MALE STUDENTS & STUDY ABROAD:
IMPROVING PARTICIPATION BY IMPROVING
THE VALUE OF EDUCATION ABROAD
Discuss a study of male engagement as a means of:

- Discussing specific findings and practical action steps suggested by the study and today’s discussion
- Thinking about concepts and models that inform discussions about the value and purpose of study abroad with all our students
- Discussing practice on our home campuses as related to these concepts and models

Goal: how can you apply this knowledge in your work on your campus
Participation Model (Henry & Basile, 1994)

Personal characteristics of the target population:
- Race and ethnicity
- Gender
- Age
- Family background
- Socio-economic status

Dispositional Motivation:
- Career-focus
- Desire for social engagement
- Desire for fun & risk
- Low maturity/confidence
- Desire for personal growth
- Fear/safety concerns

Information:
- Institutional
- Peer
- Parental/family

Institutional & Programmatic Factors:
- Program format or structure
- Time of program
- Length of program
- Courses and content offered
- Cost

Situational Factors:
- Conflict with courses & graduation
- Conflict with athletics
- Conflict with leadership
- Conflict with work
- Lost wages

Reputation:
- Peer support and messages
- Family support and messages
- Institutional support and messages

Decision to Participate
What’s the study abroad narrative?

Why we think students study abroad?
- Fun
- Personal development and growth
- Culture/diversity
- Language learning
- Résumé builder
- Service

Why we think students do not study abroad?
- Costs
- Curriculum prohibits & delay graduation
- Fear
- Other time commitments
- Lack of family support
Rethinking the messaging

- Who are the audiences for study abroad? Is it just about students?
  - Primary
  - Secondary
  - Tertiary
- What is the purpose of the message?
  - Informing
  - Educating
  - Motivating
Messaging with men

- Males could articulate, but did not always resonate with, the dominant narratives
- Messages do not always connect
  - Institutional vs. peer vs. “academic” messages
  - Academic messages missing from institutional and peer discourse
- Study abroad narratives confused men
  - What is study abroad? What is the value?
- Interpretation of the messages depending on the individual men
Dispositions seemed bi-modal…

- B. Schneider (2009) identified four student “types” based on their ability to align goals with effort:
  - **Idlers**—Low goal, low effort
  - **Players**—High goal, low effort
  - **Workers**—Low goal, high effort
    - work hard now so as not work have to work hard in the future; do not enjoy the work per se
  - **Strategists**—High goal, high effort
    - align goals with efforts and connect goals to non-work endeavors
    - See value in all activities, transferrable skills

Thinking about dispositions II…

- Brannon (1976) identified four characteristics of masculinity; recent studies show that these characteristics endure:
  - **No sissy stuff**: avoid all things female or feminine
  - **The sturdy oak**: be responsible; do not show weakness; avoid showing emotions such as fear, sadness
  - **The big wheel**: success and achievement-focused; be the bread-winner
  - **Give ‘em hell**: take risks; be aggressive; enjoy danger, adventure and excitement

Model for men

Institutional Context/Program Variables

Messages & Influences

Motivation

Obstacles

Men’s Dispositions

Fun
- Fun can be had anywhere

Culture
- Add-on, not essential

Resume
- Other opportunities are more important

Major
- Graduation credits Career goals

Not participate

Situational Barriers
Foci for the tables

What are the implications for research about students’ dispositions related to marketing?

- How might Schneider influence our thinking about how we talk to students about SA? How might we message to idlers/players/workers/strategists?
- How might Brannon’s theory help us consider male participation specifically?
- What other theories/models/concepts are you aware of/are you using in your work that help differentiate the message/narrative?

How can SA professionals differently articulate the value-added message of SA?

- Can they help students talk about study abroad with their parents and vice versa?
- How can they best work with returnees and faculty to market programs effectively?
- How and when do we best address perceived obstacles to SA?
Question 1

What are the implications for research about students’ dispositions related to marketing?

a) How might Schneider influence our thinking about how we talk to students about SA? How might we message to idlers/players/workers/strategists?

b) How might Brannon’s theory help us consider male participation specifically?

c) What other theories/models/concepts are you aware of/are you using in your work that help differentiate the message/narrative?
Schneider’s (2009) Dispositions

- **Idlers:**
  - Not engaged enough to note passive messaging, must be more creative and active in our efforts
  - Many first-generation students and males could be idlers

- **Players:**
  - Attracted to study abroad for the wrong reasons; they resonate with the “fun” message
  - Should balance fun with academics to ensure proper motivation

- **Workers:**
  - Fixated on credits, grades, and graduation; must put study abroad in a context that connects to their goals
  - Worker mentality connects with male disposition

- **Strategists:**
  - Would see study abroad as a natural extension of their studies
  - Need to communicate this connection more clearly
The Male Disposition

- **No sissy stuff:**
  - Dominated by messages from females
  - Dominated by “feminized” messages

- **The sturdy oak:**
  - Fear may play a role
  - Focus on getting responsibilities taken care of first; not fun or additive activity

- **The big wheel:**
  - Career and money comes first; study abroad might interfere with both
  - How will study abroad help me?

- **Give ‘em hell:**
  - Driven by fun, excitement, and risk
  - Study abroad may be seen as overly safe, sanitized
Question 2

- How can SA professionals differently articulate the value-added message of SA?
  - Can they help students talk about study abroad with their parents and vice versa?
  - How can they best work with returnees and faculty to market programs effectively?
  - How and when do we best address perceived obstacles to SA?
Why is this relevant: Messaging

- Who sends the message matters:
  - Faculty = academic creditability
  - Peers = social creditability
  - Parents = “this is okay for me to pursue”

- Obstacles come first in many cases; students will overcome if given reason:
  - Students do not see a benefit worth overcoming the costs, so they don’t try
  - Students have misconceptions about “what is study abroad”

- Need to highlight study abroad’s value-added
  - Definition of a benefit depends on the students’:
    - Language and culture = soft skills…to some students
    - International focus matters…to some students
    - Resume builder…I’d rather have an internship
Concluding thoughts

- How can we articulate the “value added” of study abroad to diverse audiences, including men? How can study abroad move beyond information and motivate students?