Pre-International Cultural Preparation Courses: The “Nuts and Bolts” of Course Design and Implementation in a University Setting

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Cross-Cultural Engagement Program (CCE)

• Originate from Accreditation process and university’s Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)
• Three courses help students develop new skills and awareness of intercultural competence
• Pre-departure (INS 150) – started Fall 2007
• While abroad (INS 151) – started Spring 2008
• Re-entry (INS 152) – started Fall 2008
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; tolerant of ambiguity; curiosity; readiness to suspend belief or disbelief
Pre-Departure Course (INS 150) Goals

• Prepare to interact with people in their programs
• Understand the value of intercultural competence
• Explore self-awareness and one’s cultural identity
• Learn about the study abroad “bubble” and develop strategies for getting outside of it
• Examine (non)verbal communication styles
• Understanding cultural adjustment and strategies
• Learn basic facts about host country and culture(s)
Initial challenges

- Course credit value set at 0.5 credits -- too small
- Course title: “intercultural competency program”
- Initially heavy on theory, less on practical
- Marketing: helping students see relevance
- Increasing enrollments
- Staff time for marketing, scheduling, curriculum development, registration
Changes Made to INS 150

- Increased credit value to 1.0 credits, 2009
- Changed to “Preparing for Cross Cultural Engagement Abroad”
- Emphasize practical aspects in preparation
- Online submissions in Sakai, retain for later research
- Changed texts, adapted activities from “What’s Up with Culture” & other sources
“Nuts and Bolts” of the course, part 1

- Faculty steering committee provides overall vision and offers buy-in, but leaves work to Global Programs
- Course offered in the second-half of the semester
  - In fall, can capture SA applicants through mid-October; in spring, through mid-March
- Primary instructor (Andrew Smith) is an instructor, paid by office budget (not departmental faculty)
“Nuts and Bolts” of the course, part 2

- Enrollment is voluntary (not required to study abroad)
- Many students drop the course (right after spring break) because they “have too much work”
- Enrollment process requires “permission of instructor”
- Higher enrollment in spring than in fall
Assessing Student Learning

- Have used IDI (Intercultural Development Inventory) since the beginning, both as monitoring tool as well as instructional tool
- Faculty team is developing a home-grown ICC (intercultural competency) assessment tool
- Numerous readings and assignments
- Daily discussions in class, students learn from each other about new places
- Emphasis on experiential learning
Outcomes: Administrative

• Enrollments in INS 150 have steadily increased
  • 6 in Fall 2007 (1 section) = 6%
  • 85 in Spring 2012 (6 sections) = 13%
  • 94 in Spring 2013 (7 sections) = 15% rate
• Enrollments in INS 151 and INS 152 have increased as well
• New ICC assessment tool being tested (version 3)
Outcomes: Student Learning

• Students feel better prepared for studying abroad
• Students know more about host country
• Students are more willing to step outside their comfort zone, interact with locals (especially in INS 151)
• “Cultural Intelligence” indicator found alumni of program had greater gains
• Students like having career advisors discuss strategies for job interviews
CCE Website
http://global.wfu.edu/cross-cultural-engagement/

- Descriptions of courses, links to syllabi
- Reflections from students
- List of info sessions and course sections
- List of speakers and events
- Notes about Intercultural competence
Intercultural Competence

Next steps

• Increase number of students in CCE courses
• Develop events and programs for on-campus students that relate to intercultural competence and career development
• Do research on outcomes with CCE alumni
• Expand assessment efforts on student learning and student development
• Publish our findings and continue research