Virtually there:
Examing a collaborative online international learning
pre-departure study abroad intervention

Carrie Wojenski, Ed.D | Sacred Heart University
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Guided interventions are necessary

(La Brack, 1994; Paige, 1993)
Problem of Practice

Background

Studying online intervention outcomes is not enough

(La Brack, 2003; Lou & Bosley, 2008; GlobaLinks Learning Abroad, 2012; The Center for Global Education, 2012; University of Minnesota: Learning Abroad Center, 2012; Romero, 2005)
Research Background

What we now know

The Georgetown Consortium Project

(Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009)
Research Background

What we now know

Lou and Bosley’s students increased their IDI® scores

(Vande Berg, 2009; Lou & Bosley, 2008; Bosley, 2012; Cunningham, 2009; West, 2010)
Research Background

What we’re missing

guided intervention research

computer-supported collaborative learning research
Research Background

Computer-supported collaborative learning

(Mullenburg & Berg, 2005; Vonderwell, 2003; Volet & Wosnitza, 2004; Fung, 2004; Stahl, 2006; Resta & Lafenière, 2007; Hartman, 2010)
Research Background

Computer-supported collaborative learning

(Wegerif & Mansour, 2010; van Aalst, 2009; Resta & Laferrière, 2007; Hmelo, Guzdial, & Tums, 1998; Hmelo-Silver, 2006)
Problem of Practice

Studying online intervention outcomes is not enough
Context

Purpose of Research

Identify factors that:

- influence pre-departure study abroad students’ intercultural development
- experiences in an online intervention

Understanding these factors on a deeper level will:

- help education abroad professionals design more effective online interventions for study abroad students
The research questions posed were:

• (a) what is the influence of a collaborative online international learning intervention on pre-departure study abroad students’ intercultural development;

• (b) how do social interactions influence pre-departure study abroad students’ experiences within the intervention;

• (c) what are the affordances and constraints of collaborative learning in an online, international intervention?
Study Context

Design

Sakai

facebook

Inbound Fall Outbound
7 Seminar Group 8
3 Comparison Group 8

Inbound Spring Outbound
6 Seminar Group 4
5 Comparison Group 7
Study Context

Theoretical framework

(Garrison, Anderson, and Archer, 2000)
Methodology

Data collection

Mixed Methods Research

**Needs Analysis**
- Identified technical knowledge gaps or restrictions

**Pre-ID**
- Intercultural development continuum score

**Focus Groups**
- Mid and end Affordances /constraints of CSCL and intervention; experiences

**Post-ID**
- Progress gauge of Intercultural development continuum score
Methodology

Data analysis

- Needs Analysis
  - Descriptive statistics
- IDIs
  - Two-factor Anova
- Focus Groups
  - Deductive & inductive coding
- Online discussions
  - Deductive & inductive coding

**Relationship Between Research Questions and Data Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Data Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are the affordances and constraints of collaborative learning in an online,</td>
<td>Needs Analysis</td>
<td>Phenomenological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>international intervention?</td>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>What is the influence of the intervention on study abroad students’ intercultural</td>
<td>IDI®</td>
<td>Two-factor ANOVA Phenomenological</td>
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<tr>
<td>development?</td>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How do social interactions influence students’ experiences within the intervention?</td>
<td>Online discussions Focus Groups</td>
<td>Phenomenological</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications for Practice

Findings

A summary:

- Ways the intervention and social experiences influenced students’ measured and self-reported intercultural development

- How participants’ technical and social interactions were connected to CoI presences and perceive intercultural development

- Affordances and constraints of a CSCL intervention
Implications for Practice

Findings

• Students’ experiences and engagement within an intervention are intimately connected to the social interactions experienced. Both groups agreed that interacting with other participants was the most educational, developmental, and enjoyable aspect of the seminar.

• Students who participated actively in the seminar demonstrated more of the intended learning outcomes, felt more socially connected, and had a more positive seminar experience. Active participation was also connected to the quality of reflections.
Implications for Practice

Findings

• Factors that inhibit social connectedness included overall participation rates, individual insecurity, and technological challenges.

• Different technologies, which offer different affordances and constraints for supporting a COIL community, greatly influence learning and social experiences. Choice of platform and integration of tools influenced seminar students’ motivation and perceived socialness, as well as perceptions of the value-added affordances of technology.
Implications for Practice

Intercultural development

(Hammer, 2009)
Implications for Practice

Lessons learned

• A CSCL environment has the potential to connect people from around the world, provide a voice to all participants in a flexible format, allow space for prolonged thought and reflection, and provide a value added element in understanding content.

• Technologies used in COIL environments must support the social connections necessary to create a collaborative community otherwise students will not achieve the desired learning outcomes.

• Technological constraints, such as connectivity, lack of embedded collaborative tools, and disjointed flow can discourage participation and thwart intervention success.
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Implications for Practice

Lessons learned

If the technologies employed do not afford the social connections necessary to create a collaborative community, neither enhanced cognitive presence nor shared meaning making will be realized.
Implications for Practice

Lessons learned

This study may be used as a reference for practitioners, providing practical guidelines and insight into the implications of design decision so that they may implement COIL interventions with their own study abroad populations.

- Consider a well-designed, 3 credit, 45 content hour intervention. Experiment with Pre/During/Post intervention
- Balance instructional and cognitive needs with an environment that affords social presence
- Provide further opportunities for virtual f-2-f interaction
- Include activities that facilitate deeper connection, foster conflict and resolution, and require participants to work towards a shared goal
Thank You