Blended learning in mobility: effective program delivery, support and assessment

Rebecca Hall
Executive Director
International Education and Training, Trade and Investment Queensland

Kirrilee Hughes
CEO & Partners Director
AFS Intercultural Programs - Australia

Linda Stuart
Education & Training Specialist
AFS Intercultural/Sentio Global Ed Network USA
WHAT IS AFS?

A bold idea with a courageous mission...
a non-profit organization that provides intercultural learning opportunities to help people develop the knowledge, skills and understanding needed to create a more just and peaceful world
...with a powerful brand, unique legacy and committed alumni base...
...and we want to make maximum impact on our mission.
A large network with programs and activities around the world...

- 60 national AFS organizations
- 12,000 participants
- 8,500 families hosted participants
- 50,000 active volunteers
- 1,720 volunteer chapters
- 509 local Board members
- 1,000 employees
- 94 countries
- 11 external partners
- Program activity in 23 education ministries
Through what lens do we view international education?
What skills do we need to thrive in the 4th Industrial Revolution?

The new power skills: intercultural understanding, global competence and active global citizenship

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Generation Z Mapping

**RESUMÉ PACKERS**

- **Economic standing:** significant financial resources, expected to be less price sensitive.
- **Primary focus:** obtaining quality education abroad preferably at a reputable institution and enhancing their academic profile and eventually their job prospects.

**CULTURAL FLOATERS**

- **Economic standing:** significant financial resources, expected to be less price sensitive.
- **Primary focus:** to have an intercultural experience while on an exchange program. Less likely to be focused on academics, more likely to be inclined toward "exotic" languages and destinations.

**ACADEMIC ACHIEVERS**

- **Economic standing:** restricted financial resources, expected to seek merit-based scholarship opportunities for academic mobility.
- **Primary focus:** obtaining quality education abroad at a reputable institution and enhancing their academic profile, and eventually job prospects.

**CULTURAL HITCHHIKERS**

- **Economic standing:** restricted financial resources, expected to be very price sensitive.
- **Primary focus:** to have an intercultural experience while on an exchange program, expected to value the opportunity to go abroad regardless of destination type or language.
What role for blended and guided learning to leverage impact?

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Abstract

Merely the “act of going abroad” is not enough to gain intercultural skills & sensitivity and research shows that the most powerful variables in developing intercultural competence through mobility programs are:

1) regular reflection guided by
2) skilled facilitators
students need facilitated, intercultural education

Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad

The Georgetown Consortium Project: Interventions for Student Learning Abroad

Michael Vande Berg
Council on International Educational Exchange

Jeffrey Connor-Linton
Georgetown University

R. Michael Paige
University of Minnesota Twin Cities

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Key take-aways from Georgetown Consortium Research

- Importance of effective cultural mentoring by skilled facilitators
- Need to share culture-general frameworks and culture-specific content up-front
- Including time for regular reflection in program design
- Necessity of a developmental approach

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1. well-designed technology together with
2. peer learning that is supported by qualified facilitators

Can be leveraged to **maximize reflection** and, subsequently, **student learning**.

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Key Considerations in Design Phase

1. How can we intervene in student learning along the continuum pre, during and post?

2. As facilitated intercultural learning becomes more embedded (and expected) in education abroad and exchange, how can we address the scale and scope of facilitation?

3. How can we reach increasing number of students as demands for intercultural training come to the forefront of program design and delivery?

4. We have an organizational preference for in-person training - can we move beyond that?
GCC Approach

- Experiential learning
- Modular/Developmental
- Peer learning
- Blended learning/Flipped classroom
- Content: Intercultural education and cultural adjustment
Educational Framework

1. bring your own way of behaving into awareness
2. bring the other’s way of behaving into awareness
3. manage your emotional response
4. adapt to the other’s way of framing or behaving
Module
Global Competence Certificate

0% Complete

Module Outline
Welcome!
- Welcome and Participant Handbook
- Participant Handbook (en Español)
- Participant Handbook (auf Deutsch)
- Survey

About the Module
Case Study: Australian and Indonesia

- Government-funded program now in its 37th year
- Operates outside of university study
- 18 participants from each country, aged 21 – 25 years
- Participants spend 2 months in each other’s country; 1 month urban placement + 1 month regional/rural placement
- 2 host family placements; 2 internships/community service placements

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• Provision of GCC and intercultural learning materials key component of AFS’ tender to manage this program

• All participants were offered the GCC prior to commencing their program

• Blended delivery – primarily online, with some material delivered in-person at on-arrival / pre-departure orientation in Australia

• Supports intercultural learning throughout the program and during various placements

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• Program now effectively ‘scaffolded’ with intercultural training and resources
• High take-up and completion rate of GCC
• Feedback from participants is positive
• Future iterations of this program will involve facilitation training (GCC and other intercultural learning resources) for alumni
• Working towards more robust impact measurement, for example IES

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Case Study: U.S. HEIs - Faculty-Led

Purdue University:
- 2-week Maymester
- Global Engineering in Colombia
- Intentional study abroad design
- Pre-post IDI
- GCC online + FDS

University of St Thomas:
- 3-week J-term
- Social Entrepreneurship in India
- Intentional study abroad design
- Pre-post IDI
- GCC online+FDS

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Purdue-AFS/Sentio 3 year partnership

210 possible participants in this study; in 3 population groups:
• Those enrolled in the Purdue mentoring course (Study Abroad & Intercultural Leadership) = 70
• Those enrolled in Sentio GCC = 140
• Those who declined to enroll in either (but still abroad for spring semester) = 100

Research questions:
• What is the effect of mentoring on intercultural competence growth?
• Is there a difference in IDI entering score for students who chose the mentoring option as opposed to those who did not?
“In terms of my future plans regarding global and intercultural skills, I wish to continue going on trips to maximize my progress before I become stationary in my career. These skills would prove useful as I believe strong understanding of cultural differences can unify groups from a leadership standpoint.

This in return can reduce conflict, gear individuals’ motives towards a goal, and create a diverse community.”

~ Purdue student participant - Professional, Intercultural, And Global Development In Colombia
GCC testimonial - Faculty Feedback

“I just led a J-Term class for the second time to Mumbai India. The class was Social Entrepreneurship in India. And part of the success in helping our students with the challenges of touring Mumbai and working alongside NGO’s was the AFS training contained in Global Competence Certificate. We completed the training and did the follow-along discussions during the trip. The students and I found the tools and conversation to be a great way to explore and expand our experience.

The GCC was a great way for our students to have a common language and a starting point for our conversations together processing the study abroad experience.”

Mo Fahnestock, PhD
“After completing the first half of the Global Competency Certificate, I became aware of the cultural identity that is prevalent in my daily life. I began to recognize communication styles and values that the GCC had talked about specific to American culture. I realized that since I had been surrounded by these my whole life, it had never been a concern of mine that cultures would be different than what I see on a daily basis. I felt naive all of a sudden, realizing that I had not put much thought into the world outside of my own bubble of experiences.”
Questions & Answers
Contact Us

Kirrilee Hughes
CEO & Partners Director
AFS Intercultural Programs - Australia
kIRRilee.Hughes@afs.org

Rebecca Hall
Executive Director
International Education & Training, Trade and Investment Queensland
rebecca.hall@tiq.qld.gov.au

Linda Stuart
Education & Training Specialist
AFS Intercultural
linda.stuart@afs.org