

# From Emerging to Independent Adults: Fostering Student Resilience & Responsibility Abroad

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Forum on Education Abroad - Seattle, March 2017

# Introduction, sources, session outline

- ▶ Genesis of topic
  - ▶ Primary sources & resources:
    - J. Arnett: developmental model of emerging adults
    - K. Ginsburg: research & work on resilience-building in childhood & youth
    - C. Kinginger: research on identity, language learning & study abroad
    - Academy of Arts & Sciences Feb 2017 report: *America's Languages*
  - + Our experiences & observations from working with students in France
  - + Student views & voices (testimonials)
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- I. Leslie - On responsibility & resilience in emerging adults abroad
  - II. Monique - role of 2nd language skills
  - III. Thomas - role of internships

# Responsibility

- ▶ Decision-making
- ▶ Personal accountability

# Student voice

## ► Isabel - Intern in theater company in Paris

“At the end of my time abroad I had to return to the US and school, and what I found somewhat satisfying and mildly disturbing was that my college campus was no longer fun for me. **This program showed me what it was like living in the real world, making your own decisions and being responsible for your actions.** Coming back to a sheltered school where there isn't that freedom (...) was honestly quite awful. There is nothing I would rather do now than graduate and go live in a city where I can once again spread my wings”.

# What is resilience?



- ▶ Power or ability to return to the original form or position (physics).
- ▶ Ability to bounce back or recover from adversity (psychology).

Kenneth R. Ginsburg Building Resilience in Children & Teens: Giving Kids Roots and Wings. (3rd edition, 2015)

American Academy of Pediatrics

# RESILIENCE.

This, too,  
shall pass.



# Ginsburg's 7 Crucial C's of Resilience

## The two fundamental C's

- ▶ **Competence**

acquired through actual experience

- ▶ **Confidence**

acquired through demonstrated *competence* in real situations

**Confidence is developed through  
taking risks and experiencing success.**

**Success leaves clues.**

## Vanessa - Intern in 2 Paris museums

**“The internships gave me more confidence in my French,** especially rewarding after five weeks of intensive learning at the program center before the internships. I felt really assured when I realized that I could understand almost everything that my colleagues talked about, had a clear idea of what tasks my supervisor wanted me to do, and **did not really encounter problems with communication. That was a huge boost to my confidence, since before this I had only practiced French either in classrooms or in casual settings (i.e. with a French host family). And knowing that I could handle an internship well in a country that I wasn't so familiar with, I felt sure that I would do really well, if not better, in internship/jobs in the US as well.** In that sense, it was a great first internship(s) experience which really paved the way for more opportunities down the road.”

# Setting students up for success

Expect 20-year olds to ...

- ❑ Push the envelope!
- ❑ Challenge authority
- ❑ Make mistakes

Our role: How to give students the structure in which they can make good decisions for themselves?

(and knowing when to get out of the way!)

# Student voice: Structure & Support

## ► Nate - Intern in soccer club in Strasbourg

"I think that one of the most beneficial aspects of this past semester was professional experience and development that helped foster my independence. Having an actual internship in a foreign city in a foreign language might seem daunting, but **the intensive period prior really helps get you ready. Once you are at the internship period, one thing I noticed that helped a lot was that my program staff was there for you whenever you needed, while continuing to foster a certain professional independence.**"

# Other C's in Ginsburg's « web »

- ▶ **Connection**: sense of group belonging (family, civic, educational, athletic, etc.)
- ▶ **Character**: values (e.g., caring, tenacity, effort)
- ▶ **Contribution**: sense of purpose, serving others
- ▶ **Coping**: repertoire of positive, adaptive strategies
- ▶ **Control**: decision-making; choices + actions = outcomes

# Student voice: Coping & Control

- ▶ Maddie - Intern in research center for International Studies in Strasbourg

“doing an internship in a language that isn't my first language definitely helped me notice that **I tend to be a little more timid in new surroundings, but especially in a foreign language. Recognizing that has helped me try and fix that problem.** Generally speaking, having enough confidence isn't something that I tend to have a problem with, but I would definitely say that **living in a foreign country for four months and doing an internship in French has made me feel a lot more self-assured and a lot more confident, and not only when it comes to speaking French.**”

# Additional C's for students abroad

- ▶ **Courage** – personal challenge, leap into the unknown, venturing out of one's comfort zone
- ▶ **Curiosity** – desire to learn & engage; prerequisite for managing inevitable hiccups

# On curiosity ...

❖ THINK

❖ FEEL

❖ DO

One more!

# COMMITMENT

- ▶ **To program goals**
  - ▶ **To individual goals**
- 
- Knowledge of country & its place in world
  - Experiencing culture from within
  - Gaining different perspectives on the world
  - Improving language proficiency

# Role of L2 skills

- ▶ Student testimonials underscore key role of French/L2 skills in fostering confidence, independence & success abroad.
- ▶ Affective & personality factors in language acquisition
  - language ego: personal nature of L2 acquisition, new identity
  - risk-taking: overcoming fear of looking ridiculous, of not being understood, of loss of identity, fear of failure
  - anxiety: debilitating (bad kind) versus facilitative (good kind)
  - motivation: extrinsic/intrinsic; instrumental/integrative

# Courage - Curiosity - Commitment

## ► Cathy - Intern in a music school in Paris

“After thriving in French courses in college, **I was so mortified because I realized that it was a whole new playing field in actual French society where my level of French was clearly elementary. Determined, I went home from class that day and googled "how to pronounce French r" and did a few step-by-step exercises with my throat every night** until I was able to make the r sound in the back of my throat and say "preuve" correctly by the end of the course. **I was so frustrated but learned in that moment that my learning was in my hands.**”

# Kinginger's « activist stance »

## Celeste Kinginger - SLA researcher at Penn State

- *Language Learning in SA: Case Histories of Americans in France* (MLJ, 2008)
  - *American students abroad: Negotiation of difference?* (Lang Teaching, 2010)
  - *Contemporary SA & FL Learning: An activist's guidebook* (CALPER, 2010)
  - *Identity & Language Learning in Study Abroad* (FL Annals, 2013, vol. 46)
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- Insufficient emphasis on L2 learning in programs abroad (non-English).
  - Case studies = individual differences, especially among advanced learners.
  - Critique of research: over-emphasis on student perspectives, insufficient attention to quality of interactions with local hosts, no perspectives from host nationals or on-site actors, **no studies on student motivation & desire to learn while studying abroad.**
  - Need for explicit L2 instruction on pragmatic aspects of language & relationship to presentation of self and one's social identity.

As study abroad professionals...

If we don't address the issue of the role of second language acquisition & learning in study abroad programs, who will?

**RESPONSIBILITY**

## Language enrollments - MLA stats

**1986: 275,132**

### TOP 5 STATES

- ▶ CA (1) 31,314
- ▶ NY (2) 22,574
- ▶ MA (3) 14,100
- ▶ TX (4) 13,671
- ▶ PA (5) 13,384

+10,000 : NC, OH, VA

**2013: 197,757**

### TOP 5 STATES

- ▶ CA (2) 19,830
- ▶ NY (1) 20,924
- ▶ MA (5) 7,436
- ▶ TX (4) 9,783
- ▶ PA (3) 9,952

All others: below 7,200

# MLA Report - February 2015

**SINCE 2009**

**Overall FL enrollments - 6.7%**

- ▶ Spanish (1st time) - 8.2%
- ▶ French - 8.1%
- ▶ German - 9.3%
- ▶ Italian -11.3%
- ▶ Japanese - 7.8%
- ▶ Arabic - 7.5%
- ▶ Russian -17.9%

## And the winners are...

### Enrollment increases since 2009

- ▶ Korean + 44.7%
- ▶ ASL + 19.1%
- ▶ Portuguese + 10.1%
- ▶ Chinese + 2.0%

# Commission on Language Learning

## Feb 2017 Report

### *America's Languages: Investing in Language Education for the 21st Century*

[www.amacad.org/language](http://www.amacad.org/language)

- ▶ Commissioned by 8 members of Congress (4 Senate + 4 Representatives)
- ▶ Only 20.7% of U.S. population speaks a L2, far fewer at a functional level.
- ▶ 2014 NAFSA study: 40% of U.S. business executives reported failure to reach international potential due to language barriers.
- ▶ Testimonials of U.S. professionals on importance of FL skills to success.
- ▶ Rec n° 5: Promote L2 opps through immersion in L2 cultures and increase international internships sponsored by businesses and NGO's.

# Conclusion of report

*« Language acquisition on the scale that this Commission proposes will require a combination of skillful instruction, technical assistance and innovation, new and redirected investments, public-private partnerships, **and the personal commitment of each individual language learner.** »* p. 30

# Internships

## A stressful experience by nature

- ▶ working in a second language
- ▶ different culture & work ethos
- ▶ often a 1st professional experience
- ▶ non-classroom format; a “real-life” experience
- ▶ lack of training, frames of reference, protocols, cultural codes
- ▶ miscommunication, mistakes, delays
- ▶ responsibilities, assignments, tasks = pressure
- ▶ occasional boredom -> need to be proactive
- ▶ work overload -> feeling overwhelmed
- ▶ co-workers: personalities, interpersonal & group dynamics

# Payoffs in terms of resilience

- ▶ sense of independence (coping, control)
- ▶ self-confidence
- ▶ team work amidst diversity (connection, contribution)
- ▶ time-management (coping, control)
- ▶ cross-cultural learning & reciprocity (competence, connection)
- ▶ self-knowledge & personal growth (confidence, control)
- ▶ empathy (character)
- ▶ professional skills (competence, confidence)
- ▶ language proficiency/fluency (competence, confidence)

# Student voice

- ▶ Nairuti - Intern in Belgian public health agency in Brussels

“My experience really shaped my personal and professional development. By engaging in the field while simultaneously developing a critical perspective via memoir-writing, I was able to reconcile and engage with both my academic interests and professional skill development.”

# 8 Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities

National Society of Experiential Education  
[www.nsee.org](http://www.nsee.org)

1. Intention
2. Preparedness and Planning
3. Authenticity
4. Reflection
5. Orientation and Training
6. Monitoring and Continuous Improvement
7. Assessment and Evaluation
8. Acknowledgment

## Providing structure & support

- ▶ **Preparation** -> content-rich (courses, workshops, peer advice from past participants)
- ▶ **Follow-up** -> weekly class, check-in, workshops
- ▶ **Evaluation & critical thinking** -> 3-way meeting
- ▶ **Advising** -> academic, professional
- ▶ **Re-entry** -> maintaining & building on skills

**Caring**  **Coddling**

## Alain - Intern in public hospital in Paris, Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

“There is perhaps no word more encompassing of the personal growth that occurs during an internship abroad than resilience. While the positive impact of international study on student independence, self-confidence, and growth is clear, I believe these benefits are accentuated and further developed within the context of an internship. For me, classroom study, while vital to formal education, preserved the familiar student-teacher dynamic and, at times, isolated my studies from their applicability to the professionalism of the ‘real world.’ My internship experience with IFE took me out of this comfort zone, not only with respect to language and culture but pedagogical perspective as well” .

# Your turn!

- 1) What successes have you had at your institution with regard to fostering the seven (or ten!) C's and cultivating resilience and responsibility in your students?
- 2) Which C's would you like to develop further?

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