matter and the local setting
- o Learn and respect basic cultural do's and don'ts
- o Participate openly in structured cross-cultural events
- o Navigate an unfamiliar environment
- o Travel independently
- o Form friendly ties with locals on a "guest-host" basis
- o Observe and record feelings and events
- o Emotional awareness
- o Achievement drive

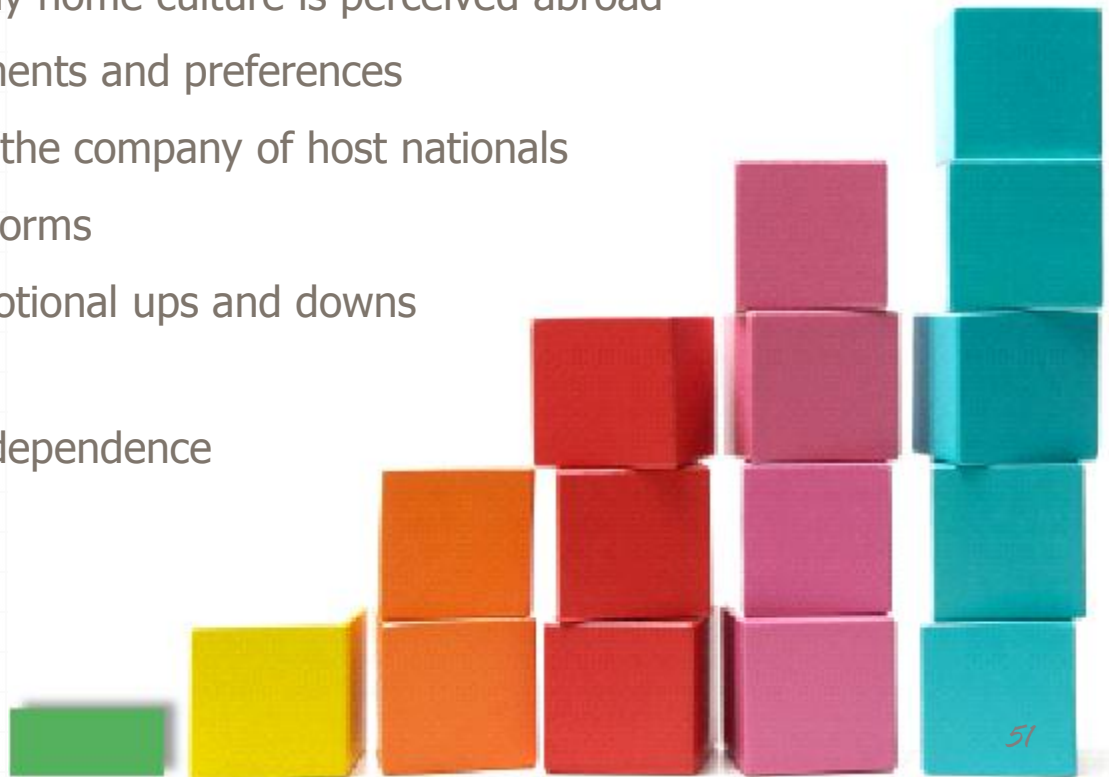
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3. Cross-cultural Contact

Student-Learning Objectives

- o Increase awareness of national and religious heritage
- o Increase awareness of the way home culture is perceived abroad
- o Increase awareness of judgments and preferences
- o Develop initiative to seek out the company of host nationals
- o Discern differences in social norms
- o Reflect on and accept the emotional ups and downs of an extended time abroad
- o Increase self-confidence & independence
- o **Emotional awareness**



4. Cross-cultural Encounter

Student-Learning Objectives

- o Manage time and responsibilities with reduced supervision
- o Make conscious choices in light of subsequent learning outcomes
- o Expand repertoire of behavior to include local customs
- o Share opinions and worldviews with host nationals
- o Adapt to changes in teaching and learning styles
- o Cultivate respectful, considerate relations with hosts
- o Multiply encounters with host nationals
- o Independently explore local resources
- o Accept cultural difference
- o **Adaptability**
- o **Conscientiousness**
- o **Optimism**

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5. Cross-cultural Engagement

Student-Learning Objectives

- o Meet responsibilities and deadlines with reduced supervision
- o Observe, investigate and synthesize facts, behavior, and events
- o Apply academic theory to real-life situations
- o Navigate new systems for information and leverage
- o Cultivate inductive & deductive reasoning skills
- o Engage in reflective dialogue with mentor, advisor or coach
- o Clarify career goals
- o Leveraging diversity
- o Self-confidence
- o Building bonds
- o Collaboration/Cooperation

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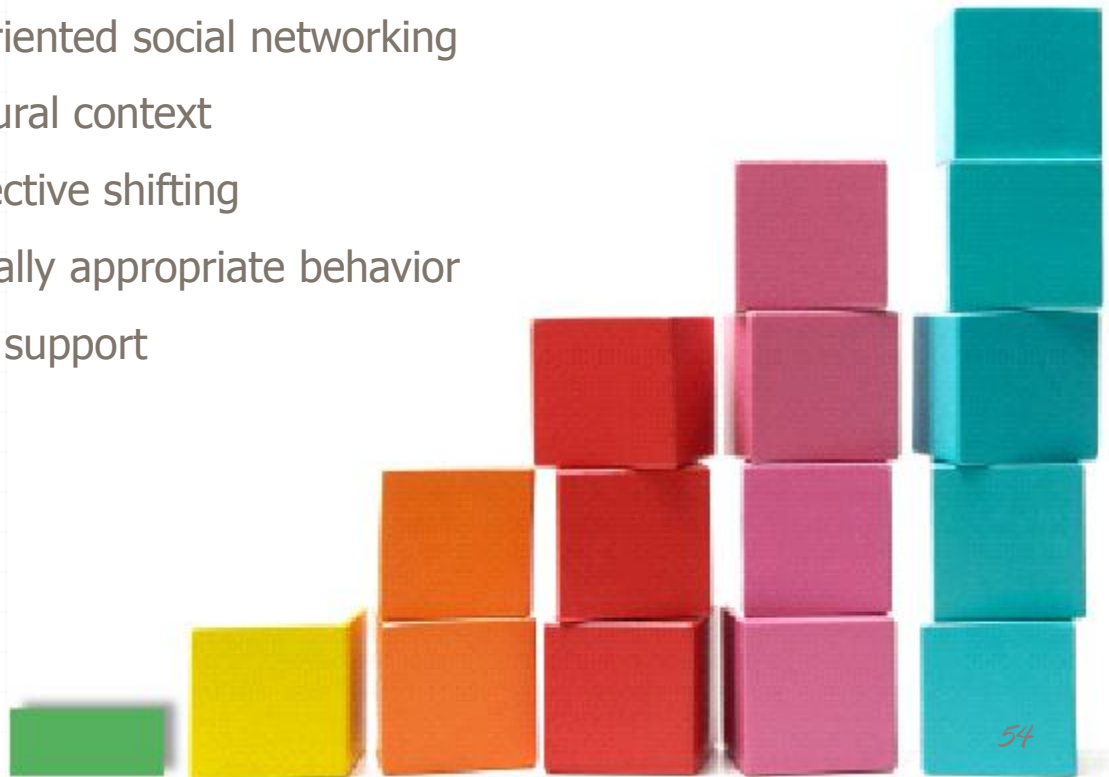


6. Cultural Integration

Student-Learning Objectives

- o Cultivate present-moment awareness
- o Discern and appreciate cultural difference
- o Discern and adapt to local rhythms of life
- o Curb dependence on home-oriented social networking
- o Interpret meaning within cultural context
- o Cultivate empathy and perspective shifting
- o Discern and implement culturally appropriate behavior
- o Cultivate group solidarity and support
- o **Commitment**
- o **Initiative**
- o **Understanding others**
- o **Communication**

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Sample Program Description

Cultural Integration Program

Mission Statement

Provide motivated students with appropriately challenging opportunities for inter-cultural learning both inside and outside the classroom

Overall Learning Goals

- Help students adapt to a variety of teaching and learning styles
- Foster the building of meaningful relationships with host nationals
- Optimize target language acquisition
- Challenge students to become the co-creators of their experience abroad

Sample Program Components

- Arrival orientation
- Re-entry facilitation
- In-house courses
- Direct enrollment courses
- Housing
- Field Trip/Excursion
- Language Partner
- Community Service/Internship
- Local club membership
- Overall program

Collective Exercise N° 3

Learning Goals per Program Component

Based on the sample program components:

- List the learning goals of each component using **ACTION VERBS!**
- Echo the goals** in question form

Collective Exercise N° 4

Adaptational Challenges

- ❑ Identify the students' adaptational challenges relative to each component
- ❑ **Echo the challenges** in question form

Collective Exercise N° 5

Ideal Student Engagement

□ List what the ideal student would do to achieve the targeted learning goals

In terms of the following criteria:

- Motivation
- Attitude
- Investment
- Academic Performance
- Personal Growth

□ Echo ideal student engagement in question form

Goal-based Assessment

How much did your off-campus experience contribute to your learning in each of the following areas?

Impact on your knowledge about a region of the world beyond the United States, including:

- Social, political, or economic characteristics of another country
- Literature, the arts, or other forms of creative expression in another country
- World views, values, and/or religious beliefs in another country
- Contemporary issues or problems in another country
- Strengths and accomplishments of another country
- Connections between past and present in another country
- The relationship between people and the environment
- Specific examples of global interconnectedness

Considerable / Quite a bit / Some / Very little / Not applicable

Goal-based Assessment

□ **Impact on your perspective on the United States, including:**

- Your ability to identify and describe similarities and differences between your own culture and another culture
- Your ability to analyze and explain similarities and differences between your own culture and another culture
- Your understanding of the ways the United States affects, and is affected by, other parts of the world
- Your ability to see the United States from the perspectives of people elsewhere in the world
- Your evaluations of the strengths and limitations of U.S. culture, politics, economics, social relationships, or other features of contemporary U.S. life

Considerable / Quite a bit / Some / Very little / Not applicable

Goal-based Assessment

□ Impact on your subject-matter knowledge and understanding, including:

- Broad knowledge of human cultures – literature, the arts, philosophy, religion, history, politics, human behavior, etc.
- Knowledge of the natural world
- Understanding of a specific field of study (e.g., history, music, economics, environmental studies, literature, etc.)

Considerable / Quite a bit / Some / Very little / Not applicable

Goal-based Assessment

□ **Impact on your intellectual skills and abilities, including:**

- Careful reading
- Critical thinking
- Research proficiency
- Effective writing
- Effective speaking and listening
- Communicating in another language
- Connecting ideas and information from various sources or experiences
- Applying knowledge to new problems or situations

Considerable / Quite a bit / Some / Very little / Not applicable

Goal-based Assessment

□ **Impact on your personal, relational, and vocational development, including:**

- Self-understanding
- b. Independence and initiative
- c. Collaborating with others
- d. Learning from people who are different from you
- e. Adapting to unfamiliar or ambiguous situations
- f. Evaluating your own views and values
- g. Applying ethical principles in making decisions

Considerable / Quite a bit / Some / Very little / Not applicable

Goal-based Assessment

❑ Now that you have returned to campus, which of the following have you done or do you expect to do prior to graduation?

- Follow news reports about the country/countries where you studied
- Follow news reports about international issues more generally
- Use what you learned off campus in an on-campus course assignment
- Choose a course that relates in some way to your off-campus experience
- Change or add a major or concentration as a result of your off-campus experience
- Investigate future opportunities to study off campus
- Investigate graduate or professional school options that would build on your off-campus experience
- Investigate career opportunities that would build on your off-campus experience

Done or currently doing / Plan to do / Not sure / Will not do

Goal-based Assessment

□ To what extent, if any, has your off-campus experience informed or enriched the following areas of your life?

- Your lifestyle choices (food, clothing, resource use, entertainment, etc.)
- Your friendships
- Your volunteer or service commitments
- The knowledge, skills and experiences you can offer an employer
- Your moral beliefs and/or religious values
- Your sense of your place in the world

Considerable / Quite a bit / Some / Very little / Not applicable

Goal-based Assessment

□ Open-ended Questions

- Please provide a specific example of something you learned from your off-campus study experience that you probably could not have learned on campus, and explain how you learned it.
- If you wish, please elaborate on any of the responses you provided or say anything else about your learning in your off-campus program.

Examples were taken from the St. Olaf Study Abroad Learning Assessment Questionnaire

http://wp.stolaf.edu/ir-e/files/2013/07/F13_SALA_Instrument.pdf

Based on the following learning goals:

Study Abroad Goals - <http://wp.stolaf.edu/international/international-and-off-campus-studies-intended-learning-outcomes/>

Overall Learning goals - <http://wp.stolaf.edu/outcomes/stogoals/>

Benefits to the Profession

The process of alignment and accountability:

- ❑ Clearly defines program commitment and **learning objectives**
- ❑ Validates the level of **adaptational challenge** for the student
- ❑ Implicates **student responsibility** in the co-creation of the experience and its learning outcomes
- ❑ Fine-tunes **program design**
- ❑ Brings more **identifiable value** to our field

In depth

For more regarding the process of alignment and accountability:

Forum on Education Abroad, Standards of Good Practice on-line tool kit
www.forumea.org for a complete handbook

“The Rewards of Qualitative Assessment Appropriate to Study Abroad”

Engle, Lilli, [Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad \(2013\)](#)