Enhancing the Faculty-Led Study Abroad Proposal Process to Facilitate the Creation of Academically Enriched Programs

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Enhancing the Faculty-Led Study Abroad Proposal Process to Facilitate the Creation of Academically Enriched Programs

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IELR PIM73

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of International Education at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

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Adviser: David Shallenberger, Professor
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Date: ___7/10/2015__________
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ABSTRACT

Faculty-led programs are distinctive in that they are created through collaborations between study abroad professionals and the faculty who lead them. Faculty leaders are experts in their discipline, while the study abroad administrators are knowledgeable about best practices and theories related to learning abroad. This paper set out to determine what proposal and academic preparation procedures could be developed that incorporate key stakeholders at North Dakota State University and that contribute to the creation of academically sound programs that include student development and experiential/constructivist learning theories. Data was collected through surveys submitted by study abroad administrators at the national and regional level, as well as by faculty leaders at North Dakota State University. A majority of faculty leaders welcomed standardized guidelines, learning objectives, and assessment, as long as it did not interfere with the discipline-specific content. At the same time, very few study abroad professionals reported that they were directly involved with course content, nor had they incorporated standardized learning objectives and assessment. It was determined that the inclusion of consistent guidelines and procedures into the proposal would lead to the academic enhancement of faculty-led programs. By recommending the use of standardized content early in the process while faculty are designing the courses, faculty could decide how to utilize the content and make use of additional resources related to student development and learning abroad. This method provides a partnership between study abroad professionals and faculty, where each one contributes their expertise towards educationally enriched faculty-led courses.
ENHANCING FACULTY-LED STUDY ABROAD

Introduction

Faculty-led courses are unique in that home campuses are the ones that are responsible for the credit that is awarded, unlike some other study abroad experiences that bring in credit from other institutions. These courses are created in collaboration between faculty members and study abroad offices, the latter of whom is often not involved with designing the academic components. Yet, it often falls upon the study abroad offices to create the evaluation and assessment pieces due to the overarching similarities across programs, their inherent experiential learning components, and the specialized knowledge study abroad professionals have on the topic. Vande Berg, Paige, and Hemming Lou (2012), the authors of *Student Learning Abroad: What Our Students Are Learning, What They’re Not, and What We Can Do About It*, found that faculty and staff not only need to, “frame learning and teaching abroad very differently, but also to change long-established practices in designing and delivering programs” (p. 418). They go on to say that faculty and staff will need to, “identify clear learning outcomes, provide for the mentoring of students, and assess their learning” (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012, p. 418). The authors are clearly stating that it is not only the responsibility of the study abroad professionals, but also the responsibility of the faculty who teach students abroad to work together to accomplish academic goals.

My role at North Dakota State University (NDSU) for the past seven years has been working with the administration of study abroad programs, so all aspects of the faculty-led proposal stem from what was done prior to my arrival in the position and my expertise as I have made updates over the years. Up to this point, the proposal has been a purely administrative function with no integration of the academic piece, except to ask
for approval signatures from the department and college. The reason this study is being
undertaken stemmed from an incident when a department on campus refused to allow on-
site experiences to be able to be counted towards the classroom contact hours, even
though other departments had approved the same types of experiences. It was at that
point that a suggestion was made to make a proposal for standardizing certain aspects of
faculty-led courses, based on industry standards, which could then be vetted and
approved by the NDSU Academic Affairs Committee. That suggestion, along with a
course I took on assessment and evaluation, turned my focus towards improving and
standardizing the current faculty-led course creation process at NDSU.

This study will look at how to bridge the gap between what is viewed as a fairly
non-academic, faculty-led proposal process with the regular course creation process at
NDSU. First, I would like to learn if it is possible to encourage the use of student
development and experiential/constructivist learning theories as the basis of the faculty
leader’s course design using the proposal process. It is my assumption that very few
faculty on campus design their abroad courses using these theories and yet they are
foundational for the learning that occurs abroad.

Secondly, the goal is to determine the role of the proposal in relation to the
standardization of faculty-led learning objectives and evaluation plan. The International
Student and Study Abroad Services (ISSAS) office is in the process of transitioning into
the division of Student Affairs as this paper is being written. The plan when the paper
was proposed was to create a set of faculty-led learning objectives and an evaluation plan
derived from the NDSU core undergraduate learning experience outcomes (CULE) to
include as an appendix, however the division of Student Affairs is in the process of creating a Student Affairs Learning Agenda (SALA) that is intended to:

Better align the work of the Division of Student Affairs with the academic mission of the institution and to guide the development and assessment of programs and services to ensure they contribute to student learning or create an environment conducive to learning. In the fall more guidance will be coming from the Student Affairs Assessment Committee and a to-be-created Curriculum Committee on how you can begin to integrate these outcomes. (T. Alverez, personal communication, June 5, 2015)

Due to the fact that learning outcomes and assessment plan are still being worked on at the division level, the focus has shifted for that portion of the paper to be directed towards determining the best method for including the yet to be finalized learning outcomes and assessment as part of the faculty-led proposal process.

Thirdly, as mentioned earlier, there are no academic guidelines at NDSU as to which types of experiences abroad are able to count towards contact hours or how those hours should be calculated. The lack of institutional guidance in this area has led to inconsistencies among the various departments that conduct faculty-led programs. Finally, I hoped to learn more about the NDSU departmental and college procedures that are in existence to ensure the proposal works within the procedures already in place across campus. The goal was to combine the nationally recognized best practices with the current NDSU ones in order to create academic guidelines and faculty-led course creation procedures.
The research question I addressed is: *What universal faculty-led proposal and academic preparation procedures can be developed at NDSU that incorporate key stakeholders while contributing to the creation of academically sound programs that take into consideration the student development and experiential/constructivist learning that occurs?* The intended outcome on the faculty-led course design process will be that programs will be enriched through the use of student development and experiential/constructivist learning theories; by the integration of standardized learning outcomes and evaluations; and through the formation of campus-wide guidelines. By creating a process that marries the significantly different, but important components of the non-academic proposal process with the academic course creation process, the hope is for enhanced academic quality.

**Literature Review**

It is important to set the groundwork for the process by which a study abroad program can be created in a way that enhances both the developmental and the learning needs of students. According to King and Baxter Magolda (2011), many educational settings feel that these two areas are mutually exclusive, but the authors argue that they should be considered together, especially when seeking to improve intercultural maturity. The theories used as part of this paper for student development and learning are based on the experiential/constructivist paradigm where the learner is central in creating knowledge and beliefs, “Learning does not occur as the environment imprints itself on the mind; it occurs through ongoing transactions between the individual and the environment, with humans the principal agents of their own learning” (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012, p. 18). The experiential/constructivist paradigm is a way
of teaching and learning that brings the learners’ assumptions, knowledge, and beliefs into awareness and focuses on how they interact with the environment (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Theory is based on the learning cycle (Appendix A) that is made up of four areas: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012). Deep learning occurs when the learner engages with all four aspects of the cycle, “When a concrete experience is enriched by reflection, given meaning by thinking and transformed by action, the new experience becomes richer, broader, deeper” (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012, p. 146). The learner is not able to do this effectively on their own, but rather is reliant on an educator to help guide the process through effectively designed courses (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). Passarelli and Kolb (2012) explain the philosophy one must have in order to become an experiential educator through the following four points: educating is a relationship, which means that learning involves interactions that build back and forth between the learner and the educator; educating is holistic, meaning that learning goes beyond the act of gaining cognitive skills and into spheres of emotional and social skills; educating is learning-oriented, which is a concern for process of how learners reach the answers; and learner centered, having a focus on taking a learner from where they began with all of their innate knowledge and beliefs to being able to become self-directed.

King and Baxter Magolda’s (2011) chapter on student learning, in the book *Student Services: A Handbook for the Profession*, is especially useful for setting the foundation for theories that should be incorporated into a faculty-led program. The use of Self-Authorship Theory, Transformation Theory (Mezirow, 2000), the Learning
Partnerships Model, and the Framework for Student Development are discussed extensively throughout King and Baxter Magolda’s work. All four tie together in a way that can help advance the developmental growth of college age students and they are all experiential/constructivist at their roots. Self-Authorship and Transformation Theories form the basis of how learning and development occur while the Learning Partnerships Model provides a way for educators to help students as they discover their internal self. The Framework for Student Development breaks down self-authorship into three levels while providing, “a comprehensive example of developmental goals, learning outcomes, faculty/staff expectations, and learning experiences” (King and Baxter Magolda, 2011, p. 219). Even though the authors offer a more general use of these theories rather than pertaining specifically to study abroad, the theories used to encourage deep learning align well with this paper.

**Self-Authorship Theory**

King and Baxter Magolda (2011) highlight the importance of Self-Authorship Theory to help students make meaning of new experiences, like when they participate in a faculty-led program, which will then lead to transformational learning. Traditional college age students are attempting to resolve three questions related to intellectual, intrapersonal and interpersonal development: “How do I know? Who am I? How do I want to construct relationships with others?” (Davidson, 2011). As students answer these questions, they move from understanding that knowledge is static and external to an internalized and changing set of views and beliefs. They begin to rely on themselves rather than external authorities as they set their internal compass. Holbrook (2012) writes that self-authorship is a “promising example of a more holistic approach to student
development” (p. 36). By providing opportunities to challenge students in these areas and supporting students as they navigate through self-authorship, faculty-led courses can help advance students along their path of development.

Opportunities through which students learn to construct new frames of reference with these features make for powerful educational experiences. In addition, such experiences can cut across dimensions of development: they can help students become good critical thinkers and decision makers (epistemological development), become self-aware and appropriately confident (intrapersonal development), and socially responsible citizens (interpersonal development).

(King and Baxter Magolda, 2011, p. 209)

The use of Self-Authorship Theory as an integral part of the teaching and learning can enhance the experiences that students have on the programs. Faculty leaders can help students become more internally focused by designing their program and teaching style to validate students’ knowledge by “presenting thorny problems and topics that lend themselves to multiple legitimate perspectives, introducing them to competencies needed to address those topics, and helping them form, and accept responsibility for, their own decisions and actions” (Hodge, Baxter Magolda & Haynes, 2009). Self-Authorship is discussed further throughout this paper and forms the foundation for the Learning Partnerships Model and the Student Development Framework.

**Transformation Theory**

King and Baxter Magolda (2011) stress the importance of creating a transformative environment that “gives students opportunities to learn new skills but also systematically and intentionally build in opportunities to help students “make object” that
to which they are currently “subject” (p. 2015). This idea is related to Mezirow’s Transformation Theory (2001) where learners experience changes to their meaning structures, but the change occurs through the use of reflection. An example of how this type of learning has been applied to an NDSU program, albeit unintentionally on the leader’s part, is a situation where students stay with the families of migrant workers, and the students participate in service-learning with the families to help them with their crops. The leader requires written and facilitates verbal reflection periods throughout the experience. It challenges the students’ perceptions of the American views on migrant workers while helping them to put things in context based on their new perspective. It also forces them to reevaluate their view of something that is currently being told to them by others (how to view migrant workers) by giving them the context to make up their own mind based on personal experiences with those families. “Inner emotional states and values become object, making it possible to reflect on them and make intentional choices about them that are separate from others’ emotions” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2011, p. 210).

The Transformative Education Abroad Model (TEAM) proposed by Ogden (2010) details the process of how global citizenship and academic development are shaped by the transformative learning process. Ogden goes on to place the findings of his research about embedded programs, a type of faculty-led program that is abroad for a shorter duration and is part of an on-campus course, within TEAM and discusses his findings. The model sets the experience abroad as the disorienting dilemma that helps lead students towards transformed meaning perspectives. The model may be useful as a practical way to include transformation theory into the faculty-led course design. If
nothing else, it will be a wonderful resource for faculty to have available as they plan their courses.

**Learning Partnerships Model**

Each educator has a unique set of qualifications and experiences that has led them to create a faculty-led program. Some may already utilize the concepts introduced previously for learning and development, but for others this may be new. A faculty member in Business, Architecture, or Communications may not have the foundation for creating faculty-led courses that utilize student development theories because they are experts in their subject area and not necessarily in education techniques related to study abroad. Creating a study abroad course is very different from creating a course on campus and many are not prepared for the reality of the type of experiential learning that occurs, nor are faculty aware of how to merge academic learning with student development theory. King and Baxter Magolda (2011) talk about the importance of having the combination of the two when they say that it, “involves more than the acquisition of knowledge and skills; it also includes developing a frame of mind that allows students to put their knowledge into perspective; to understand the sources of their beliefs and values; and to establish a sense of self…” (p. 207). It is critical for leaders to realize that the experience on the ground will have an impact on the students that reaches far beyond any normal classroom setting. The faculty members are there to facilitate the depth of learning and to set the stage for transformational learning. Many programs will put students into situations that are unfamiliar, but the leap will be to help guide them towards the next step of putting meaning to events. “Opportunities through which
students learn to construct new frames of reference with these features make for powerful educational experiences” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2011, p. 209).

To help educators as they facilitate students’ journey of development and learning, King and Baxter Magolda (2011) developed the Learning Partnerships Model where the role of the educator is to, “support learners in developing internal authority by: validating learners’ capacity to know; situating learning in learners’ experiences; and defining learning as a mutual process” (p. 217). The Learning Partnerships Model provides a helpful framework for program leaders to foster learning and self-authorship and to stretch their participant’s thinking beyond their safe patterns. The model supports the development of self-authorship to help students move towards internalizing knowledge rather than having a reliance on external sources. This idea of taking students beyond the reliance of authorities for their opinions, values and beliefs is incorporated within the model. There are three core principles: “Validating learners as knowers, situating learning in learner’s own experience, and defining learning as mutually constructing meaning” (Davidson, 2011, p.2). The use of the model on faculty-led programs means that the students will have developmental goals built into the curriculum and that are tied to the experiences abroad. This design will allow the participants to move away from a reliance on external sources and to realize the limitations inherent in that reliance on others. Faculty can incorporate the Learning Partnerships Model into their teaching style by, “Creating a safe environment and validating learner’s capacity to learn, using their experiences as a context for learning, and encouraging multiple perspectives…”(King & Baxter Magolda, 2011, p. 216). The authors also suggest further resources for putting these ideas into practice in an educational setting. The Learning
Partnerships Model is more useful to the faculty as they form their teaching, rather than as something incorporated into the coursework.

**Framework of Student Development**

The Framework of Student Development was designed by K.B. Taylor and C. Haynes (2008) to provide a framework for student learning utilizing Self-Authorship Theory (King & Baxter Magolda, 2011, p. 2016). The use of the Framework of Student Development (Appendix B) is important to be able to situate the student development goals for the participants on NDSU faculty-led programs, as well as to develop learning goals that are appropriate for scope of the program. “Both the person (learner characteristics) and environment (learning context) must be considered when designing educational experiences” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2011, p. 214). Although students attending a faculty-led program may vary developmentally, the type of learning experience fits well in tier one of the framework. Students in this tier are still very reliant on external knowledge and have thought processes that are more fixed. For many students who attend a faculty-led program at NDSU, this will be their first time abroad. Even though these students may function at higher level developmentally, the use of the tier one frame to help determine developmental goals and learning outcomes are the best fit for the majority of participants. Knowing in advance that a majority of the students will not be reaching the highest levels of development as they would on an immersive, semester-long program, means that the learning outcomes can be framed in a way to help students on their journey through the tier one level. The tier one information details faculty or staff expectations to:
Cultivate a safe climate for honest exchange of ideas; validate students’ capacity to know and learn; build on students’ experiences, connect academic learning to their experiences; provide multiple valid perspectives on topics; model critical self-reflection, and offer regular feedback; sequence material to cultivate students’ research or discovery-oriented skills. (King and Baxter Magolda 2011, p. 220)

It will be important to consider the tier one level of learning as learning objectives are implemented. Faculty who intentionally design their program following student development models will create a rich learning environment that will foster transformational learning.

It may also be possible to create learning goals that challenge the students who are further along developmentally to encourage growth in all participants. Those particular students who have travelled extensively, who are older, or who are at a higher level developmentally, would benefit from being able to take on more challenging roles as part of their participation. A faculty leader who is designing a program geared more towards students at the tier two level will move from being the “principal designer of the learning environment with the aim of actively involving students in the topic of study (which was appropriate for the Tier One context) to one who codesigns the learning environment with the students” (Hodge, Baxter Magolda & Haynes, 2009).

A trap that leaders may fall into when planning their program is to have it too scripted from start to finish, where it does not allow students to step out on their own to expand their comfort zone. It is best to offer opportunities that offer a nice balance between challenging and supporting the students because that design allows students to continue to develop their adaptive responses (King & Baxter Magolda, 2011).
approach could be something as simple as taking students on the metro system the first
time to show them how it works in a new city and then allowing them free time to be able
to use it themselves. A program which carts students from one location to another on a
bus, can lead to students being less engaged and at the outcome leave them feeling less
capable of their abilities than programs where students have control of certain aspects of
their experience.

**Holistic Learning**

It has also been shown that increased learning happens when “holistic education
(i.e., blend of emotional, intellectual, and social learning) and activities that relate
classroom learning with the outside world are part of the teaching methodology” (Ritz,
2011, p. 166). Holbrook (2012) notes that, “the breadth of research available supports the
concept that practitioners must look at the whole student and the whole of the student’s
experience in creating educational opportunities” (p. 38). The Learning Partnerships
Model promotes self-authorship and provides a “holistic, integrated approach”
(Holbrook, 2012, p. 61). Faculty-led programs are a great way to incorporate holistic
education because of the unique culture of learning that is created on each one. The
students interact daily with their peers, the leader(s), and the local culture; those
interactions cross the traditional learning boundaries that one would normally find in a
classroom. Ritz’s (2011) article expands on the practical use of theories as course
components to illustrate how they work within a short-term program. She also has a focus
on transformational learning, but in addition feels that these programs should practice
holistic teaching as well. Holistic learning takes place when the various aspects of
emotional, intellectual, and social learning are blended into the same learning experience
(Ritz, 2011). Ritz’s paper outlines her use of these theories throughout her faculty-led program and explains how her course was structured to facilitate and evaluate the learning. Her paper is a useful example of how a program can successfully integrate learning and development theories into the course design to enhance academic quality and provide holistic learning.

**Standards of Good Practice**

The Forum on Education Abroad has developed a set of standards for student learning and development and for the academic framework (Appendices C and D). The Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad (2015) indicate that programs should provide opportunities for student learning and development throughout the study abroad cycle: prior to departure, on-site, and upon return (The Forum, 2015). In addition, The Forum (2015) indicates that learning objectives should be central to the program design and should have evaluations to determine whether the objectives are being met. As for the academic framework, the Standards explain the importance of having the program curriculum goals tied to the host site and having faculty who are trained to teach within the context of the learning abroad (The Forum, 2015). The Standards offer important programmatic aspects that are important to include as faculty-led courses are being developed.

Although the Standards list the importance of including those features, they do not delve further as to how they could be integrated. There are examples from various institutions for most of the Standard areas on the Forum’s website, but none of the examples relate specifically to the topic of this study. For a more in-depth look at the Standards, one would need to attend a workshop on Standards two and three. Faculty who
design courses abroad would benefit greatly by attending the Standards workshops. Overall, the Standards are useful as a general guideline for determining what design features should be used during course creation as opposed to offering practical applicability.

**Administrative Processes for Academic Design**

**Proposal.** Spencer and Tuma’s (2007), *The Guide to Successful Short-Term Programs Abroad*, offers more of a practical guide for study abroad administrators as they work with faculty to create programs. The book explicitly states that a well-designed proposal is the first step in creating a program that will offer both a “positive experience and image” (Amel & Uhrskov, 2007, p. 47). The course proposal process offers an important way to help fulfill the academic mission of the institution and to utilize standardized evaluation procedures (Chieffo & Johnson, 2007, p. 7). The use of standardized evaluation procedures across all faculty-led programs also leads to reliable measures of learning (Chieffo & Johnson, 2007, p. 7). Amel and Uhrskov’s (2007) chapter outlines key features that should be included as part of the proposal process for the academic portion. The requirements go beyond what would normally be needed in a course taught on the home campus, and are the following: learning objectives, what students will learn from the experience abroad that would not be learned abroad, how the course integrates the content abroad, including a day-to-day syllabus that connects activities to the learning, pre-, during, and post- abroad components, and evaluations (Amel & Uhrskov, 2007, p. 48). Amel and Uhrskov (2007) go on to say that, “Although faculty may question the need for such detail, academic quality begins as ideas are articulated in writing and a tentative plan is formulated” (p. 47). Requiring a
comprehensive proposal process in regard to course design is something that should be integral for any study abroad office.

**Contact hours.** Amel and Uhrskov (2007) also discuss the importance of having institutional policies in place with regard to contact hours for study abroad programs. The authors note that it is, “common practice is to define as contact hours any activity in which students are engaged with the learning objectives of the course. This includes lectures by the faculty director or in-country experts, site visits, excursions, discussions, and student presentations” (Amel & Uhrskov, 2007, p. 53). Throughout the chapter the authors repeatedly mention the importance of tying the experiences abroad to the course learning objectives as part of the proposal. With such intentional planning, there would be no doubt that many of the experiences abroad directly contribute to student learning and should be counted as classroom contact hours.

To wrap up the review of the literature, there appears to be a wealth of information about student development and experiential/constructivist learning theories, but fewer resources on the most effective ways to incorporate the theories into a faculty-led course and for other areas of practical or administrative functions. There are examples of individual uses of the techniques used to embed the theories within programs, such as Ogden (2010) and Ritz (2011), but there does not appear to be specific research done to-date on the best practices of incorporating them into faculty-led courses. Luckily, Spencer and Tuma’s (2007) book does offer practical insights on such topics as course design in relation to the faculty-led proposal process and contact hours. There is also a small section about the use of experiential learning, however it mainly gives a nod to the fact
that study abroad is inherently experiential rather than offering guidance on the use in a
course abroad.

**Research Design**

This study sought information from two source groups: study abroad administrators and faculty leaders. The rationale for collecting information from both external and internal sources was to be able to combine both the current knowledge and practices in the field with the organic faculty knowledge and departmental practices that already occur at NDSU. The survey sent to study abroad administrators gathered knowledge about subject matter related to current administrative practices and policies regarding the creation of faculty-led study abroad programs. The information gathered from administrators focused on learning more about academic quality including: standard course creation guidelines (i.e. contact hours for experiential learning), the utilization of learning objectives related to international education, and practices used to embed transformational and experiential learning into faculty-led courses.

An online survey was used to collect information from participants using open-ended questions (Appendix E). The use of an electronic form of data collection was necessary due to the great distances between higher education institutions; also, the hope was that participation would be easy and would lead to a higher response rate. Open-ended responses provided qualitative information, but this approach was limited in comparison to personal interviews, which would have been able to gather additional follow-up information. The respondents had the option to include their contact information, allowing me to be able to clarify any points or to ask follow-up questions. In an attempt to receive the broadest response, the survey was sent to the SECUSS-L study
abroad listserv, in addition to emailing invitations to participate in the survey to specific institutions. Although any institution could have participated in the survey, direct emails were also sent to study abroad administrators at NDSU’s peer institutions and to other regional public universities. The hope was that targeted invitations would lead to responses from similar types of institutions as NDSU. The survey was sent to the SECUSS-L listserv, and seventeen invitations were sent to regional and peer institution administrators. There were only seven total respondents, with four out of the seven coming from peer or regional institutions based on the optional contact information that they provided.

The most important component to this study was to collect information about what is happening at NDSU from the faculty leader perspective. The information obtained from faculty leaders also helped to provide context for the understanding of experiential and transformational learning techniques. In addition, I was able to query the leaders about the use of potential, standardized learning outcomes and evaluation, as well as to learn more about the individual departmental practices. The survey provided an excellent way to seek information from the faculty leaders as to how they would prefer to implement new practices and techniques that are not currently in place. Similarly to the survey that was sent to study abroad administrators, the one for NDSU faculty leaders was conducted online using open-ended questions (Appendix F). The survey was sent to thirty-one former and current faculty leaders and received responses from nine. The small cohort of faculty leaders that were invited to participate had the opportunity to remain anonymous if they wished, allowing them to be able to be frank with their responses. The
respondents also had the option to include their contact information and to email additional information that was not able to be included in the survey answer area. 

Findings

The findings described below are grouped according to the responses from the two sets of surveys: the study abroad administrators and the NDSU faculty leaders. The topics under each one are in reference to questions that were asked as part of the survey. The first section discusses the findings from the study abroad administrators, the second reports on the findings from the faculty leader responses, and the third section looks at the limitations for both areas.

Study Abroad Administrator Responses

This section is grouped based on responses from the study abroad professionals for the following topics: contact hours, academic involvement, evaluation of student learning, and faculty leader training.

Contact hours. Only one of the study abroad administrators responded with detailed information as to how contact hours are counted at their institution. The information is available publically on their website for faculty leaders and is specific in that it only made a recommendation as to the counting of service-learning hours:

Study abroad faculty directors are encouraged to add a service-learning component to the existing academic courses on their programs. Service-learning courses abroad are first and foremost academic courses with lectures, readings and reflective assignments that integrate the academic theory learned in class with the hands-on experience. The service component may count towards the minimum contact hour requirement, but with the weight of a lab or practicum (2-
to-1 in most cases). Study abroad programs include two courses for a total of 6-7 credits, with the following rubric recommended for programs involving service: 3 credit service-learning course with a minimum of 15-20 lecture or discussion hours and a maximum of 20-35 hours of service.

None of the other administrators responded with detailed guidance for the calculation of contact hours for on-site experiences on a faculty-led study abroad program; one respondent, however, provided the following information as to the accountability faculty leaders and the study abroad office are held to by the institution:

Faculty Leaders should keep a detailed record of the actual itinerary, providing details about daily class activities that take place, including: i. Type of activity (Lecture, site visit, service-learning experience, etc.) ii. Required or optional iii. Location iv. Duration v. Relation to the syllabus and/or coursework and learning outcomes. …Each class activity will require only a few brief sentences to demonstrate the relevance of each activity to the course’s overall learning objectives. Independent auditors are requiring the OIP and Faculty Leaders to keep this information on file for each faculty-led course going forward.

Although the guidelines above do not spell out a formula for contact hours, they do appear to ensure that the course is academically rigorous and the guidelines require faculty to tie the on-site experiences to the learning objectives for the course.

**Academic Involvement.** The majority of study abroad administrators that responded to this survey are not involved with the academic portion of the faculty-led course creation process or are only tangentially involved in an advisory capacity. One respondent said that their office is involved in ensuring that the learning objectives for the
course match the educational experience abroad. They went on to say that sometimes there may be two learning objectives, one for the discipline-specific content and one related to the abroad experience.

Although all of the respondents are the administrators of the proposal process, none of the offices reported having the learning outcomes included in the proposal as the course is being approved. Three administrators out of seven responded that they are currently working on this topic, with one office having recently defined learning outcomes with the thought that they will propose them at an institutional level for both faculty-led and long-term programs. The first respondent said that they will be finalizing their outcomes to be included in the upcoming academic year’s faculty-led handbook. The second respondent said that their office had defined some learning outcomes as part of their strategic plan and would like to propose them at an institutional level. The third respondent’s office shares examples of successful course proposals and syllabi with leaders to encourage them to create programs with similar learning experiences. They also refer the faculty leaders to the learning outcomes that have been approved by the institution. The third respondent also noted, “We are very aware that faculty have control of their academic content and we honor their ability to develop appropriate curriculum.”

**Evaluation of student learning.** Two of the respondents indicated that they have embedded coursework that is evaluated as part of an assessment process determined by the study abroad office. One office requires an assignment that was created by them to be included as part of the syllabus, although it is unclear as to how that assignment is relayed to the faculty based on the answer provided. The second office provides reflection activities that are not required, with the final project meant to culminate the
student’s international experience with a reflection and analysis. They utilize a rubric prior to departure and then upon return to assess the learning that has occurred. It is not clear by the response as to who evaluates the student responses, the faculty leader or the study abroad office.

One of the administrators responded that the faculty-led learning experience is considered a “Discovery Learning Experience (DLE)” and that general learning outcomes had been identified by their faculty senate. All courses are required to incorporate the following learning goals:

Students will apply critical thinking skills and academic knowledge/concepts to develop effective responses to, and make informed decisions about, problems or situations encountered in the course of the learning experience. Students will engage in reflection, which incorporates self-assessment and analysis of the learning that has occurred as a result of their participation in the DLE. At a minimum, students will be expected to examine and demonstrate what they have learned as a result of the DLE, how they have learned it, the impact of their learning on their personal and professional growth, and how to apply that learning in other situations or contexts.

In addition, the institution had developed study abroad specific learning goals in areas of: cultural engagement, ethnorelativism, tolerance for ambiguity, knowledge of host site, diversity acceptance, and resiliency. Since the learning outcomes have been identified by faculty senate and required for all courses, it is an example of an institution that has standardized them for all faculty-led programs. The institution does not have standardized evaluation procedures, however as the respondent goes on to say, “Other than by looking
at the syllabi that are submitted with program proposals, we would have no idea how faculty assess student learning in their courses abroad and are not privy to this information.”

In regard to embedding experiential and transformational learning into faculty-led courses, one of the respondents attached their proposed, “Travel Course Experiential Exercises and Fireside Discussion Questions” that they will be piloting with two faculty leaders in the near future. They also noted that they hope to have a pre-trip and post-trip course, but that, “these courses are sometimes perceived to be outside the realm of academia, and therefore not always supported.” Another respondent noted that their practices in regard to experiential and transformational learning are written in the faculty leader handbook. In general, the majority of the administrators do not have concrete ways to embed these types of learning into the courses.

**Faculty leader training.** Nearly all respondents indicated that they conduct training for leaders of abroad programs, with only two having specifically mentioned course design in their list of topics that are covered. One administrator was very specific in stating that they include training on intercultural competence and how to integrate the abroad portion of the program into the academics. Another respondent that hopes to have a faculty leader training implemented during the upcoming year, indicated that they attended the Workshop on Intercultural Skills Enhancement and Conference (WISE), the Forum on Education Abroad Conference, and will possibly attend Summer Institute for Intercultural Communication (SIIC) to help them design the training. They plan to include topics related to integrating the learning outcomes that they have developed as
part of the training. There were two administrators that indicated that they do not currently conduct any formal training with faculty leaders.

**Faculty Leader Responses**

This section is grouped according to responses from NDSU faculty leaders on the following topics: contact hours, department/college approval procedures, campus-wide learning outcomes, evaluation of student learning, and knowledge of experiential and transformational learning theories.

**Contact hours.** To provide context, NDSU provides very clear guidelines regarding the definition of a credit hour:

One hour (50 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of time; or… (NDSU Academic Credit, 2015)

The definition goes on to explain other activities and how to count the experiences towards the credit hour calculation, but from those guidelines it is unclear how study abroad experiences should be counted (See Appendix G). The faculty leaders who responded to the survey have been working within this framework.

The general consensus from the faculty leaders is that active learning occurs during guided site visits, guided conversations with locals, lectures on location from both the faculty themselves or local contacts, discussion periods, field experiences, service-learning, performances, and other similar activities and should be counted as if it were traditional classroom time. Only one person commented on the host family aspect, and they felt strongly that learning does occur through those interactions. An additional area
of conversation by one of the respondents was the use of a three-to-one ratio for counting contact hours for learning that is not guided, such as a pre-recorded lecture (i.e. hop-on hop-off bus), self-exploration (i.e. scavenger hunt, museum without a docent), or a group meal with locals. Although the non-guided experience does allow for additional learning to occur, the three-to-one ratio appears to be based on the NDSU definition of a credit hour for undergraduate research or field experience.

The faculty leader responses align fairly well with the policy that the NDSU College of Business (COB) had developed for the counting of credit hours (Appendix H). The policy that was developed by the COB allows for guided experiences to be counted one-to-one for the classroom or direct faculty instruction, which all faculty leaders who responded to the survey agreed should be counted. Non-guided hours that directly contribute to the course learning can be counted as three-to-one. Furthermore, the COB policy does allow for any non-guided experiences, which do not directly contribute to the courses learning goals, to be able to be counted towards the out-of-class hours.

**Department/college approval procedures.** Over half of the respondents reported that they do not have any departmental procedures that are involved with the faculty-led course approval process. Of the four who wrote about the process, all of them referred to a specific department approval requirement, and three mentioned having to work with a curriculum committee. Only two respondents discussed approval at the college level and one of those faculty leaders also worked with the graduate school for approval of the graduate level portion of the course. One of the faculty leaders responded, “I wish we would’ve had someone to review the proposed syllabus, classroom time, and on-site time
to ensure we were meeting the standards necessary for the university. A checks and balances system would have helped us be confident.”

**Campus-wide learning outcomes.** A majority of faculty leaders (six out of nine) felt that there should be broad, campus-wide guidelines regarding learning outcomes on faculty-led programs. Two of the respondents that said no, added that they do think the learning outcomes should be determined at the college or department level. One of the leaders that said yes clarified that the programs should have latitude to determine what fits best. One of the respondents thought that having learning outcomes would help to reduce the misconception by “many faculty, not involved in study abroad, that thinks that study abroad is tourism and not a learning experience.” Another respondent, said that they thought having them would “make the experiences more anchored in the learning process – not just a trip.”

It is interesting to note that with the exception of one, the same faculty who responded that they did not have a course approval process through their department or college were the same ones that responded positively to the creation of campus-wide guidelines regarding learning outcomes. The respondent who said yes to having guidelines for faculty-led programs, appears to have also gone through the most rigorous process for the faculty-led course approval as they had it approved by the department curriculum committee, the college, and the graduate school. That particular faculty member was the same one who made the comment above about study abroad being seen as tourism by other faculty on campus.

**Evaluation of student learning.** Several of the faculty leaders did not specifically respond as to whether they would utilize tools provided by the study abroad
office to evaluate student learning; they did discuss, however, what they are currently doing to accomplish that goal. Of the respondents who did answer as to whether they would utilize embedded assessments, reflections, or assignments that are recommended by the study abroad office, all responded favorably. Three made an additional comment that it may be difficult to have universal assignments that could be applied across disciplines. Six of the nine respondents talked about the use of some sort of written assessment, often specifically related to site visits. Two of the leaders referred to the written assignments or verbal discussions as being done prior to the visits to help prepare the students for what they will experience. Exams given at the end of the time abroad to assess student learning were only mentioned by two of the leaders. The use of pre-, during, and post- assignments to evaluate student learning were specifically mentioned by three of the faculty leaders.

Only two of the faculty leaders responded that they do not have any sort of reflections incorporated into the program, with one of those respondents going on to say that they do meet to discuss the program upon return to the United States. One respondent discussed using informal verbal reflections during group meals. For the rest of the respondents, one currently uses written reflection only and plans to incorporate verbal reflection periods during this next year’s program, while five of the faculty leaders build in both written and oral reflections. It is encouraging that a majority of NDSU faculty leaders to use some sort of journaling or written reflection as part of the coursework because they have the ability to, “reinforce relevance of course material, reduce students’ feelings of being overwhelmed by providing a theme for student experiences, and provide
practice enhancing larger, applied assignments, such as those that integrate site visits with theories from class” (Amel & Uhrskov, 2007, p 50).

Knowledge of experiential and transformational learning theories. Only a third (three out of the nine) faculty leaders report that they are familiar with experiential learning theory, with two that talked specifically about the use of reflection and the other commenting that it has to do with the students spending time engaged in their content area of study. Only one of the respondents was familiar with transformational learning theory and that person said that it is not intentionally built into the program, but that it may happen organically. It was anticipated that very few would know about either theory since it does not relate to their discipline. It is interesting to note that even though many of the faculty reported not being aware of the theories, those same faculty did utilize some form of reflection, whether verbal, written, or both. This may indicate that faculty would be receptive to learning about effective ways to facilitate reflection.

Limitations

One limitation is that there is a small pool of faculty leaders to draw from initially and those leaders are often from the same department or college. So although there may be a fairly substantial response rate, it is not representative of the campus as a whole, just the faculty who are currently or who have previously led programs abroad. The information received is also biased in that most faculty who lead programs abroad are from three of the eight colleges on campus.

A limitation from study abroad administrators’ survey is the lack of responses, which did not allow for a substantial pool of data from which to draw. This meant that since many of the respondents are only beginning to look at the issue of learning
outcomes, embedded assessment, or faculty training, that there is not a general framework or standard that could be deduced from the responses. Although there are most likely many institutions that do have these procedures in place, the small number of respondents did not. When the survey was initially sent out there were several people who emailed me directly to comment that they would love to know what my research would discover, so although there was a lack of responses overall, the interest does appear to pinpoint an area of need for many study abroad offices.

**Discussion**

**Contact hours**

The creation of institutional standards regarding the activities abroad that can be counted as instructional time and out-of-class student time at NDSU is a necessity. Although avoiding bureaucracy is a goal, the creation of a standardized way to count contact hours for experiences abroad makes sense since NDSU has already defined the counting of hours for other activities. The current process of allowing faculty and departments to determine what does and does not count towards contact hours abroad leads to inconsistencies and perceptions of lax coursework. Once standardized, there should be no question as to the value of the learning placed on the various experiences abroad. NDSU has an Academic Affairs committee that would be the point of approval for any suggested guidelines. The process for approval is quite in-depth, so any suggested guidelines would mean that they would be properly vetted prior to approval.

Based on study abroad administrator and NDSU faculty leader responses, and in coordination with the current NDSU and College of Business credit policy, I have created proposed credit hour guidelines for submission to the Academic Affairs committee.
(Appendix I). The policy builds off of the current NDSU policy, while detailing more specifically which experience could be considered similar to regular classroom time, to field experience, and to out-of-class work. In general, any guided experience would count as any regular face-to-face time in class as there is directed student learning involved. Any experience that contributes to the learning goals of the program, but that is not guided would count is if it were a field experience in the current NDSU credit hour policy. Any other experience outside of those two areas could count towards the out-of-class student time as the educator determines.

**Course Design**

Is it in the domain of the study abroad administrator to be a part of the course design? When one looks at the previous knowledge reported by the faculty leaders in regard to experiential and transformational learning, it is clear that few have the knowledge or related practices in place within their abroad courses. The findings suggest that NDSU faculty members would welcome guidance in many areas, especially in regard to learning outcomes and assessment, so it may be assumed they would also welcome information on student development and theories related to study abroad. One of the overall themes that came out of both sets of survey responses is the importance of allowing the faculty member, in coordination with their department, the freedom to design the course; training and resources, however, could be provided. With so many departments lacking a formal structure for course approval, it is well within the purview of the study abroad office to add a layer of academic enhancement for faculty-led courses. It not only will help to increase the quality of the student experience, but it will also raise the bar for the learning to help prevent negative associations of lax rigor.
Learning outcomes and assessment

Tying the institutional learning outcomes to the faculty-led programs adds legitimacy that is clearly wanted from both the faculty and the study abroad administrator perspective. The study abroad office can create possible learning goals for faculty-led programs that directly correlate with the institution’s learning outcomes, as well as pre-, during, and post- assessments that faculty may choose to select from as they propose their course. The idea is that the list would not be exhaustive, but rather that faculty would include their own learning goals or alter them as needed. With the transition into the division of Student Affairs, the study abroad office would be combining their responsibility within the division of reporting on the learning outcomes they are meeting with the faculty-led programs. The division of Student Affairs has an expert in this area who will assist the various offices as they adapt the institutional learning outcomes and assessments to their specific programs.

In addition to the learning goals, many of the faculty surveyed indicated interest in utilizing embedded assessment as long as it does not interfere with the discipline-specific content. By allowing the faculty leaders an opportunity to incorporate and to be the administrators of the assessment pieces, the study abroad office can remain hands-off. The faculty who do use them will also have more buy-in because they are optional. Two of the study abroad administrators who responded to the survey had some form of an embedded assignment that is utilized for assessment of student learning across multiple programs. The use of an embedded, standardized assessment is the best possible scenario as the data collection would be consistent across the various program disciplines, length of time abroad, immersive experiences, and locations. Although it could be possible to
require the use of the standard assessments, a more balanced and strategic approach
would be to recommend their use and to share results as a way to encourage more faculty
to utilize them. As the NDSU study abroad office moves into the division of Student
Affairs, administrators will be involved at the division-level creation of standardized
assessments that tie in to the institution learning objectives.

In many of the theories discussed in this paper, the Self-Authorship, Experiential
Learning, and Transformational Learning, reflection is a key component. Learning on a
faculty-led program is not something that can be effectively tested through traditional
assessment processes, such as quizzes, due to the internalized nature of the learning that
occurs. Students may report that they have changed, but self-reporting is also not as
effective when compared to assessment that takes place throughout the study abroad
cycle. Evaluation of student learning would have to occur on a qualitative level through
the use of reflection papers prior to going abroad, during, and upon return. The
transformative learning that occurs is relevant to a student’s experience and development,
and should be infused into the learning outcomes. Written reflection as a form of
evaluation should be an integral component of any program, in addition to the verbal
reflection that is facilitated by the faculty leader. The biggest hurdle to including
reflection as a universal component is that not all leaders are experienced facilitators of
reflection.

Another theme that emerged from the survey of the study abroad administrators is
that although learning outcomes have or are being developed by their respective offices,
they are not integrated into the proposal process. Instead, they appear to be offered as a
secondary process through advising, the website, and the faculty-leader handbook. It
appears as if the learning outcomes related to the experience abroad are important to study abroad offices, and yet they rely on the faculty to take that extra step to seek out the information for inclusion in the course. There is no question that a faculty leader will complete the proposal as part of the course creation process, so it seems to make sense that they should an integral part of the academic portion of the proposal.

The question remains, how do study abroad administrators work with faculty as they are designing their courses to go beyond the discipline-specific content in order to integrate the aspects of student development, experiential/constructivist learning abroad? According to the survey results, many of the faculty leaders are willing to follow a set of guidelines regarding learning outcomes and to embed assessments from the study abroad office into the course, but at the same time they appear to be wary of additional bureaucracy beyond what they already work with for course creation. It is in the best interest of study abroad administrators to make the faculty-led course creation process work within the existing, department specific structure to incorporate the outcomes, tools, theories, and evaluation in the least arduous way possible. By creating the content for the leaders and inserting it into the process, it allows for a natural blending of expertise that helps both the faculty and the administrators reach the same goals.

Course proposal

The study abroad administrators can think of their role as being an intermediary that connects the institution’s learning outcomes and academic policies to the faculty leader by way of the course proposal. See the “Role of Proposal in Faculty-Led Course Creation” (Appendix J) as to how the study abroad office can see their role in connecting the administrative side of the faculty-led program to the academic one. There does not
appear to be any question about the necessity of a faculty-led course proposal from either
the study abroad administrators or the faculty leaders at NDSU, so it can be used as the
vehicle for incorporating student development and learning theories related to study
abroad, while maintain the faculty leaders’ academic freedom. To maintain the faculty
and department independence, a draft of the academic approval section of NDSU
proposal (Appendix K) has been updated to guide faculty towards completing their
department and college requirements, to encourage the use of standardized learning
outcomes and evaluation, and to direct the faculty to guidelines and resources on student
development and learning abroad that will be created by the study abroad office. The
learning objectives and evaluation will be created in coordination with the NDSU Student
Affairs curriculum and assessment committees starting fall 2015. Although the proposal
does not specifically list the learning objectives and evaluation procedures, it does
explain in detail why they are recommended and that they contribute to the NDSU Core
Undergraduate Learning Experience Outcomes. The academic approval section directs
faculty to the, yet-to-be-created, Faculty-Led Course Design page on the website where
they would then find detailed information to help them incorporate as many as they see
fit into their course.

The proposal also directs faculty to be explicit in their descriptions of the on-site
experiences and to explain how each one contributes to the student learning and
development. There is also a section that directs faculty to the NDSU web page that
currently shows how to determine credit hours with the hope that there will be
institutional guidelines approved for faculty-led experiences in the future. In addition, a
new web page will be created by the study abroad office to provide guidelines and
resources to faculty related to student development and learning. In order for the process to truly be successful, faculty will need to receive training and resources on how to facilitate the student development and experiential/constructivist learning. This holistic view of the training means that faculty will not only have the tools to enhance the academics of their faculty-led courses, but that they will have the foundation to successfully apply them.

The recommendations to faculty to use the standardized learning outcomes and embedded assessments and to review student development and learning theories as part of the proposal process helps to direct faculty in a gentle manner. They are not required to include those components, and many may ignore them altogether, but based on the feedback from the surveys it appears as if many would welcome the additional help as they design their courses. The information is provided in an overt way with the hope that it will be more likely to be utilized. Then, it can also be promoted by passive means through advising, online resources, trainings, and the faculty leader handbook.

Advantages. The pros of the suggestion to include learning outcomes and assessments designed by the study abroad office as an optional part of the course proposal are many. To start, this creates less bureaucracy than if they were set at the institutional level while still tying the learning to the institutional goals. This means that the courses will have a solid academic foundation that will help to release the stigma of being just a “trip.” Secondly, the faculty are free to design the course as it fits their discipline, departmental, and college requirements, and will have more buy-in when they do utilize the learning outcomes and assessments. This creates more of a partnership with the faculty that takes some of the work away from them as they design the course.
Thirdly, the faculty are in control of the assessment process as they are for any other course they teach. Not only is this the natural order of things, but it also assists study abroad administrators who are often understaffed and who do not have time to do proper assessments. Finally, moving forward in that manner is less likely to create blowback because it offers a strategic and inclusive step forward. Rather than requiring and enforcing, this process introduces new ideas to the faculty and invites them to participate.

**Disadvantages.** One of the largest disadvantages to this idea is the fact that it is not a requirement and so there is no guarantee that faculty will utilize them. There may be a variety of reasons as to why this would occur, but one of the thoughts would be that the faculty do not see the value of it in relation to what is being taught within their discipline. It also could be possible that some faculty would not agree with the significance of the student development and learning theories for their program, which means even if they utilize the learning goals and assessments that there could be variability in their effectiveness and implementation.

**Conclusions**

Throughout the course of this study I was searching for the best way to integrate student development theories, experiential/constructivist theories, and standardized learning objectives and evaluation procedures into the faculty-led course proposal process, as well as to determine institutional academic guidelines related to experiences abroad. Through a survey of study abroad administrators and NSDU faculty members, as well as through research on relevant literature, I determined that although the courses are ultimately designed by the faculty, a thoughtful partnership could be formed through the use of the faculty-led proposal. The creation of institutional academic guidelines and
standardized learning outcomes and assessment for faculty-led programs helps to form the basis on which everything else can rest on. It is important to have the academic guidelines set at an institutional level to not only have all programs following the same rules, but also to be able to learn from the evaluation and assessment taken across disciplines and from various locations and program lengths. The proposal can act as the central point of reference where guidelines and standards are recommended to faculty as they design their programs. The key in all of this is the recommendation, rather than requirement, for utilizing the standardized learning outcomes, evaluation procedures, and theories related to student development and experiential/constructivist learning. Faculty who opt to follow the recommendations are more likely to think of it as a partnership to enhance learning, and could become allies with the study abroad office to help with those faculty who are more resistant. The idea is to provide structure and assistance for the faculty, rather than to add additional bureaucracy with which they will have to deal. In the end, it is ultimately up to the faculty to utilize the recommendations, but many of the NDSU faculty who were surveyed indicated that they would welcome a framework and resources from the study abroad office. In addition to utilizing the proposal as a vehicle for delivery, other methods of delivery such as advising, website, handbook, and training would supplement the information and be able to provide expanded knowledge on the theories.

Although this study was specific to NDSU faculty-led programs, other institutions may find it useful to have a snapshot of what other study abroad administrators are currently doing on this topic and to see how welcoming faculty leaders appear to be for receiving guidance from administrators. On the practical side, I hope study abroad
professionals find the framework for the proposal and institutional guidelines helpful for their unique situations as well. Even though the framework is meant for NDSU, the ideas and process are general enough to be able to be adapted elsewhere.
Bibliography


Appendix A

Experiential Learning Cycle
Appendix B

Tier 1 Framework for Student Development

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<tr>
<th>Tier 1</th>
<th>FRAMEWORK FOR STUDENT DEVELOPMENT.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Student Traits</td>
<td>Developmental Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Knowledge viewed as certain</td>
<td>Question how authorities create knowledge and see the need to create their own knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reliance on authorities (parents, faculty, textbooks)</td>
<td>Realize the drawbacks of defining themselves based on others' perceptions and focusing on approval from others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Externally defined value system and identity</td>
<td>Think critically by identifying multiple perspectives on an issue</td>
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<td>Relate to others for approval</td>
<td>Identify one's strengths and areas for improvement</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Interact with others to engage with provocative ideas, disciplines or cultures</td>
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Appendix C

Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad, Student Learning and Development

2. STUDENT LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

The organization's mission, goals, and operations prioritize student learning and development.

- Educational objectives remain central to program design and management.
- Regular evaluations are conducted to assess student learning and development.
- Organizations seek to create and maintain continuity with student learning and development on the home campus.

QUERIES

1. In what ways do you prioritize student learning and development in the design and management of your programs?

2. How do you measure student learning and development outcomes?

3. How do you use student learning and development assessments to improve your program design and management?

4. How do program offerings support academic objectives of students and their home institutions?

5. To what extent is your program curriculum integrated with curricula of the students' home institutions?

6. In what ways do your pre-program, on-site, and post-program offerings support the continuity of student learning and development?
Appendix D

Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad, Academic Framework

3. ACADEMIC FRAMEWORK

The organization delivers academic content appropriate to its stated mission and goals, ensures adequate academic supervision and evaluation, and maintains clear and transparent academic policies.

- Curriculum supports the program’s stated goals and leverages the unique learning opportunities offered by the host context.

- Students’ academic work is adequately supervised and fairly evaluated by faculty with appropriate training and credentials.

- The organization’s policies and procedures related to evaluation, awarding of credit, grade appeals, research ethics, and academic integrity are clear and accessible.

QUERIES

1. In what ways does the program curriculum support your program’s stated goals?

2. In what ways does the curriculum leverage the unique learning opportunities of your host context?

3. Are faculty credentials and background appropriate for your program? Do they meet local standards or U.S. institutional expectations for higher education?

4. Where appropriate, have faculty been trained to teach in your education abroad context?

5. Is student work supervised and fairly evaluated by faculty?

6. Are your policies and procedures related to evaluation, awarding of credit, grade appeals, research ethics, and academic integrity clearly stated and accessible?
Appendix E

Study Abroad Administrator Questionnaire

Please type a response after the statement below. A "YES" response indicates that you understand the statement and are at least 18 years of age and you agree to participate. If you respond "NO", your response to this study will not be used.

I understand the potential risks associated with participation in this study. I also realize that while the researcher will keep responses confidential, e-mail surveys are not secure. Furthermore, I realize that I may omit any question(s), and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am at least 18 years of age or older. YES/NO:

1. Does your institution have guidelines for the type of experiences abroad (i.e. service-learning, site visits, guided conversations with locals, etc.) that may count towards contact hours? If yes, please include a description of the guidelines and the how contact hours are calculated.

2. Is the study abroad office involved in the academic portion of the course creation process? If yes, what does that process entail?

3. Do the faculty and/or departments have any campus-wide guidelines regarding learning outcomes on faculty-led programs that they can refer to as the course is being approved? If yes, please include the guidelines and speak to how you feel this affects the programs?

4. Do the faculty leaders utilize embedded assessments, reflections, or assignments that are used for evaluating student learning abroad? If yes, please explain the process for implementation into the courses and how evaluation of the data occurs.
5. If your institution uses embedded assessments, reflections, or assignments, please provide examples of the questions or prompts used.

6. Does the study abroad office conduct training for faculty leaders related to student learning abroad? If so, in general what topics areas are discussed?

7. What are the current practices that are used by your office to embed transformational and experiential learning into faculty-led courses, if any?

8. Do you have any additional comments or information to add?

9. In case I have any follow-up questions, it would be helpful to have your name and email address so I can contact you. This information is completely confidential – and optional.
Appendix F

NDSU Faculty Leader Questionnaire

Please type a response after the statement below. A "YES" response indicates that you understand the statement and are at least 18 years of age and you agree to participate. If you respond "NO", your response to this study will not be used.

I understand the potential risks associated with participation in this study. I also realize that while the researcher will keep responses confidential, e-mail surveys are not secure. Furthermore, I realize that I may omit any question(s), and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty. I am at least 18 years of age or older. YES/NO:

1. Thinking about the abroad portion of your course, what types of experiences (i.e. service-learning, site visits, guided conversations with locals, etc.) do you feel should be counted towards contact hours and why?

2. Does your department or college have a course approval committee or procedures that you feel should be involved with the faculty-led course creation process? If so, how can I find out more information about the process?

3. Do you think that there should be campus-wide guidelines regarding learning outcomes on faculty-led programs, why or why not?

4. As part of your course, would you utilize embedded assessments, reflections, or assignments that are provided by the study abroad office to evaluate student learning abroad? Please explain.

5. Do you currently utilize assessments or assignments in your program to evaluate the learning that occurs abroad? If yes, please include examples.
6. Do you incorporate written or verbal reflections or debriefing periods into your program? Please explain.

7. Are you familiar with the experiential learning theory? If so, do you use any experiential learning techniques in your program, please explain.

8. Are you familiar with the transformational learning theory? If so, do you use any transformational learning techniques in your program, please explain.

9. Do you have any additional comments or information to add?

10. In case I have any follow-up questions, it would be helpful to have your name and email address so I can contact you. This information is completely confidential – and optional.
Appendix G

NDSU Academic Credit: Definition of a Credit Hour

In accordance with federal guidelines, academic credit hours are determined by the amount of work represented in intended learning outcomes and verified by evidence of student achievement.

The NDSU established equivalency for courses bearing academic credit reasonably approximates and is not less than:

1. One hour (50 minutes) of classroom or direct faculty instruction and a minimum of two hours of out-of-class student work each week for approximately fifteen weeks for one semester or the equivalent amount of work over a different amount of time; or

2. At least an equivalent amount of work as required in paragraph (1) of this definition for other academic activities as established by the institution, including laboratory work, internships, practicum, studio work, and other academic work leading to the award of credit hours.

- In the case of laboratories, a minimum of two 50-minute periods per week for one semester is equivalent to one credit.

- One credit of field experience (courses numbered 196-496; 595-795) requires a minimum of 40 hours of experience/internship, up to 15 credits, with the number of credits to be determined in consultation with the student's academic adviser/department. Cooperative Education credits and limits are determined by the Career Center.
• One credit of undergraduate research requires a minimum three hours per week for a standard semester.

• Minimum contact hours are prorated accordingly for variable length courses.

• In courses in which "seat time" does not apply, such as those offered online, a credit hour may be measured by an equivalent amount of work, as demonstrated by student achievement.

On average, students should expect to spend two hours of study or preparation for each hour spent in class. Preparation time varies for laboratories, variable-length and individual study classes.
Appendix H

NDSU College of Business Study Abroad Credit Hour Policy

Each credit earned in study abroad requires the equivalent of 750 minutes (12.5 hours) of direct faculty instruction, with at least 1500 minutes (25 hours) of additional work by students. This can be fulfilled with (1) traditional classroom sessions, or (2) business, governmental, historical, or cultural tours. The following guidelines apply to each activity:

1. Each hour of a traditional classroom session in a study abroad program is equivalent to an hour of a traditional classroom session in other programs.

2. Each hour of a business, governmental, historical, or cultural tour that is guided, includes an executive lecture, or includes some other face-to-face experience with executives/professors/government officials/guides, etc., is equivalent to an hour of a traditional classroom session in other programs as long as it requires at least two hours of outside work by students.

3. Additional outside work by students could include a variety of activities, such as journal reflection, written papers, outside readings, written examinations, case study preparation, etc.

4. Each hour of a business, governmental, historical, or cultural experience that does not include a face-to-face experience with executives/professors/government officials/tour guides/etc. is equivalent to 1/3 of an hour of a traditional classroom session in other programs.

5. Activities during the study abroad experience in which the students are engaged, but which do not include a face-to-face experience with a
lecturer/guide/executive/professor/government official, etc., may count towards
the additional two hours required for each hour of face to face instruction, if they
are not counted as 1/3 of an hour of class time (point 4 above).

6. Travel time to and from a destination does not count as class time or additional
out of class work unless there is a guide on the bus (boat/plane/train) offering
commentary.
Appendix I

Proposed NDSU Study Abroad Credit Hour Policy

Each credit requires the equivalent of 750 minutes (12.5 hours) of direct faculty instruction, with at least 1500 minutes (25 hours) of additional out-of-class work by students. The following guidelines apply:

1. **Guided Experiences**: Each hour of a business, governmental, historical, or cultural experience that is guided, includes an executive lecture, or includes some other face-to-face experience with executives/professors/government officials/guides, and other similar activities, are equivalent to an hour of a traditional classroom lecture.

2. **Unguided Experiences**: Each hour of on-site experience (business, governmental, historical, service-learning, cultural experience, and other similar activities) that does not include a face-to-face experience with executives/professors/government officials/tour guides/etc. that contributes to the learning objectives for the course is counted as field experience, which requires 40 hours per credit or 3 hours of experience per 1 contact hour.

3. **Out-of-Class Work**: Additional outside work by students could include a variety of activities, such as journal reflection, written papers, outside readings, written examinations, case study preparation, etc., as well as any on-site experiences that are not counted towards direct faculty instruction, but that contributes to cultural learning, is counted towards the out-of-class hours.
Appendix J

Role of Proposal in Faculty-Led Course Creation

- **FACULTY LEADERS**
  Creates course using discipline specific knowledge and optional learning goals. Administers and evaluates embedded assessments.

- **STUDY ABROAD OFFICE**
  Proposal provides optional student learning and development goals and embedded assessments. Handbook and faculty training provides additional support and knowledge.

- **INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**
  Standardized, related to mission and values, and forms the basis for any course, regardless of discipline.
Appendix K

Draft Academic Approval Section of NDSU Faculty-Led Proposal

NDSU INTERNATIONAL STUDENT AND STUDY ABROAD SERVICES

Faculty-Led Study Abroad Academic Approval Form

Non 370 courses must also follow departmental procedures to be approved by the Curriculum Committee.
370 699 courses are approved and created through this Faculty-Led Proposal process, however the department may require approval by the Curriculum Committee prior to signing the approval form. Please follow departmental college procedures.

Course Number(s) and Title

Syllabus
Please attach the course syllabus which includes the following
• Minimum syllabus requirements as required by NDSU Policy 331.1 and any college requirements
  www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/policy/331_1.pdf
• Course objectives and evaluation.
  o Include learning objectives that are specific to the student development and cultural components that will be learned abroad, in addition to the discipline specific content. Site visits should be incorporated to directly advance the objectives of the course, please be explicit in your description for each site as to how it connects to student development and learning.
  o Visit the web page Faculty-Led Course Design for a list of recommended learning objectives with evaluation criteria. The learning objectives and evaluations are intended to be specific to the learning and development that occurs on a faculty-led program, while directly contributing to the NDSU Undergraduate Learning Outcomes.
  o For courses that utilize the recommended learning outcomes and evaluation, the assessments will be gathered at the end of the course and compiled at the university level to evaluate the student learning and development that occurs on faculty-led courses.
  o Due to the unique nature of faculty-led programs, the study abroad office recommends that faculty review the web page Faculty-Led Guidelines and Resources on Student Development and Learning Abroad as the course is being designed.
• Course schedule outline calendar of events.
  o In addition to the detailed description of on-site experiences, utilize NDSU’s official policy to calculate contact hours. It is recommended that the class meet as early as possible after acceptance to answer initial questions and for the group to begin to know one another. Depending on the timing of the portion abroad and or the class structure, it may not be necessary to meet again until closer to departure, however student learning is greatly facilitated when programs offer classes throughout the experience (pre-, during, and post-).
  o At least a portion of a class should be dedicated to health & safety, responsibilities of participants, pre-departure preparations, etc., and you may invite Tanya Kramer to present on that topic.
  o Consider holding at least one course upon return to wrap-up any course requirements and to allow the students the opportunity to talk about their experiences. This allows students an opportunity to connect their learning with the NDSU environment. It is also a good opportunity to encourage your returnees to become involved with promoting next year’s program.

Approvals
By approving this course, it means that it has met the academic requirements for both the department and college.

Department Chair/Head

Date

Dean of College

Date

Submit form with all signatures and syllabus to Tanya Kramer, Assistant Director of Study Abroad
International Student and Study Abroad Services, 110 Memorial Union