

Bang for the Buck: Hybrid Online Short Term Study Abroad Programs

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Abstract

The most effective learning takes place outside the classroom. Study Abroad programs are a high-impact practice that leverages this type of learning and combines it with the kind of cross-cultural experiences which are also high-impact. Unfortunately, such programs are often perceived to be too expensive for the average university student. The length of such programs is often a key prohibitive factor as instructors spend time delivering academic content in lectures while in the host country. Further, most study-abroad programs take place either over lengthy periods of time such as in a full semester, full school year, or over several weeks during peak summer pricing. One way to lower costs and therefore increase the reach of such programs is to deliver formal theoretical material online. Such hybridization can focus and narrow the study abroad to those elements which cannot be experienced outside the host country. The shorter term also reduces costs and thus makes the experience more available to more students. This presentation uses 15 years of online hybrid short-term study abroad experiences from the US to the UK and Ireland to illustrate its advantages (and some disadvantages) to faculty who may have considered such trips as cost-prohibitive to their students in the past.

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