An Intercultural Competency Program

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Study Abroad at Wake Forest

- Around 60-65% of undergraduates study abroad for credit before graduation
- Approximately two-third of students who study abroad do so for a semester or year
- Wake Forest operates programs in our own facilities in London, Venice & Vienna, and at host universities in Chile, France, Japan, Spain, & the UK; many summer programs
- We benefit from active faculty involvement in study abroad, from teaching abroad to advising students
ICP program developed out of our Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

- QEP entitled “Beyond Boundaries: Preparing Students to Become Global Citizens” (2007 →)
- The goal is to enhance students’ experience abroad, help them take full advantage of time in another culture, and get to know people
- The need: many students are oblivious to cultural differences, don’t know how to start
Wake Forest developed three courses to help students develop ICC

- Pre-departure (INS 150) – started Fall 2007
- While abroad (INS 151) – started Spring 2008
- Re-entry (INS 152) – started Fall 2008

- Each course is 1 credit hour, pass/fail grade
- Voluntary enrollment
What is Intercultural Competence?

• **Knowledge**: self-awareness (foundations of one’s own culture), understanding of world history, knowledge of norms, values, and patterns in other cultures.

• **Skills**: Use knowledge during interaction with others by listening and observing; using appropriate behavior and greetings; establishing rapport; seeking to understand; serving as a “cultural bridge”

• **Attitudes**: motivation to understand and respect others; adaptability; openness; hardiness; tolerates ambiguity; curiosity; readiness to suspend belief or disbelief
Culture:
“...that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” (E.B. Tylor, 1871)

“...the learned and shared patterns of beliefs, behaviors and values of groups of interacting people.” (M.J. Bennett, 1998)
Pre-Departure Course (INS 150) Goals

- Understand the value of intercultural competence
- Explore self-awareness and one’s cultural identity
- Examine multicultural (non)verbal communication styles
- Develop knowledge of cultural adjustment processes
- Survey basic facts/principles of host country culture
- Non-traditional classroom activities

- One credit hour, meets in second half of semester
While Abroad Course (INS 151) Goals

- Enhance exploration of host culture and values
- Encourage active pursuit of intercultural experiences
- Guide reflection on encounters and observations
- Facilitate greater adaptation and fuller immersion
- Activities encourage interaction with locals

- One credit hour, activities done while student is abroad, strong emphasis on written reflection
Re-entry Course (INS 152) Goals

- Facilitate re-entry into the home culture
- Examine personal change and growth
- Identify cultural learning gained during sojourn
- Extend and apply learning in new situations
- Students can skip INS 151, but must have had 150

- One credit hour, meets first half of semester immediately after student returns to campus
“I participated in the ICP to gain support before, during and after my time abroad. This program forced me to think outside my comfort zone and to truly expand my horizons. I found the post-abroad course to be most helpful, as it gave me the opportunity to process everything I had experienced … in Italy.”

- Jenna, studied in Italy, Fall 2008
Intercultural Competence

Student Participation

Enrollments (2008-2009)

- INS 150: ≈ 10% of semester abroad students
- INS 151: ≈ 3%
- INS 152: ≈ 2%

Challenges

- Elective courses
- Recruiting students into the courses
- Many students lack context or appreciation of need for intercultural competence