

Compassion in Study Abroad

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COMPASSION AS A THEORETICAL CONSTRUCT

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Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr:

“Intelligence plus character – that is the true goal of education.”



World-Readiness Standards (ACTFL)

Interact with cultural competence and understanding: relating cultural practices and products, on the one hand, to cultural perspectives, on the other.



AAC&U Liberal Education (1)



Global Learning: “Engage and learn from perspectives and experiences different from one’s own ... how one’s place in the world informs and limits one’s knowledge”

Perspective Taking

AAC&U Liberal Education (2)

Intercultural Knowledge:
“Interprets intercultural experience from the perspective of own and more than one worldview and demonstrates ability to act in a supportive manner that integrates the feelings of another cultural group”

Empathy



Global Competence (Asia Society)



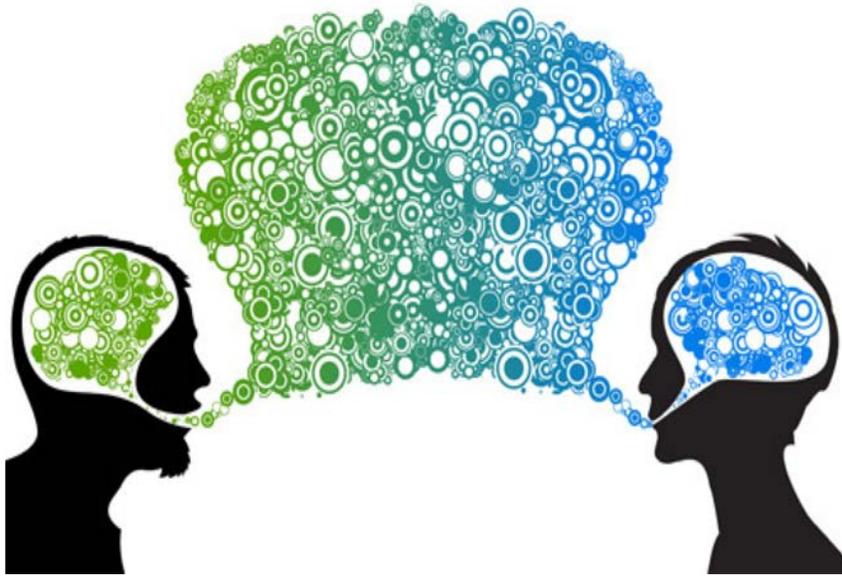
4 Domains of Global Competence

- Investigate the World
- Recognize Perspectives
- Communicate Ideas
- **Take Action**

Charter for Compassion



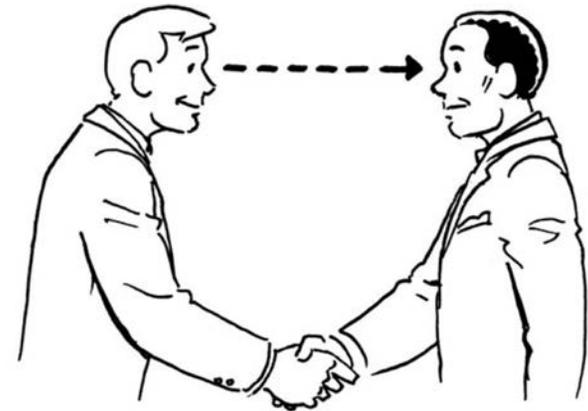
Communicative Competence



Hymes

Additional Dimensions of Communication

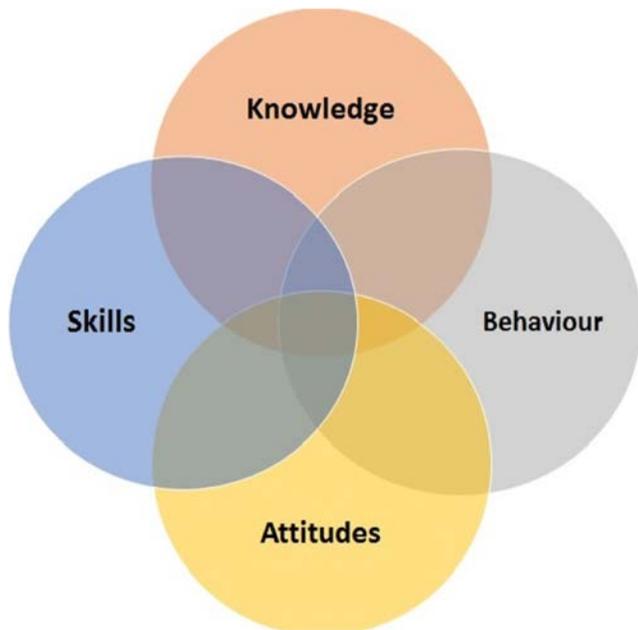
- Paralanguage - pitch, rate of speech
- Proxemics - space between us
- Oculistics - eye contact
- Kinesics - facial expressions, gestures
- Haptics - touch
- Silence - pause culture



RMRS

Chaney and Martin

Intercultural Competence (1)



ICC is a complex of abilities needed to perform ‘effectively’ and ‘appropriately’ when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself.

(Fantini)

Intercultural Competence (2)



Intercultural Competence (3)



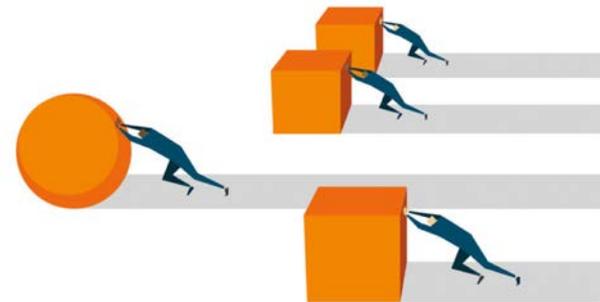
Chomsky: Competence vs Performance

What we know
(cannot be measured)



Attitudes

What we do (can be measured)



Skills

Compassion = Intercultural Performance

- Investigating
- Cultural Self-Awareness
- Empathy
- Perspective Taking
- Interpreting
- Participating
- Building cultural bridges / Advocating for intercultural understanding



We must count what we value,
because by default,
**be value only that
which we count.**



COMPASSION IN THE PROGRAM: PRE-DEPARTURE

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Pre-Departure Programming & Compassion 1

- Benchmarks
 - How does the study abroad experience impact your students?
 - Does the experience move the needle in a positive direction?



Pre-Departure Programming & Compassion 2



- Tension - Selfishness vs. Compassion
 - Balance between “developing oneself” and “concern for others”
 - Personal and professional development vs “voluntourism”
 - Striking the right tone – academic rigor and helping the less fortunate

Pre-Departure Programming & Compassion 3

- Opportunities
 - Reframing existing pre-departure programming
 - Establishing a new approach that incorporates the role of compassion within the framework of an academic study abroad program



Intercultural Competence Workshops in PDO

- Assessment - application essay responses, inventories, et al.
- Pledge - the value of “creeds” and “credos”
- Reflection and goal setting
- Action plan and personal mission statement
- Guided introduction to “What is Culture”
 - Iceberg theory time
- Intentional approach - presenting opportunities to engage in compassionate activities within study abroad programs



Additional Activities to Consider

- Language boot camps and survival language classes
- An orientation before the orientation
- Role of host institution in PDO and on-site orientations
- Online and on-site buddies



COMPASSION IN THE PROGRAM: DURING STUDY ABROAD

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Volunteer Work - Teaching at a Refugee Center in Heidelberg

- Special topics course “Refugee Crisis: A Multi-Disciplinary Policy Perspective on European Refugee Crisis”
- Support for refugee families and on-site social workers
- Learning and playing activities during 3 mornings / week
- Students are responsible for:
 - Project management
 - Fundraising
 - Lesson plans and instructions
 - Social Media, PR, and Event Planning



About the Course



- Interdisciplinary to examine the challenges that arise from the large-scale human migration and asylum processes
- Conducted in four main ways:
 - Theoretical background (history, policies, asylum laws, migration and integration policies)
 - Service learning (3x week, 4 hours in 3 groups)
 - Reflection
 - Presentations during a bi-annual symposium

Learning Goals and Outcomes

- Engage in a meaningful way and develop emotional skills such as empathy and compassion
- Develop self-awareness and leadership skills
- Foster intercultural communication skills and embrace other cultures
- Gain geographical know how and learn about world politics and conflicts
- Utilize theoretical knowledge and transfer it into practice
- Cultural Immersion through interaction with local NGO's and other volunteers



From a Student Perspective



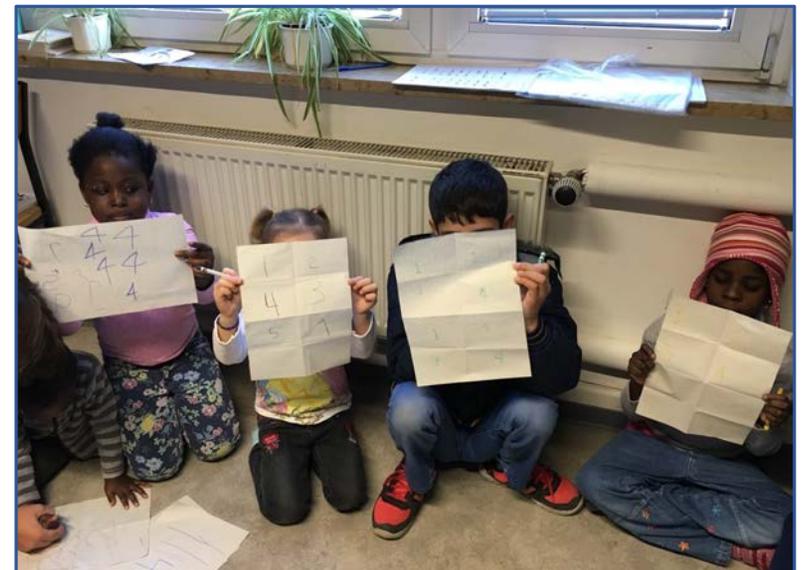
- Interaction with families and children of all ages, cultures, and languages
- Work side-by-side with Caritas, a German non-profit organization
- Establish relationships through stories, similarities, and learning experiences with refugees from around the world
- Share smiles and laughs with children through participating in our daily activities
- Sense of pride for the meaningful and impacting work they do

Liberal Education and America's Promise - LEAP program

- Essential learning outcomes defined by the Association of American Colleges and Universities:
 - Integrative Learning
 - Creative Thinking
 - Problem Solving
 - Team Work / Collaboration

Challenges and the Future of the Program

- Sustainability
 - Constantly adapting to the current situation
 - Continuous collaboration with local NGOs and reaching out to other projects to build the program to include more than one project
- Cultural differences and sensitive issues
- Reflection time is crucial to digest the lessons learned
- Increased monetary support from the CEPA Foundation







COMPASSION IN THE PROGRAM: POST-RETURN

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Returning Home - Processing the Experience

- 2008 - Michigan State “Unpacking” Study and Lessons from Abroad
 - What impact have these initiatives had on returnee programming?
- Assessment Data Collection
 - Documenting the movement of the needle
- Campus Celebration
 - Euphoria...
- Small Group Debriefings
 - Often not so euphoric, but important for personal development
- Opportunities to Share Stories and Apply New Knowledge
 - Helping students prepare their presentations to “the next generation”

TECHNOLOGY FACILITATES THE WORK

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Overview



- The power of technology and media
 - Finding Others
 - Global Reach
 - Acceleration - speed with which digital information travels
- Technology for study abroad
 - Negatives
 - Positives
 - It's about reasonable and responsible use
- 4 Categories of technology use:
 - Exploration and Self-Development
 - Communication
 - Self-Expression
 - Activism



1. Technology for Exploration and Self-Development Pre-departure



- Technology can assist students in immersion of a place
 - Geography, environment, plants, and animals
 - Culture, daily life, food, music, religion, and art
 - Government, politics, regulations, technology infrastructure, and freedom/access to information
- Facilitating Technologies
 - Online learning management systems
 - Online tutorials
 - Local radio feeds - Sound Garden Radio App
 - Online news feeds
 - Images
 - Web conferencing
 - Facebook, Twitter, blog, and internet searches
 - Virtual reality

Sound Garden App





2. Technology for Communication

Where we form connections we attach emotionally; where we attach emotionally we have empathy and compassion.

- Technology facilitates:
 - Connections, friendships, and understanding of one's personal life.
 - Home connections
- Facilitating technologies:
 - Mobile technology
 - Social media





3. Technology For Self-Expression

How do I feel? What have I learned? How has this experience changed me?



- Passion is often revealed through self-expression
- Technology facilitates self-expression through constructive and reflective activities:
 - Media projects, written journals, photo journals, and blogs
 - Create during study abroad as an outlet while information and experiences are in the forefront



4. Technology for Activism Post-departure

- Facilitating post-departure proaction - Changing the world (or a part of it)
- Technology can be used to keep students engaged and turn their experiences into action after returning home.
- Connection to people abroad.
- Special interest groups.
- Activism - spreading the word.



A photograph of a courtyard with a wooden door, potted plants, and two wooden chairs on a brick floor. The scene is set in a courtyard with a weathered wall and a wooden door. In the foreground, there are two wooden chairs on a brick floor. The background features a wooden door and several potted plants, including a cactus and various leafy plants in terracotta pots. The overall atmosphere is warm and rustic.

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THANK YOU