

Abstract

The Academics of Study Abroad: Developing Transformative Learning Outcomes

By: Dr. Angela E. Miller

Study abroad programs have long been recognized for their potential to provide students with transformative educational experiences. This presentation delves into the academic dimensions of study abroad, with a particular focus on how these experiences can be harnessed to cultivate transformative learning outcomes. The journey of studying abroad extends far beyond just geographic boundaries; it is a pedagogical opportunity that can foster personal, academic, and intercultural growth.

Our presentation explores the diverse academic facets of study abroad, including:

1. **Curricular Design:** We delve into the strategic planning and design of study abroad programs to ensure they are academically rigorous, aligned with institutional goals, and encourage meaningful student engagement. The integration of courses and experiential learning opportunities is central to this discussion.
2. **Interdisciplinary Exploration:** Study abroad provides a unique platform for interdisciplinary learning. We examine how students can engage with diverse academic fields, encouraging them to view complex issues through multiple lenses and facilitating intellectual growth.
3. **Cultural Competence:** Cross-cultural competence is a key outcome of study abroad. We explore how academic experiences can be leveraged to develop a deeper understanding of global perspectives, intercultural communication, and adaptability.
4. **Reflection and Self-Discovery:** We discuss the importance of reflective practices in the study abroad experience. Students can develop greater self-awareness, discover their passions, and set academic and personal goals for the future.
5. **Assessment and Evaluation:** The presentation also addresses the challenge of assessing the impact of study abroad on academic and personal growth. We examine various assessment strategies and best practices for evaluating the transformative learning outcomes of these experiences.

By the end of this presentation, attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how study abroad programs can be designed to foster transformative learning outcomes that extend beyond the classroom. We aim to equip educators, program administrators, and other stakeholders with the knowledge and tools needed to create study abroad opportunities that empower students to become academically enriched, globally competent, and personally transformed individuals.