Assessment for Campus and Abroad:

Why a Home-Grown Instrument May Be the Best for Both

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UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE

- Doctoral research institution
- 15,000 undergrads
  - 33% study abroad, ca. 1,400 in 2014/15
  - 1,025 in January 2015
- 4-1-4 calendar
  - 5-week January term
  - courses offered abroad and on-campus
  - 50+ faculty-led January programs representing 75% of academic departments
- 12-15 faculty-led summer programs, <200 students
- About 20 semester/exchange programs (about 150 students total
- 10-person office staff

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“Home grown” assessment initiative:

- Developed iteratively over years
  - first instrument – post-program only
  - second – pre and post, but not well tested
  - third – pilot tested, doctoral student developed (expertise)
  - fourth – currently collecting data from on-campus control group
- Incorporated into required online pre-departure orientation
- Linked to University-wide Discovery Learning Experience required for graduation
- Incorporated to a required post-program assessment
- Uses existing online course evaluation system
- new instrument easily adapted to on-campus domestic & international students
Arcadia University

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

The College of Global Studies

- 60+ years in education abroad
- 17 countries, 140+ programs
- 3,000 students per year
- Center-based, internship, institutional-based programs
- Global faculty, staff, properties, curricula

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Examples of “home grown” assessment initiatives:

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

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

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Examples of “home grown” assessment initiatives:

- Both study abroad students AND visiting international students are assessed, and then compared on:
  - Self-reported second language use and immersion
  - Development of relationships with host-nationals
  - Cross-cultural development, skills, and other aspects of personal growth

- Designed goal-setting program
  - Before going abroad: students set academic and personal goals
  - Mid-semester: students are reminded of their individual goals
  - End of semester: students are again reminded of their goals and rate their success in achieving them
  - Goals are coded for content, specificity, and attainability
HOW DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW?
PURSUING A LINE OF INQUIRY

Why are you asking?

Who is the audience?

$$ What is your budget? $$
PURSUING A LINE OF INQUIRY: THE FRAMEWORK

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

- Cost
  - Cost of instrument itself
  - Personnel cost
  - Possible student incentives to complete surveys

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

The Framework

The Content

What do you want to know?
Who will you ask?
When will you ask them?
How will you ask?

$$ What is your budget? $$

Why are you asking?
Who is the audience?
Pursuing a line of inquiry: the content

- Groups of interest: who do you want to ask?
  - Study abroad students, international students, faculty
  - *It takes a campus: recognize potential for multiple, overlapping assessment initiatives*

- Scope of inquiry: what do you want to know?
  - General learning/development vs. specific outcomes of a particular program
  - This may vary if you are assessing multiple groups – faculty, study abroad students, international students – but some areas may still overlap

- When to assess, and for how long?
  - Long-term, ongoing initiative vs. one-time project
  - Pre-, during, and/or post-program surveys

- How will you ask?
  - Online vs paper surveys; journals; blogs; photos/videos/multimedia; personal interviews
  - Qualitative, quantitative, or a mix
  - Required or optional

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Once the framework and content of inquiry are determined, available instruments can be examined.
PRACTICAL TIPS FOR GARNERING SUPPORT

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PRACTICAL TIPS FOR GARNERING SUPPORT

• Seek Resources within Academic Departments
  - graduate student support (for data entry, analysis, and interpretation)

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

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PRACTICAL TIPS FOR GARNERING SUPPORT

- Collaborate between Education Abroad and International Student Offices
  - As appropriate, develop comparative instruments, share results
- Appeal to institutional stakeholders who have an interest in the outcomes
- Be transparent!
  - share results, collaborate, accept critique, build buy-in
PRACTICAL TIPS FOR GARNERING SUPPORT

A Few Shared Examples of Collaborative Efforts

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Advantages of an In-House Instrument

Why not just purchase a commercial survey?

- Freedom to measure exactly what you want!
- Measure when and how you want—what works for your campus and students
- Change instrument/items as needs/goals change
- No fee for administration; exercise control over costs
- Institutional ownership of instrument
**DISADVANTAGES OF AN IN-HOUSE INSTRUMENT**

**But freedom has its price . . .**

- Can be labor-intensive
- Requires institutional expertise, working with other offices; some expertise within international ed. office preferred
- Data bottleneck due to competing demands of “real job”
- Staff turnover may stall project
- Difficult to generalize results to other institutions
RESOURCES

- Association for the Assessment of Learning in Higher Education: www.aalhe.org
- NAFSA Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship Knowledge Community
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