Developing Multi-Disciplinary Study Abroad Programs in an Undisciplined World

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Developing Multi-Disciplinary Study Abroad Programs in an Undisciplined World

Disciplines
Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education | Higher Education | International and Comparative Education | Spanish Linguistics

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“Developing Multi-Disciplinary Study Abroad Programs in an Undisciplined World”

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Languages and Cultures for Professions (LCP)

- Second major concentration for students in engineering, business and agriculture
- Specialized coursework that focuses on technical skills and contemporary cultural literacy
- Requires study abroad or international internship
- The initiative was funded with a Title VI in 2004 for business and engineering. A second Title VI (currently) allows us to integrate issues related to sustainability and biodiversity and other “green issues” into the curriculum through modules, new courses, or internship focus.
LCP-Valencia Plan

- **ISU on the Mediterranean – Summer in Valencia, Spain**
  - Combine Spanish with other academic disciplines to offer international experience, cultural training, and language skills to students who would not likely study a language otherwise
  - Provide an international experiential opportunity: study abroad, international internship, service learning.
ISU on the Mediterranean – Summer in Valencia, Spain

• History
  – 2001: language and culture program for advanced students; change of venue from a language school to a university
  – 2005: cross-disciplinary collaboration with Colleges of Business and Engineering (part of first Title VI)
  – 2006: internships for advanced Spanish students
  – 2007: cross-disciplinary collaboration with Department of Genetics, Development and Cell Biology.
• Management 310 (Principles of Management)
• Business Administration 291/491 (Business in Spain and the EU)
• Industrial Engineering 305 (Engineering Economic Analysis)
BIO 394: International Programs in Biology (as part of this Title VI)

• Developed and Coordinated by Steven Rodermel, Professor of Biology, Development and Cell Genetics and Prof. Beatriz Spalding, Lecturer in Plant Biology and Food Science

• 2 Modules:
  – Module 1: full-immersion laboratory experience under the guidance of a University of Valencia faculty member and grad student team
  – Module 2: field work with Valencia faculty around the region
BIO 394 Field Work

Albufera Lagoon
BIO 394 Field Work

BioParc Zoo
BIO 394 Field Work

Oceanographic Aquarium
Spanish Courses

- Spanish 195: Beginning Intensive Spanish
- Spanish 295: Intermediate Intensive Spanish
- Spanish 301: Grammar and Composition
- Spanish 303A: Conversation
- Spanish 304: Spanish for Business & Professions
- Spanish 314: Intro. to Reading Hispanic Texts
- Spanish 321: Spanish Civilization and Culture
- Spanish 323: Spain Today
- Spanish 352: Phonetics
- Spanish 395: Study Abroad
- Spanish 490: Independent Study
- Spanish 499: Internship
Courses (English)

- Industrial Engineering 305: Economic Analysis
- Management 310: Entrepreneurship in Spain and the European Union
- Business Administration 291/491: Business in Spain and the European Union
- Biology 394: International Programs in Biology
- International Studies 235: Introduction to International Studies
- Management 367: International Entrepreneurship
Where we are today
Best Practices

• Acknowledging Realities
  – Recognize the significance of other campus entities
  – Stay true to your mission

• Location
  – Attractive location of smaller cities
  – Make sure it is somewhere YOU want to spend time
Best Practices

• Educational Venue
  – Private language school vs. a university
  – Does it have support staff with contacts and connections?
  – Experiential learning?
Best Practices

- Involving other disciplines: program leaders and collaborators
  - Choose to partner with disciplines that are also high priority campus initiatives
  - Utilize existing knowledge: a potential collaborator may have contacts or expertise you can draw on
  - Seek out complimentary experiences for integrated study that connects to a variety of majors
  - Communicate clearly the goals and expectations with other faculty for the program.
  - Make sure student expectations are the same across disciplines.
  - Do you like this person? Can you spend a great deal of time with him/her?
Best Practices

• Program Goals
  – Make your language and culture learning goals transparent to your collaborators
  – Design programs with students in mind and be smart about course scheduling, especially when experiential learning is involved
Best Practices

• Coursework and Language Proficiency
  – Make sure that courses taken abroad count toward major or minor requirements
  – Try to design unique courses/experiences – things you cannot do on the home campus
  – Involve collaborators in choosing courses
Best Practices

• Preparing Students
  – Extensive pre-departure training a must!
  – Re-entry advising or courses are helpful
  – Develop mechanisms to maintain meaningful contact with students while abroad:
    • One-on-one or small group meetings
    • Facebook and Twitter
    • Blackboard or Moodle, etc.
Best Practices

• Parting insights: the Positive
  – Work together for the good of the program
  – Allow students time to learn
  – Design unique courses or experiences
  – Make language learning the cornerstone
  – Students and faculty in different disciplines can work meaningfully together
  – With larger groups, cost savings can be significant
## Survey Data (2006-2011)

### Percent who “Mostly Agree” or “Completely Agree”

(67% Response Rate)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am more receptive to different ideas</td>
<td>94.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have gained better insight into myself</td>
<td>90.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have a greater sense of self-confidence</td>
<td>87.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My tolerance of other people and customs has increased</td>
<td>86.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand the U.S. better</td>
<td>71.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My interest in social issues has increased</td>
<td>83.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My interest in world events has increased</td>
<td>90.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My interest in the arts has increased</td>
<td>70.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My ability to adapt to new situations has increased</td>
<td>93.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My overall satisfaction with the program is excellent</td>
<td>82.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Proficiency</td>
<td>BEFORE 17.47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Good” or “Excellent”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(67% Response Rate)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>