

Assessing Progress in Global Learning and Development of Students with Education Abroad Experiences

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Introduction

One of the goals of any undergraduate education is developing students as whole human beings. Higher education leaders and faculty are not only concerned with intellectual development and learning but also moral, social, physical, and spiritual development of students, including intercultural competency or global learning and development (American Council on Education, 1995; Association of American Colleges & Universities, 2007; Musil, 2007). Many colleges argue that this holistic focus is the value added of a college education, i.e., students develop their thinking, gain a better sense of themselves, and engage in relationships with others not like them to a greater degree as a result of their attending college. In our pluralistic world, students now need to develop a global perspective while in college. They need to think and act in terms of living in a world in which they meet, work, and live with others with very different cultural backgrounds, habits, perspectives, customs, religious beliefs, and aspirations. In a recent survey of over 300 executives of U.S. corporations, 72 per cent reported that they desire to have colleges place more emphasis on students dealing with “global issues and developments and their implications for the future” (AAC&U, 2007, p. 12).

Education abroad has become an increasingly important educational program (experience) in global learning and development, intercultural competence, intercultural maturity, and intercultural sensitivity of students. It has been accepted as an integral component of an effective liberal education (e.g., Bolen, 2006). Education abroad has considerable potential in providing an environment

that results in value added to student global learning and development. Evidence exists that education abroad is a powerful influence on student's attitudes, intercultural skills, learning within a discipline, and views of an education abroad experience, (e.g., Dwyer, 2004; Paige, Cohen, and Shively, 2004; Vande Berg, Balkcum, Scheid, & Whalen, 2004; National Survey of Student Engagement, 2007), but to date little evidence exists about the potential influence of education abroad on holistic and global learning and development (King and Magolda, 2005). As Steinberg (2002) argues, more assessment on holistic student development is needed. He writes, "The study abroad field needs to develop instruments that measure students' overall growth holistically" (p. 12).

Student Global Learning and Development

We have selected to use the term, global learning and development, to focus on the desired ends of a college education. It is a term that stresses both the inner and external growth of students, as do similar definitions such as intercultural competence (Dearoff, 2006). Our view of student holistic learning and development encompasses two theoretical perspectives: human development and intercultural communication, both of which use the metaphor of a journey in life in describing a person's progress in learning and development. The human development perspective is based on the seminal work of Robert Kegan (In *Over our Heads*, 1994), who has argued that as people grow they are engaged in meaning making, i.e., trying to make sense of their journey in life. In doing so they not only rely on their thinking, but also on their feelings and relationships with others in their journey in life. Kegan identified and labeled three major domains of human development: cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal. Patricia King and Marcia Baxter Magolda (2005) refined these domains in describing students in their social-cultural development during their college years. In the context of a global society, they called this developmental view "intercultural maturity." Intercultural communication scholars also have recognized the cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains (i.e., the thinking, feeling, and relating domains) as important to individual success in communicating with and interacting with others in intercultural contexts. To be an optimally functioning communicator in a pluralistic society, individuals need to demonstrate intercultural competence and sensitivity as they live in increasingly pluralistic and diverse environments (Bennett & Bennett, 2004; Chavez, Guido-DiBrito, & Mallory, 2003; Chen & Starosta, 1996).

Thus both human development and intercultural communication theory form the basis for our understanding of global learning and development. It

not only includes an acquisition of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and awareness important to communication and interpersonal relationships, but also the development of more complex epistemological processes, identities, and interpersonal relations. Development involves qualitatively more complex mental processes and behavior acquisition involves an increasing collection of skills. These primarily developmental processes consist of three major domains: cognitive (epistemological, awareness, knowledge), intrapersonal (identity, attitudes, emotion), and interpersonal (behavioral, skills, social responsibility). This theoretical framework has guided our research program on the impact of educational environments, including education abroad, on student global learning and development, i.e., how do students come to live a life that reflects a global perspective?

The research reported here is based on the research question: Do students enrolled and engaged in education abroad express changes and growth in their self reports of their global learning and development? More specifically, do students change their self reports on cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of global learning and development from the beginning to the end of their semester-long education abroad? In what domains are the influences of education abroad most and least evident?

Research Design

A pretest-posttest design was selected to measure changes in students' global perspective over the period of one semester, the length of the education abroad experiences of students participating in this study. Students took the same written survey before or during the first days of their education abroad program and then during the last week abroad or shortly after they returned to the United States. Since students took the same instrument of global learning and development, we were able to determine if students change as a result of their education abroad experience. Ten different programs/centers at different sites throughout the world were involved, and by regarding each one as a planned variation of an education abroad experience, we were able to examine trends and consistencies over a wide array of education abroad programs. While this design does not include a comparison group as those in a quasi-experimental research design (Sutton, Miller and Rubin, 2005), the pretest/posttest design allows us to note changes over time and provides us with evidence to make tentative inferences about possible causal connections between education abroad environments and desired dimensions of student global learning and development.

Sample

During the spring of 2008, students participating in this study enrolled in ten different semester-long education abroad programs from five different institutions (colleges, universities, third party providers) representing a wide range of institutional goals and missions. The institutions included one public Masters-level degree university, two private liberal arts colleges, one public undergraduate college and one third-party provider of study abroad. Table 1 lists a description of the five institutions, number of students who completed the GPI during the pretest administration, the posttest administration, and the number of students who participated in both the pre- and post- administrations of the GPI, labeled matched in the far right column. Since one institution, Central College Abroad (CCA), has eight centers, we were able to analyze the results of each participating center as well as the aggregate of the centers.

The range of participation varied considerably, with some having 20 percent of the students to others with nearly 100 percent of the student completing the GPI. If students completed a paper form while attending a required orientation or pre-departure session, the response rate was much higher than when students were given the opportunity to complete an online survey.

Table 1:
Institutions participating in a pretest posttest administration of the GPI

Institutional ID	Institutional Type	N (pre; post; matched)
1	Private liberal arts college Midwest (Total of 6 Centers)	156;156;139
2	Private liberal arts college West	20; 16; 9
3	Public Masters Midwest	28;23;17
4	Third Party Provider	125;102;68
5	Public liberal arts college Midwest	17;19;12

Instrument

The Global Perspective Inventory (GPI) was used to measure the three major domains of global learning and development. The GPI was constructed to incorporate both human development and intercultural communication theories of global learning and development. It was designed to provide a comprehensive profile and a portrayal of global learning and development to reflect how students (and other persons) think, form a sense of themselves, and relate to others. It was not designed to directly evaluate the features of an education abroad program. The GPI measures dimensions of student learning

and development that are included in established sets of standards in education abroad (e.g., Forum on Education Abroad, 2005; Institute for the International Education of Students, 2007). Two scales for each of the three major domains—cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal—were constructed to measure each of the three domains. The two cognitive scales are knowing (development) and knowledge (acquisition); the two intrapersonal scales are identity (development) and affect (acquisition); and the two interpersonal scales are social responsibility (development) and social interaction (acquisition). (A more complete description of the GPI is included in Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill, 2008.)

Cognitive domain. Cognitive development is centered on one's knowledge and understanding of what is true and important to know. It includes viewing knowledge and knowing with greater complexity and taking into account multiple cultural perspectives. Reliance on external authorities to have absolute truth gives way to relativism when making commitments within the context of uncertainty. The two scales are:

- **Knowing:** Degree of complexity of one's view of the importance of cultural context in judging what is important to know and value.
- **Knowledge:** Degree of understanding and awareness of various cultures and their impact on our global society and level of proficiency in more than one language.

Intrapersonal domain. Intrapersonal development focuses on one becoming more aware of and integrating one's personal values and self-identity into one's personhood. It reflects one's sense of self-direction and purpose in one's life, becoming more self-aware of one's strengths, values, and personal characteristics and sense of self, and viewing one's development in terms of one's self-identity. It incorporates different and often conflicting ideas about with whom one is living in an increasingly multicultural world. The two scales are:

- **Identity:** Level of awareness of one's unique identity and degree of acceptance of one's ethnic, racial, and gender dimensions of one's identity.
- **Affect:** Level of respect for and acceptance of cultural perspectives different from one's own and degree of emotional confidence when living in complex situations.

Interpersonal domain. Interpersonal development is centered on one's willingness to interact with persons with different social norms and cultural backgrounds, acceptance of others, and being comfortable when relating to oth-

ers. It includes being able to view others differently; and relating to others in terms of moving from dependency to independence to interdependence, which is considered the most mature perspective in effectively living in a global society.

- **Social Interactions:** Degree of engagement with others who are different from oneself and degree of cultural sensitivity in living in pluralistic settings.
- **Social Responsibility:** Level of interdependence and social concern for others.

Statistical Analyses

Frequency distributions of each of the 46 items and means of the six scales were calculated for all students combined over all the education abroad programs during the spring of 2008 to obtain an inclusive measure of the differences between students who completed the GPI before and after their education abroad experiences. Nearly 250 students completed all six scales of the GPI in both the pretest and posttest administrations in the spring semester. (This number is however much less than the total number of students who completed either a pretest or posttest of the GPI, as shown in the last right hand column of Table 1). We then calculated the differences between the pretest and posttest administrations of the GPI for students enrolled in the Central College Study Abroad Program (CCA) since CCA had nearly 100 percent participation of the students enrolled in a semester abroad program during the spring of 2008. These students were enrolled in eight centers (of which we have data for six centers), which were located in Europe, China, and South America.

We analyzed the changes in all students from the ten programs that participated in the study; all students in the six CCA centers; CCA students in each of the six Centers of CCA, and students in the other programs. Since only students who completed both the pretest and posttest administrations of the GPI are included in the tests of the difference between the means, a paired sample t test was used.

Results

The means of the six GPI scales of the 245 students enrolled in all education abroad programs and centers in the spring of 2008, of the 139 CCA students (Row 1 of Table 1), and the 106 students enrolled in other education abroad programs (Rows 2 through 5 of Table 1) are presented in Table 2. As shown in Table 2, the means of the six GPI scales on the pretest administration are quite similar for the students enrolled in the CCA and the other programs.

Students entering these programs have somewhat similar profiles before they study abroad. Since our interest lies in the changes in students over the semester abroad, our focus is on change, and we will refer to selection of students into specific programs when warranted.

As shown in Table 2, differences between the pretest and posttest means on five of six GPI scales are statistically significant, based on the total number from all nine programs/centers. Students have statistically higher posttest means of all scales, except Knowing, than they did on the pretest administration of the GPI. Given the large sample size, the power of the statistical test is high to detect rather small differences. Thus we established a minimum of .10 difference to indicate sufficient practical and educational significance in this study.

Not all the differences are of the same magnitude, however. Students showed the largest differences in their pretest/posttest responses on the Knowledge scale, (Cognitive domain), but they had the lowest difference on the Knowing scale (Cognitive domain). Students indicated that they were learning how to analyze and understand cultural differences, but did not show significant progress in knowing how to take these cultural differences into account in their thinking about truth and knowledge. The next largest difference is on the Affect scale (Intrapersonal domain). They gained in self-confidence in the way they viewed themselves after living in a foreign country for a semester. They also showed progress in further identifying themselves as unique individuals, although the degree of progress is not as marked. Finally, they did show statistically significant gains on the two scales of Interpersonal domain, i.e., about how they perceive their relationships with others, being more comfortable with persons unlike them, and developing a greater commitment to assisting others grow in a global world, but the differences on the Social Responsibility scale were not large.

We found the pattern of pretest/posttest changes to be fairly consistent across all CCA centers. Students made the most progress toward expressing a global perspective in their knowledge of intercultural differences. When compared with other students from the other programs at four institutions, students enrolled at the six CCA centers did not indicate as much progress in relating to others from other cultures, but gained a greater sense of social responsibility toward others over the semester abroad. Students at the center in Mexico showed the largest gain on Social Responsibility scale (Interpersonal Domain), which reflects an emphasis on social justice and humanitarian goals at this center. Where the curricula and out-of-classroom activities are intended to reflect a mission of global social responsibility.

Table 2: Means of pretests and pretest- posttest changes of each GPI scale of students enrolled in all programs/centers, CCA centers, and other programs

Group/Scale	Cognitive Knowing	Cognitive Knowledge	Intrapersonal Identity	Intrapersonal Affect	Interpersonal Interaction	Interpersonal Responsibility
Total Pretest Mean (245)	3.51	3.34	3.89	3.65	3.49	3.67
Mean pre-posttest Change	.03	.33***	.12***	.19***	.13***	.10***
CCA Pretest (139)	3.52	3.34	3.92	3.61	3.50	3.63
Mean pre-posttest Change	.05	.34***	.13***	.19***	.11***	.12***
Other programs Pretest (106)	3.50	3.35	3.87	3.67	3.48	3.73
Mean pre-posttest Change	.03	.34***	.11**	.15**	.18***	.07*

*p< .05; **p<.01; ***:p<.001

Table 3 presents the percent of students from the six CCA centers who indicated that they strongly agreed or agreed with selected GPI items in the pretest and posttest administrations of the GPI. Two items from each of the six GPI scales included in Table 3 are the items with the greatest differences of all the items in each of the six scales. The individual items reflect the differences between the scale means of the pretest and posttest administrations of the six GPI scales, but provide a more detailed portrayal of changes in each of the three domains. Students expressed an increased global perspective on items measuring increased knowledge of intercultural affairs, greater self-confidence in living in new situations, and greater commitment to being more concerned about other citizens.

Table 3: Percent of CCA students agreeing to items in pre and posttest administrations

Item	Pretest	Posttest
When I notice cultural differences, my culture tends to have the better approach.*	38	49
I prefer complex rather than straightforward interpretations of debatable issues	44	50
I am informed of current issues that impact international relations.	47	68
I can discuss cultural differences from an informed perspective.	58	83
I see myself as a global citizen.	59	88
I currently feel that I am developing a meaningful philosophy of life.	77	89
I avoid disagreements with people from backgrounds different from my own.*	32	45
I am confident that I can take care of myself in a completely new situation.	78	95
People from other cultures tell me that I am successful at navigating their cultures.	24	51
I am able to behave appropriately in another cultural context, even if I need to behave inappropriately from the perspective of my own culture.	64	69
I work for the rights of others.	44	57
I put my beliefs into action by standing up for my principles.	79	90

*Percent of students who indicated either Strongly disagree or Disagree on the item since it is worded in a reverse direction.

Table 4: Pretest posttest differences of students in other programs by GPI scale

Institution Number students (N)	ID, of students	Cognitive Knowing	Cognitive Knowledge	Intrapersonal Identity	Intrapersonal Affect	Interpersonal Interaction	Interpersonal Responsibility
2 (9)	.17	.46*	.15	.32**	.37**	.13	
3 (17)	.03	.03	.12*	-.10	.16*	.09	
4 (68)	.00	.38***	.13**	.22**	.17**	.09	
5 (12)	.12	.40**	-.02	-.02	.15	-.08	
Total (106)	.03	.34***	.11**	.15**	.18***	.07*	

* p < .05; ** p < .01; *** p < .001

The pretest/posttest differences of students in the non-CCA programs are presented in Table 4. If we regard these programs as “planned variations” around the broad theme of each program’s goal as one of facilitating student global learning and development with each “intervention” locally determined within this broad goal and mission, a consistency over the programs can be noted. In general, students in most of the education abroad programs show the greatest gains in their self-assessment in the Cognitive domain, especially their knowledge of international affairs and cultural understanding. Students also showed changes in their level of respect, acceptance of cultural difference, and emotional confidence in living in complex situations, but the changes are not consistent over all centers (based on their changes on Affect of Intrapersonal Domain). Students showed changes in how they relate to persons unlike them and their commitment to becoming more global citizens in terms of assisting all persons of this world to live a better life, but the changes over the centers vary somewhat, using the .10 difference as a minimal difference for practical significance.

Discussion

Based on the results of this research study, education abroad is an effective educational experience for students, if the desired goal of an education abroad experience is to help students to develop holistically and globally. Students progressed in all three domains of global learning and development from the beginning to the end of the education abroad experience. These results support the argument that education abroad is a value added experience. That is,

student engagement in education abroad experiences enhances global learning and development, which we argue should now become an important and even the core of holistic student development, a goal of almost every undergraduate college or university. Based on the evidence from ten different programs/centers located throughout the world, students changed their self-assessments of their knowledge of cultural traditions, sense of self, and relations with others over a period of a semester abroad.

The GPI, as a measure of the multiple domains of learning and development rather than a measure of a specific dimension or aspect of student behavior or attitudes, has provided useful evidence for measuring the effectiveness of education abroad. Since the GPI takes into account the fact that student development can be influenced not only by participation in education abroad experiences, but also by their engagement in their total collegiate experience, the GPI results can be interpreted in terms of student development, i.e., in terms of a journey of college students. This journey throughout college, of which an education abroad experience can be a very powerful influence, is a good metaphor in describing and understanding the complexities of student learning and development. The GPI can provide useful information to those responsible for the programs to conduct further follow-up studies involving multiple methods of evidence collection (Deardorff, 2006), such as qualitative studies involving interviews, to investigate more deeply why students view their progress in their learning and development the way they do (e.g, Doyle, 2009).

The differential influence of education abroad on the three domains of global learning and development is an important finding in this research, since the research evidence supports the generalization that students with education abroad experiences are more apt to become more global in their perspective in the intellectual domain than they are in the other two domains which are non-cognitive. That the greatest change in student self-assessments is in the cognitive domain is not surprising since intellectual and cognitive learning and development is the primary focus of a college education, and apparently in education abroad, given these results. But the changes in the Cognitive domain are in Knowledge—what students know and understand about cultural differences—and not on knowing—how students come to learn and understand what is true and important to discern and the development of critical thinking. This finding is consistent with the recent study by the National Survey of Student Engagement, (2007), which found that an education abroad experience is moderately correlated with higher order thinking, and less than with integrative and reflective thinking. Education abroad as currently

designed and implemented at the various centers may not yet sufficiently focus on helping students take a multiple perspective approach to knowledge and understanding. We often hear that students enjoy being abroad and that they learned so much, but the instruction still may be focused on what they learned rather than on how they think. Knowing that differences exist may not have been internalized enough so that it impacts the way students regard knowledge. Thinking critically may not be stressed in comparison to knowledge acquisition. Cultural differences are to be known but they may not be internalized sufficiently to have them affect students' perspectives on knowledge and understanding. Complexity is still not highly evident in the way students approach their thinking, especially how they take into account cultural perspectives.

In general, an education abroad experience seems to have a general positive psychological impact on students. Students express a greater self-confidence in their ability to meet new situations, communicate with others not like them, and have a lesser need to be continuously supported by others. When this finding is interpreted in terms of fostering the goal of student learning and development, the education abroad experiences are important influences in developing stronger self-confidence. Education abroad may be an important catalyst for students developing personal attributes, like a sense of self direction, i.e., helping students make progress in their journey toward self authorship, a critical and central goal of a successful journey in life (e.g., Magolda, 2004). Thus education abroad may prove to be one of those defining experiences in the life of college students that advances them in their journey toward self-authorship within a context of living in a global community.

Based on the specific items of the six scales in which students expressed a more global perspective, students showed the most progress on items that are most highly correlated with a measure of well-being (Walker, 2007). Students increased their global perspective the most on items such as "I see myself as a global citizen"; "I currently feel that I am developing a meaningful philosophy of life"; "I work for the rights of others"; and "I put my beliefs into action by standing up for my principles" (Walker and Braskamp, 2008). In short, over a semester abroad the students changed in ways that indicate growth in developing well-being. The impact of education abroad may have some value in fostering aspects of student development that lead to a more healthy self-image, even though the immediate stress of students going abroad is well documented.

College students in general did not show much change in their social concern for others during their semester abroad, although students in the CCA center in Mexico showed some progress in alignment with the goals of this center. While

social responsibility is a goal listed in almost every college mission statement, and a goal expressed by students, faculty, and academic and student affairs administrators, the attention given to it on campus is much less, according to a recent survey of over twenty colleges and universities (AAC&U, 2008). Thus, a typical education abroad program may also not yet focus on developing this domain of global learning and development. This should not be surprising since the college experience has not fostered growth and development in the non-cognitive areas, as we found in the views of seniors as compared to other undergraduates (Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill, 2008) and as many higher education leaders (e.g., AAC&U, 2007) consider to be important goals of an education. This lack of progress toward a more global perspective may be a matter of attention and focus, but it also may be due to the developmental stages of young persons.

Implications for Practice

Based on the research findings, we conclude that while students did change on five of the six dimensions of holistic student development, they progress more on some dimensions than in others. Cognitive changes in knowledge of international issues were more apparent and evident than growth in having a more complex sense of self and more intense relationships with others unlike them. Students acquired more knowledge, more relationships and more self-confidence, but they did not progress as much in their development in learning how to think using multiple perspectives, integrate their cultural experiences into a more refined sense of self, and become more committed to an interdependent life style. Thus a challenge remains for leaders and faculty in education abroad to create an environment for students that fosters their global learning and development, i.e., more intentionally create in - and out -of -classroom conditions that deliberately foster a global perspective. Formal didactic classroom instruction or experiences such as travel and social encounters alone may be insufficient in guiding students to think with more complexity and to view themselves as global citizens with a sense of responsibility. Recently more pedagogical strategies, based on active learning such as internships, field trips, service learning activities, are becoming a part of the curriculum in education abroad. What may still be missing, however, is the necessary integration of experience and reflection. Experience integrated with rigorous and critical, constructive, and creative thinking may help students learn and develop even more holistically. Education abroad is ideal for creating an optimal global learning and development environment for students, one that brings valued added to whole student development.

In any assessment project in which the GPI is used to provide evidence to program and campus leaders, we strongly propose that this evidence and the conclusions about the potential value added of education abroad on global learning and development be the first step in the assessment process. Evidence from the GPI is a means and not an end, i.e., the GPI is most effective when the results are used to begin conversation, discussion, and debate about what characteristics, events, activities, and interventions in the lives of student studying abroad are most apt to influence the desired changes in the three domains of student learning and development. We advocate that the GPI be used as one measure among many different types of evidence to be collected within a culture that stresses the use of evidence, focusing on a formative and interactive approach rather than a formal, external, and summative approach. We thus encourage education abroad program leaders and faculty to employ a form of strategic thinking that connects desired goals of student learning and development with possible and potential environmental and programmatic factors (Braskamp and Braskamp, 2007). Thus evidence gathered in assessment should be the starting point of focused discussions about improvements and enhancements, effectiveness, and efficiency. What is important is establishing a communication process that encourages stakeholders—especially the faculty and staff—to take ownership of the evidence and the responsibility for creating a more effective and efficacious educational environment.

To increase the utility of the collected evidence we offer a framework that not only focuses on global learning and development as the “desired ends” of education abroad, but one that stresses the potential connections between the “desired ends” and the “appropriate means” to foster and promote these ends. We use the “desired ends” concept in terms of students being on a journey, which is consistent with the human development and cultural communication theoretical bases (e.g., King and Mogolda, 2005). Students, especially during the traditional college years of ages 18–24, are actively involved in asking several questions about themselves, including:

- How do I know?
- Who am I?
- How do I relate to others?

These three questions are related to the domains of Cognitive, Intrapersonal, and Interpersonal. We have employed this framework at a major education abroad organization (Gillispie, Braskamp, and Dwyer, 2009). The framework includes the three dimensions of thinking, self-identity, and relationships with

others in their descriptions and a way to conceptualize the environment of the students. Based on our research of ten liberal arts colleges and universities that have as their goal educating students holistically, we identified four environmental characteristics for organizing the campus environment — Culture, Curriculum, Co-curriculum, and Community (Braskamp, Trautvetter, and Ward, 2006). Culture focuses on the identity and character of the program/center. It includes the rituals that reflect the traditions and legacies, habits of staff and faculty in their interactions with students, rules and regulations, and physical setting. Curriculum focuses on the courses and pedagogy employed by the teaching faculty. It includes course content (what is taught) and pedagogy that reflects local style of teaching and interactions with students (how content is taught). Co-curriculum focuses on the activities out of the classroom that foster student learning and development. It includes planned interventions, programs and activities such as organized trips, social and cultural events, immersion experiences, and leadership programs. Community within focuses on the relationships among the various constituencies including students, faculty, and staff to create a sense of camaraderie and collegiality, whereas community beyond focuses on the relationships study abroad programs and centers establish and have with home stays and external and local community agencies, schools, and churches.

A portrayal of the framework that connects the “desired ends” and “appropriate means” is presented below.

		MEANS			
ENDS		Culture	Curriculum	Co-Curriculum	Community
	Cognitive				
	Intrapersonal				
	Interpersonal				

Based on our experience in conducting a series of workshops on fostering holistic student development at education abroad centers, this framework has been an appropriate way to organize discussions about the environmental conditions of students abroad. The physical and cultural setting in most education abroad programs is ideal for fostering holistic student development, particularly global learning and development. The foreign setting maximizes the opportunities to help students understand the necessity of multiple perspectives, reflect on how one’s own cultural background influences one’s sense of self, and to form social relationships with others not like them. At more than one center faculty were able to create assignments that influenced all three of

the domains. For example, students studying family relations were asked to construct an interview in the native language, interview persons from the local community about their values of the family, and then to write a paper about how family values reflect the culture in which one is reared. This assignment allows students to think about multiple perspectives about a topic, to reflect on their own values about family structures in comparison to others, to interact with persons from a different culture and to communicate orally and in writing in a second language.

In summary, education abroad is ideal for creating an optimal global learning and development environment for students, one that brings valued added to holistic student development. We often hear students say they are learning all the time, are immersed in their work, and find the experience so meaningful and powerful. It may well be that these students are continuously viewing their learning and development as deeply personal and thus filled with meaning. Robert Nash, in a recent article in which he describes features of an environment that creates meaning for students, refers to the learning process in terms of constructivism. He argues, "In summary, constructivism is predicated on an approach to knowledge that views teaching, leading, and learning as conversational, narrative, conditional, developmental, socially and culturally created, as much heart- and hand-based as it is head-based, and always profoundly personal in nature" (Nash, 2008, p. 19). We have attempted to measure and discuss the "desired ends" in ways that include the heart (Intrapersonal), the hands (Interpersonal) as well as the head (Cognitive) and the social cultural environment that may influence the desired global learning and development, i.e., assist students to enhance their global perspective.

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