MYTHS & MISCONCEPTIONS OF STUDENT DEVELOPMENT:
Exploring New Critiques of Old Theories

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Overview of Today’s Session

- A review of theory
  - Foundational theories
  - Updates to these theories
  - Newer, related theories
- Applications of theory to practice
Goals

- Our goals for the day are to challenge you to:
  - Move beyond the iconic theories and think about these theories more deeply
  - Understand the realities of today’s students and how these realities influence education abroad
  - Apply theories—old, new, and lesser known—in ways that move our programs beyond “it was great”
Discussion Point

What are the main goals for education abroad?
Today’s students

“this generation requires a different brand of education that will enable them to attain their personal dreams and to serve the society they must lead. The education we offered to previous generations, whether successful or not, will not work for these students.”
## Our students

### Strengths
- Digital natives
- Self-confidence
- Optimism about self
- **Pragmatic**
- Good with diversity and team work
- Interested in global issues
- Driven by earning money and securing future

### Limitations
- Pessimistic about future of country
- Entitled
- Dependant on adults
- Don’t cope well with adversity
- Struggle with face-to-face interactions
- Less interested in following interests, identifying values, learning people skills
Narratives for Education Abroad

- **Positivist**
  - Observation
  - Language
  - Learning is a Given

- **Relativist**
  - Intercultural
  - Immersion
  - Transformation

- **Constructivist**
  - Intervention
  - Design the experience
  - Multi-layered
Bennett’s Model

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity

EXPERIENCE OF CULTURAL DIFFERENCE

ethnocentric stages

Denial
Defense
Minimization
Acceptance

ethnorelatvie stages

Adaptation
Integration

Strengths and Limitations

- Acknowledges intercultural learning does not happen automatically during study abroad
- Framework establishes a base understanding of how people navigate cultural differences
- Place self/students on the continuum to identify development status
- Accounts for differences between cultural groups
- Includes a cognitive and interpersonal aspect to development
- Theory & practice disjointed
- External forces influencing development not explicitly addressed
- Highly internalized & individualized developmental process
- Predicts and imposes patterns of behavior & attitudes as one point on a continuum
- Generalizability effect
- Assumptions about how people translate experiences (via stages) from one culture to another
- Incorporation of identity and intrapersonal development
Newer Insights (Bennett, 2012)

- Intercultural learning consists of practical skills (intercultural competence) and multicultural/global citizenship (intercultural consciousness)
- Moving beyond “stages” in DMIS (positivist) to “positions” along the continuum (constructivist)
- New concepts:
  - “Predominant Experience”
  - Reversal in lieu of defense
- Educational intervention necessary for intercultural learning to occur
- Social media as detemporalizing/delocalizing experience
- Creating 3rd cultures
Newer Insights (continued)

- King & Baxter-Magolda, 2005
  - High levels of cognitive understanding may be needed for high levels of cultural understanding
  - Understanding intercultural learning and development requires an understanding of cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal aspects of the student development and their interaction with one another
  - Bennett acknowledge that cultural-self awareness is needed to develop intercultural abilities
- Students need training in this area to maximize their learning while abroad
Just to keep you on your toes….

Case Study #2
Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984)

Concrete Experience
(design experience)

Active Experimentation
(planning / trying out what you have learned)

Reflective Observation
(reviewing / reflecting on the experience)

Abstract Conceptualisation
(concluding / learning from the experience)
Strengths and Limitations

- ELT suggests that the experience itself is not educative and offers ways to think holistically about learning
- Reflection and testing help students consider their experience in “transformative ways”
- Considers the notion of learning flexibility and learning space
- Is starting with the experience always the best place on the model?
- Students often come to us with diverse backgrounds in terms of their ability to process and reflect
- All programs do not offer the same learning spaces
- Faculty roles and experiences as teacher play an important role
Newer Insights

- Students KLSI fell on the conceptualization/experimentation zones (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012)
  - Culture of Higher Education
  - Student Expectations

- Conceptualization might be a vital first step (Roark & Norling, 2010)
  - Students need some scaffolding on which to “hang” their experiences
  - Starting with abstract conceptualization or prompting reflection is more valuable than starting with experience
  - FIPSE study and the connection with motivation and prior knowledge

- Planned happenstance (Krumboltz, 1999)
Reverse design in action…

Case Study #1
Connecting learning to development

- Many new theories take into account issues of student development and prior life experience as a means of considering new learning.
- Look at all aspects of development and their interrelationships: cognitive, intrapersonal (affective), interpersonal.
- Need to look at theories that explain what is happening on the micro-level, not just the macro-level.
Expanding learning

- Perry is an iconic, but dated cognitive theory
- Transformative learning (Kegan, 1994; Mezirow, 1996; Cranton, 1996; Taylor, 2006)
  - the process of effecting change in a frame of reference
  - A process of letting go of old ways of being and accepting new ones
  - Understanding what happens to move students between levels of development
Transformative Learning on Education Abroad Programs

- Frames of reference
  - Structures of assumptions through which we understand our experiences.
  - Selectively shape and delimit expectations, perceptions, cognition, and feelings – how we “see” the world.

- Perspective transformation (Mezirow)
  - Process of changing one’s worldview and system of beliefs
  - Includes psychological changes, convictional changes, and behavioral changes
  - Expansion of consciousness through the transformation of one’s basic worldview
Transformative Learning on Education Abroad Programs

- Learning “how to negotiate and act upon our own purposes, values, feelings and meanings rather than those we have uncritically assimilated from others” (Mezirow & Associates, 2000, p. 8)
  - Goal of learning: To become autonomous, socially responsible thinkers (Baxter-Magolda, 1999; Grabove, 1997)
  - A “critical incident” (also called “disorienting dilemma”) often serves as a catalyst for transformative learning to occur
Program Funnel (SIT)

Academic Focus

Program Structure
Theories Supporting a Constructivist Paradigm I

Challenge, Support and Readiness (Sanford, 1966)

Scaffolding (Sawyer, 2006)
Theories Supporting a Constructivist Paradigm I

Bridges Transition Theory
(Bridges, 2009)

Identify desired results.

Determine acceptable evidence.

Plan learning experiences and instruction.

Backward Design (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) – Note many updates to this as well
Applications and Conclusion I

- When applying theory to program planning, make sure the theory you select fits your goals and context
  - Learning goals
  - Faculty and staff preparedness
  - Student readiness
  - Learning space and context

- Acknowledge that authentic learning, especially transformative learning, is a “high” bar
  - Authentic reflection is difficult (Social Desirability Bias)
  - Pre-packing might be needed
  - You might need to construct your own interventions and not rely on happenstance
Applications and Conclusions II

- Students need interventions to learn effectively abroad
- Intersectionality between students’ developmental realms and learning must be considered
- Assessment should relate to program goals
- Moving beyond the “iconic” or foundational theories is critical to respond to student learning needs
“Most students abroad are at this point not learning to negotiate cultural differences, whether inside or outside the classroom, unless educators intervene in their learning in ways that help them develop the types of knowledge and skills that will allow them to shift perspectives and adapt behavior to new and often challenging cultural contexts.” (p. xiv, SLA)
Thank you for joining us today!

Comments and Questions?

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