

Immersion and Interdisciplinary Learning in Study Abroad Experience: Building Participant Agency

Dr. Brenda Kauffman

Flagler College, United States

Abstract

International education and intercultural communication are increasingly necessary for students to be successful after college in the globalized world. Study abroad opportunities for students to learn critical skills for navigating the world and the time and space to reflect on their own assumptions and beliefs. Well-crafted study abroad programs enable students to expand their conceptualizations of ethical citizenship and awareness of global issues. Immersing in and discovering diverse viewpoints can impact the way students consider the local in the global. Interdisciplinary approaches to studying abroad are even more effective. This paper presents some key examples of faculty led study abroad. It provides pedagogical tools for planning successful trips, analyzes the kinds of activities and individuals included, and assesses their overall effectiveness as high impact practices that put students into real contexts with real people with real struggles and high stakes. Establishing a balance between being interlopers and members of the community is challenging but rewarding. The paper offers key examples of such cases from an interdisciplinary perspective. The agency of all participants is considered in the context of genuine exchange.

Keywords: global citizenship, global ethics, pedagogy, study abroad, sustainability