Developing an In-House Instrument to Assess Learning Outcomes of International Education

Lisa Chieffo, University of Delaware
Rachel Romesburg, Barnard College
David Rudd, Arcadia University

Before the session begins, please complete the questionnaire on your chair. Thank you!
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NAFSA San Diego 2014
University of Delaware

- Doctoral research institution
- 15,000 undergrads
  - 33% study abroad, 1,250 in 2013/2014
  - 969 in January 2014
- 4-1-4 calendar
  - 5-week January term
  - courses offered abroad and on-campus
  - 50 faculty-led programs representing 75% of academic departments
- 10-12 faculty-led summer programs, <200 students
- About 20 semester/exchange programs (about 150 students total
- 10-person office staff

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“Home grown” assessment initiative:

- Developed iteratively
  - first instrument – post-program only
  - second – pre and post, but not well tested
  - third – pilot tested, doctoral student assistant (expertise)

- Incorporated into required online pre-departure orientation

- Linked to University-wide Discovery Learning Experience required for graduation

- Incorporated to a required post-program assessment

- Uses existing online course evaluation system (via registration for 0-credit, pass/fail travel study marker, UNIV course)

- Includes standard satisfaction survey (subjective feedback on program quality)
Arcadia University

- Glenside, Pennsylvania (suburban Philadelphia)
- 4,000 Students (2,000+ UG; 1,500+ GR)
- 4 Colleges (Arts & Sciences, Health Science, Global Studies, Global Business) and 2 Schools (Continuing Studies & Education)

The College of Global Studies

- 60+ years in education abroad
- 17 countries, 140+ Programs
- 3,000 students per year
- Center-based, internship, institutional-based programs
- Global faculty, staff, properties, curricula
Examples of “home grown” assessment initiatives:

- Goal Inventory to identify student goal formation; used in pre-departure and in-country advising
- Post-program evaluation to re-assess student goals and how they have changed
- Course Evaluation form for center-taught courses, which addresses the relevance of place
- Co-Curricular Learning rubric to assess aspects of out-of-classroom learning
- Program Review process, referred to as ATLAS, ties program review to the accreditation standards
Barnard College

- Liberal arts college, for women, in New York City
- Affiliated with Columbia University
- 2,400 undergrads
- ~5% international students
- ~30% of students study abroad
- Office of International and Intercultural Student Programs (OIIS)
  - study abroad, visiting international students, full-degree international students, faculty trips, and other international programming on and off-campus
  - 3.5 staff

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Examples of “home grown” assessment initiatives:

• Designed goal-setting program
  • Before going abroad: students set academic and personal goals
  • Mid-semester: students are reminded of their individual goals
  • End of semester: students are again reminded of their goals and rate their success in achieving them
  • Goals are coded for content, specificity, and attainability

• Both study abroad students AND visiting international students are assessed
  • Poster presentation at NAFSA’s 2014 International Education Research Fair – *The Invisible Population: Lessons Learned from Visiting International Students*
Assessment is not a four-letter word

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Pursuing a Line of Inquiry

• **Goals: why do you want to know?**
  • Institutional mandate vs. personal or unit area of interest

• **Groups of interest: who do you want to ask?**
  • Study abroad students, international students, faculty
  • Recognize potential for multiple, overlapping assessment initiatives

• **Scope of inquiry: what do you want to know?**
  • General learning/development vs. specific outcomes of a particular program
Pursuing a Line of Inquiry

- **Audience:** with whom, and in what way, will you share what you learn?
  - Internal (i.e. annual report) vs. external (re-accreditation, publication)

- **When to assess, and for how long?**
  - Long-term, ongoing initiative vs. one-time project

- **Cost**
  - cost of instrument itself
  - personnel cost
  - possible student incentives to complete surveys

Once the nature and scope of inquiry are determined, available instruments can be examined.
Advantages of an In-House Instrument

Why not just purchase a commercial instrument?

• Freedom to measure exactly what you want!
• Measure when and how you want—what works for your campus and students
• Change instrument/items as needs/goals change
• No fee for administration; exercise control over costs
• Institutional ownership of instrument
Disadvantages of an In-House Instrument

But freedom has its price . . .

• Can be labor-intensive
• requires institutional expertise, working with other offices; some expertise within international ed. office preferred
• data bottleneck due to competing demands of “real job”
• staff turnover may stall project
• difficult to generalize results to other institutions
Welcome to My World

But we don’t have enough time… or budget!

I don’t know the first thing about statistics!

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Practical Tips for Garnering Support

• **Seek Resources within Academic Departments**
  - graduate student support, data interpretation

• **Share Resources / Data with units with an Institutional Focus**
  - Institutional Research
  - Office of Assessment
  - Accreditation Team
  - Planning Division
  - Student Affairs
  - Curricular Assessment Teams

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Practical Tips for Garnering Support

• Collaborate between Education Abroad and International Student Offices
  • As appropriate, develop comparative instruments, share results

• Appeal to institutional stakeholders who have an interest in the outcomes

• Be transparent!
  • share results, collaborate, accept critique, build buy-in

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Resources

- Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education:  [www.aalhe.org](http://www.aalhe.org)
- NAFSA Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship Knowledge Community
- *Measuring and Assessing Internationalization*, Madeleine F. Green, May 2012, [www.nafsa.org](http://www.nafsa.org) (e-publication)
How to find us

Rachel Romesburg, Program Director
Office of International and Intercultural Student Programs
Barnard College
New York, New York, USA
212-854-8972
rromesbu@barnard.edu
barnard.edu/global

David Rudd, Director
Center for Research and Assessment
College of Global Studies
Arcadia University
Glenside, Pennsylvania, USA
215.572.2901
ruddd@arcadia.edu
arcadia.edu/research/assessment

Lisa Chieffo
Associate Director
Institute for Global Studies
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware, USA
302-831-2852
lchieffo@udel.edu
udel.edu/global/studyabroad

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