

**“How Study Abroad Changed My Life: Student Development Pathways”
2014 Forum on Education Abroad Conference**

Small Group Discussion Question Responses by Small Groups

1. ***Based on your own experience in working with students who have studied abroad, what are your reactions to the research findings shared by the presenters? Do they fit with your own perceptions, or were there any surprises?***
 - Depends on student. Depends on program
 - Outside of comfort zone
 - Overcoming difficulties
 - Pathways (tools, resources) and student initiative – intellectual curiosity
 - Not surprised. Depressing that there weren't greater impacts based on Wabash report. However, critical thinking may not be a concept students understand or think about. Students may not realize gains in certain areas such as independence, critical thinking, etc.
 - Yes, the nature of the program is very important for the outcome. Re-entry programming or courses is an important aspect of students coming to understand their own experiences, immediately and over time
 - To what extent is “self-reporting” sufficient as data?
 - “program design” is the key
 - Comparative method may be significant – connecting with students prior to departure, during and after returning
 - Seen changes but depends on program design
 - Confirmed what I see. Wonder how much students get out of experiences if they didn't have to reflect. Good to see experiences as much as 10-30 years later.

2. ***If your own perception of the short- and long-term impacts of study abroad on students' personal, academic, and career development differs from that shared by the presenters, why do you think their findings differed? Can you identify specific differences in the programs they discussed and your own that might lead to such differences?***
 - Not much of a difference
 - For the most part we agreed. There were some surprise findings related to the impact on GPA. Many factors can impact an experience.
 - Again, “program design” is the key . For short-term experience
 - Need to be intentional
 - Ex) students often times do not even know how to reflect
 - Orientation at the destination is important
 - No major differences

3. ***What are your reactions to the tips and strategies shared by the presenters regarding ways to foment positive long-term impacts both during and after study abroad experience?***
 - Very positive
 - How are those faculty research fellows going to work? Will faculty be able to give the right information and guidance?

4. ***What is your own experience of and/or ideas about effective ways to foment positive long-term impacts on students during and after the study abroad experience?***
 - Reciprocity – collaboration for change
 - Sustainable engagement
 - Reflection component
 - Need for more attention to community feedback – community impact

- “Engagement Abroad” course – great example conducted at Guilford College
 - Students organized by regions
 - 1 credit course (1-4 assignments during abroad)
 - Required for ALL students going abroad