

Author: Burgoon, L., Freeman, K., 08faEOL580

Title: Changes in cultural perceptions in study abroad participants

About the Author: **Lisa Burgoon** teaches leadership theory courses in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences and coordinates a USDA Higher Education grant on student leadership development in conjunction with the University of Wisconsin and Purdue University.

Kate Freeman currently works in the Dept. of French and Dept. of Germanic Languages and Literatures. She received her degree in Theatre from the University of Oregon, Eugene. Her study abroad experience is as follows: studied theatre abroad for a summer between her junior and senior year of high school. She has a daughter who studied abroad in France for a semester her junior year of college, and a son who is currently studying abroad in Japan for his junior year of college.

08faEOL580 received a degree in Ecology from the University of Illinois and has spent her adult life working in various positions at the University of Illinois.

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Abstract: Key Research questions as of 11/6/2008:

What do you believe you learned in your study abroad experience that you may not have learned if you stayed at home?

Has study abroad influenced your discussion with other people about international and transcultural issues?

Has study abroad facilitated an international or intercultural dimension in your work or classroom activities?

The following are questions actually used for our interviews, we used semi-structured method of asking the prescribed questions then asked appropriate prompts or follow-up questions for clarification of meaning:

Interview Questions for Study Abroad

1. What did you learn when studying abroad that you believe you would not have learned if you stayed at home?
2. Did your study abroad experience enhance your understanding of the United States?
3. How has study abroad influenced your discussions with other people about international and trans-cultural experiences?
 - a. How would you discuss the changes that you experienced?
4. Has study abroad facilitated an international or intercultural dimension in your work as a student or an employee?
5. When you consider the investment you and /or your family made to study abroad, your time and money; would you consider that the experience was worth the investment? Why or why not?

Coding

1. Connections
 - a. *Human connections*
 - b. *Intercultural connections*
 - c. *Relationships*
2. Cultural Awareness
 - a. *Religion*
 - b. *Work Ethic*
 - c. *Cultural personality (friendly, reserved)*
 - d. *Balance (family, work)*
 - e. *strikes*
3. Cultural Identity
 - a. *American identity*
 - b. *Repudiation of American identity*
4. Global-mindedness
 - a. Comparisons of French politics and U.S. politics
 - b. Geography
 - c. Elections
 - d. Media focus
 - e. Scandals

5. Personal Development

- a. Maturity
- b. Self-Knowledge
- c. Change
- d. Independent

6. Professional Development

- a. More advanced
- b. More creative
- c. Inspired
- d. Pushing the limits
- e. Thinking differently
- f. Change in choice of Graduate work/focus
- g. Career
- f. job possibilities

annotated bibliography:

- Black, H. T., & Duhon, D. L. (2006). Assessing the impact of business study abroad programs on cultural awareness and personal development. *Journal of Education for Business, 81*(3), 140–144.

Black, et. al. assessed business student cultural awareness changes, self confidence and independence resulting from a summer program in London. Learning goals and accreditation standards were integrated into their survey instrument. Students showed statistically significant increases in all three areas assessment.

The methodology and instrument used in this study have potential for use in assessment of other study abroad programs. In terms of our project, the results clearly reinforce the assertion that significant personal growth occurs though this survey instrument addresses intellectual development broadly defined. The survey instrument presented in the appendix has potential for incorporation into our project.

- Bellamy, C. , Weinberg, A. (2006) Creating global citizens through study abroad. *New England Board of Higher Education. 20–21.*
- Carlson, J. S., Burn, B. B., Useem, J., Yachimowicz, D. & Barber, E. G. (1991). Study Abroad: The experience of American undergraduates in Western Europe and the United States. New York, NY: Council on International Educational Exchange.

This is an extensive report of a multi-institution research project that took place in 1984–1985 to assess the effects of study abroad on U.S. students traveling for one year to European countries. The collaborative project is called the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP) and was developed to provide comprehensive research to determine if and how study abroad affects U.S. undergraduates during college years and after graduation. It is a longitudinal study with a research and control group using a pre- and post-experience questionnaire. The questionnaires were designed to answer multiple research questions about how students abroad differ from those who remain on campus, the changes that occur in students who study abroad and the long-term effects of study abroad. Results indicate that students who studied abroad showed increased “intellectuality” or abstract knowledge and problem solving, improved language acquisition including oral, written and reading abilities, and increased international understanding particularly as it relates to cultural interest and respect, compared to the control group. One summary result of the SAEP noted by the authors emphasizes the personal and intellectual development gains that were seen in the study abroad cohort.

This report is essentially the first extensive quantitative and qualitative study of the effects of study abroad on undergraduate students. Significant research that is far more current is now available. The benefit of using the SAEP data for this research project is that it directly relates to the research question that we are posing to determine if study abroad has an effect on intellectual development. The SAEP project supports intellectual development as part of study abroad and provides a depth of background knowledge on how and what to ask students to determine if intellectual growth has occurred.

- DeDee, L. S. & Stuart, S. (2003). The effect of student participation in international study. *Journal of Professional Nursing*, 19(4), 237–242.

This is a descriptive retrospective study of thirty eight alumni of a nursing program at the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. The subjects had studied abroad in England or France for two weeks during a semester break while undergraduates. A questionnaire was sent to 99 of the alumna of the program and 38 returned completed questionnaires. The questionnaire is the

International Education Survey and contains demographic items plus 29 questions divided into four categories: professional nurse role, international perspectives, personal development and intellectual development. The highest means were found in the intellectual development and international perspectives dimensions indicating a significant impact in these two dimensions on students who studied abroad.

This article is beneficial for the course project because it contains questions in the area of intellectual development and international perspective that have already been used and tested in a research project. These questions can guide the interviews or questionnaire to be developed for the EUI project on study abroad. The study was completed on nursing students and those students only studied abroad for two weeks. This time frame needs to be taken into consideration as many of the other research projects report data from one semester or one full year of study abroad. However, the utility of using validated questions outweighs the drawback of different study abroad time frames for the purpose of this EUI project.

- Hadis, B. (2005). Gauging the impact of study abroad: how to overcome the limitations of a single-cell design. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 30(1), 3–19.

This is a retrospective study of 95 students who studied abroad through the New Jersey State Consortium for International Studies from 1997–2002. They responded to an online questionnaire about their study abroad experience. This project used a unique design feature in an effort to control for the fact that there were no pre-test questionnaires from which to compare post-study abroad questionnaire responses. Thus responders were asked to think back to the time that they *applied* to study abroad and answer the questions. Then in the second section of the questionnaire subjects were asked to respond in present tense to the same questions. This is what the authors deem the ‘pretest’ data in this study. The study looked at a number of topics including foreign language fluency, personal development (independence), frequency of travel abroad, and “world mindedness.” Among other reported results, there was a significant change in perceived change in independence and in world mindedness. The authors conclude

that the retrospective questions, as based on criterion and construct validation, are acceptable substitutes for an actual pre-test in study abroad.

This article supports study abroad as beneficial to personal development and cultural awareness. It provides some sample questions in both of these areas that may direct the focus of the EUI study for this course. It validates the use of a questionnaire method and retrospectively asking study abroad alumnus about their perceptions of learning while abroad.

- Sandell, E. J., (2007). Impact of international education experiences on undergraduate students. *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*. 12-39.

This article covers a study of experiences of students who studied abroad in 2006 from Minnesota State University, Mankato. The method of study was adapted from a study from the University of Wisconsin-Eau Clair School of Nursing. A survey was made available to 233 students who travelled in the calendar year; 2006, of which 31 completed the survey. The article identifies 4 major impacts study abroad experiences have on the individual; the professional role, international perspectives, personal development and intellectual development. We are especially interested in the Intellectual development; which has been broken down into motivation, ability to learn another language, selection of reading material and overall intellectual development. There are 4 tables of results of the survey and references organized into categories from the article. The article is useful in that it covers the areas of study abroad benefits we are interested in studying further and it is very clearly presents the methods and questions used, the results of their survey, and has a large reference list that are mostly education-based sources, (as opposed to psychological or sociological.)

Question: How has Study Abroad affected student's perceptions of their global-mindedness?

Plan: We have identified 14 current graduate students who participated in a one year study abroad program while they were juniors in school. The study abroad program is offered through a large mid-western research one University participating students

travel to France and spend the year studying in France as a group. Though they are on a campus with French students their coursework is taught in English by a resident faculty member from the sponsoring University.

An email was sent to the graduate students asking whether they would participate in an interview concerning their study abroad experience. Potential participants were told the interview would take about 30 minutes.

Ten participants, all students at the University of Illinois volunteered to be interviewed. All were graduate students. All studied abroad for at least 9 months (full school year) and there was a range of 1 to 10 year period of time since the study abroad experience. Ages range from 22–30 years old. The years of study abroad experience span from the 1998/99 school year to 2006/07 school year. Two participants had lived outside of the U.S. before their study abroad experience. All had visited other countries before this interview.

We interviewed 10 participants. 4 Women and 6 Men.

We conducted semi-structured interviews with a pre-determined set of questions (listed above). Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed.

We used an open-coding process to analyze transcripts to determine themes. Member checking and agreement discussions with the three investigators will be completed as we finalize the data analysis.

Data:

Discuss:

EUI Links: Study abroad and the creation of global citizens - American students in Europe post 9/11:
<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/2315>

The Study Abroad Community at UIUC: Negotiating the Complexities of Doubling Numbers and Fostering Global Citizenship:
<http://hdl.handle.net/2142/3617>