

Introduction:

Research indicates that study abroad programs can be incredibly beneficial to university students (Mills, Diviney & Ball, 2010). For example, study abroad programs can help increase students' global awareness, career readiness, and overall academic performance, among many other significant outcomes (Dwyer & Peters, n.d.). Additionally, among students who study abroad, universities typically experience greater student retention and graduation rates (Education Abroad, 2015). Still, with all of these known benefits, little practical guidance exists for study abroad faculty, even as they are a crucial component of the development and implementation of such courses (Scoffham, & Barnes, 2009).

In this session, we make recommendations for the effective design of a study abroad program. We will include a narrative analysis of our recent short-term study abroad course, which was team-taught by faculty from both business and organizational leadership. Together, we traveled abroad to Italy for 10 days, with freshman through graduate students, from a variety of different majors, enrolled in our interdisciplinary class. We will highlight the successes and challenges that we encountered while designing and delivering our 6-week summer course (the first four weeks of the course were a hybrid course, taught prior to departure). Observations related to the value added by our unique course design experience will be discussed, and the practical application of relevant study abroad literature will form the basis for our discussion. We will also address: 1) learning objectives and preparing our course, which provided academic rigor with the focus on the upcoming trip abroad; 2) pre-trip course design which involved faculty, staff, and students (preparation for travel, team building, the study of destination sites, and related academic/experiential activities); 3) trip implementation, with use of time abroad spent exploring business, legal, economic, historical and cultural attributes of the country; 4)

Team teaching an interdisciplinary study abroad: Innovations in course design and collaboration post-trip reflection about the study abroad; and 5) outcomes assessment of the trip by the participating faculty. Finally, a generalizable model of study abroad course design will be provided to session attendees in the form of an activity/exercise.

Theoretical Background:

According to Gardinier and Anderson (2010), “There is no formula for the percentage of time that should be spent in formal class time, seeing cultural/historical sites and events, doing field work, or engaging in peer-to-peer cultural exchange. Regardless of the mix, students should arrive at the destination with a grounding in both the academic and cultural context through a combination of pre-departure lectures, guided research, online discussions, readings, and cultural events relevant to the trip.” (p. 26) Thus, the course design element to study abroad courses is crucial. Beginning with the learning objectives for the course, care and attention should be given, especially to elements such as cultural competency in addition to the actual subject matter that forms the basis of the course. (Mills, Diviney & Ball, 2010).

Interestingly, to date no known empirical literature has emerged with the idea of collaborative team teaching as a developmental tool for study abroad courses, though many researchers have studied and written about the benefits of collaborative team teaching in general. These benefits can include an opportunity for creativity, diversity of thought, additional interaction with instructors, and enhanced constructive feedback for students, among others (Long et al., 2013; Sandholtz, 2000). It is against this backdrop that we discuss this session’s novel collaborative topic, team teaching an interdisciplinary study abroad course: innovations in course design and collaboration.

Learning Objectives:

1. Attendees will learn ways to prepare for future study abroad courses.
2. Attendees will identify how collaborative teaching can enhance the study abroad experience for both faculty and students, and can enhance the quality of the course design, especially when it comes to interdisciplinary study abroad courses.
3. Attendees will discuss the practical aspects of team teaching a study abroad course, including but not limited to methods of assessment, division of labor, classroom management and reflective practices.
4. Attendees will propose study abroad courses and identify opportunities for collaboration within their respective university settings.

Exercise Overview:

The presenters will have a handout prepared to serve as a framework that will facilitate brainstorming and discussion among the group. The activity itself is a course design activity, specifically to encourage attendees to think about collaborative study abroad opportunities on their respective campuses. The handout's framework will include important elements to consider, such as learning objectives and course design topics, with space available for attendees to fill in their ideas. Attendees will then have the opportunity to present their ideas to the other attendees and get feedback. The goal of this activity to encourage creative and collaborative thought about interdisciplinary study abroad opportunities.

Session Description:**5 Minutes: Introduction**

We will begin the session by giving some background about the unique nature of the interdisciplinary class we team-taught. Our student base was our university's men's basketball team, which was already slated to travel abroad for an international basketball tournament. Thus, our student base was enrolled in a variety of majors and were freshman through fifth-year- eligible, red shirt graduate students. In addition to providing unique teaching opportunities, this provided some challenges in course design and creating assessment objectives for the course. We will provide session attendees with the solutions we found to these particular challenges and others.

To our knowledge, there have been no other study abroad courses designed specifically for this type of unique student population. However, we strongly believe that our course design format is generalizable such that other unique and diverse groups of students (such as first generation students), might also benefit from the opportunities provided by this interdisciplinary study abroad design and format.

20 Minutes: Course Design

During this session, we will pay particular attention to the course design and the learning experiences that were conducted in the four weeks leading up to the 10 day trip to Italy. Again, during these 4 weeks, the course was considered a hybrid, with at least one face-to-face meeting per week with the students. We will discuss course objectives, course activities, and methods of assessment, among other design topics. We will then turn our attention to the

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10 days we spent overseas and include a discussion of the final reflection assignment that was due shortly after our return.

15 Minutes: Strengths and Challenges Encountered

The primary strength of the course was the collaboration between the faculty involved (two heads were definitely better than one regarding the necessary creativity in course design). Through collaboration, we were also better able to address the particular challenges of this type of this course, specifically, the time line (4 weeks hybrid, 10 days abroad), its multi-disciplinary nature, and its need for differentiation (all levels of students who took the course). We plan to discuss the various strategies we used for each, with opportunities for discussion.

15 Minutes: Activity

Attendees will participate in the aforementioned course design activity. Attendees will brainstorm ideas for study abroad collaboration and identify possible course design and interested student populations. This exercise will result in a filled-in handout that attendees will create during the session and take with them upon completion.

5 Minutes: Question and Answer/General Discussion

Once attendees have had the opportunity to brainstorm possible study abroad collaborations, we anticipate the identification of practical challenges that may arise. The session presenters will address any challenges and open the floor for attendees to discuss study abroad courses in general.

5 Minutes: Closing Remarks

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