



Moving from Anecdote to Assessment: Measuring How Study Abroad and Intercultural Experiences Affect College Students



CCID Conference, February 2010
Edith Fernández, Ph.D., University of Texas-El Paso
Kate Thirolf, University of Michigan
**The Global Intercultural Experience for
Undergraduates, University of Michigan**



Presentation Outline

- ★ About GIEU
- ★ GIEU Assessment & Research Design
- ★ Sample Data and Results
- ★ Questions & Discussion

2 



About GIEU

- ★ Innovative intercultural program for undergrads
- ★ Part of the Center for Global and Intercultural Study (CGIS) at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor
- ★ Sends teams of students and faculty to engage in experiential and service learning research projects at field sites across the globe each summer
- ★ Year-long commitment: Students must participate in GIEU course for academic credit the semester before and after their field experience.

3



Sample field sites 2010

- ★ **BRAZIL**: Exploring Education, Culture and Community from the Ground Up: A Partnership Project
- ★ **GHANA**: No Health without Mental Health: Psychological Stress in the Lives of Young Women in Accra, Ghana
- ★ **ITALY**: Puppet Pageant Art in Morinesio, Italy
- ★ **DETROIT**: (Re)Defining Culture, (Re)Writing Care, (Re)Creating Reality from Hope: HIV/AIDS and Health Disparities in Detroit

4





GIEU: By the numbers

- ★ Over 800 student participants since 2002
- ★ 181 students in 2009
 - ✦ 84% female
 - ✦ 49.2% students of color
 - ✦ 15.5% first generation college students
- ★ 14 field sites in 2009
 - ✦ Bkejwanong First Nation, China, Ecuador, Ghana, Hawaii, India, Indonesia, New Zealand, Peru, Tetuwan Oyate, Vietnam

5



Motivations for GIEU

- ★ Involve a wider range of students in off-campus learning opportunities with direct faculty contact
 - ✦ First generation students
 - ✦ Freshmen, sophomores
 - ✦ Transfer students
 - ✦ Students of color
 - ✦ Nursing, engineering, architecture majors
 - ✦ Athletes
 - ✦ Males
 - ✦ Low-income family background
- ★ Make “global education” a reality for undergraduates
- ★ Build faculty capacity in these areas across campus

6







GIEU Mission

The GIEU program is an effort to create new opportunities for short-term intercultural study of a global nature. The program enables small groups of diverse undergraduates, led by a faculty member, to learn in rich cultural environments, and to gain a greater understanding of global situations and intercultural processes. Students and faculty will be able to learn from communities as well as from each other in locations that support cross-cultural education and benefit from partnerships with our institution.


7




GIEU Program Calendar

- ★ Fall 1
 - ✦ Faculty proposals and selection
 - ✦ Student applications, selection, team matching
 - ✦ Faculty Seminar
- ★ Winter (course elements)
 - ✦ Common Retreat
 - ✦ Field Team Preparations
 - ✦ Convocation
- ★ Summer
 - ✦ Field Experiences--paid internship
- ★ Fall 2
 - ✦ Common Debriefing--course element
 - ✦ Campus Symposium--course element
- ★ Immediate & Long-term Evaluation

8






Benefits to Faculty and Students

- ★ Faculty
 - ★ Opportunity for interdisciplinary teaching and exploration
 - ★ Exposure to world-as-classroom and teaching in context/experiential teaching and learning
 - ★ Close mentoring interaction with diverse undergraduates
- ★ Students
 - ★ Commitment to and development of intercultural competencies and skills
 - ★ Better fit with wider range of academic schedules, programs, and budgets
 - ★ Greater involvement with wider range of diverse peers in engaged cultural exchange

9

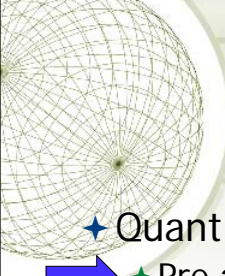


How do you measure the effectiveness of off-campus intercultural programs?

- ★ How are students, faculty impacted?
- ★ What do they learn about intercultural interactions, about themselves?
- ★ What new perspectives, knowledge, skills do they gain?

10





GIEU Research Design

- ★ Quantitative analysis

- ➡
 - ★ Pre and Post Field Experience Survey administered to students
 - ★ Pre and Post Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) taken by faculty

- ★ Qualitative analysis

- ➡
 - ★ Short open-ended survey responses from students
- ➡
 - ★ Student journal and reflection assignments
 - ★ Follow-up interviews with students and faculty

11



Field Experience Surveys

- ★ Developed by Edith Fernández in 2002
- ★ Aims to measure the extent to which students develop a *global perspective* as a result of their intercultural experience
- ★ 200+ questions, five-point Likert scale
 - ★ Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree
 - ★ Not At All Like Me to Very Much Like Me

12





Dimensions of a Global Perspective

- ★ **Preferences for Thinking and Acting**
 - ★ How often do you think about the influence that society has on other people? How difficult do you find it to see the another person's point of view during an argument?
- ★ **Intercultural Relations**
 - ★ How tense or relaxed do you feel meeting strangers, introducing yourself, etc.?
- ★ **Intrapersonal Awareness**
 - ★ How aware are you as an individual with personal preferences and habits? (includes personal identity issues)
- ★ **Global Awareness**
 - ★ How often do you think about what you have in common with other people in the world?

13



Other Variables

- ★ Student background characteristics, personality traits
- ★ Experiences with diversity and other cultures prior to GIEU
- ★ Knowledge of field site's cultural practices
- ★ Quantity and quality of interactions with local people from field site, GIEU peers, and GIEU faculty
- ★ Creativity assessment

14



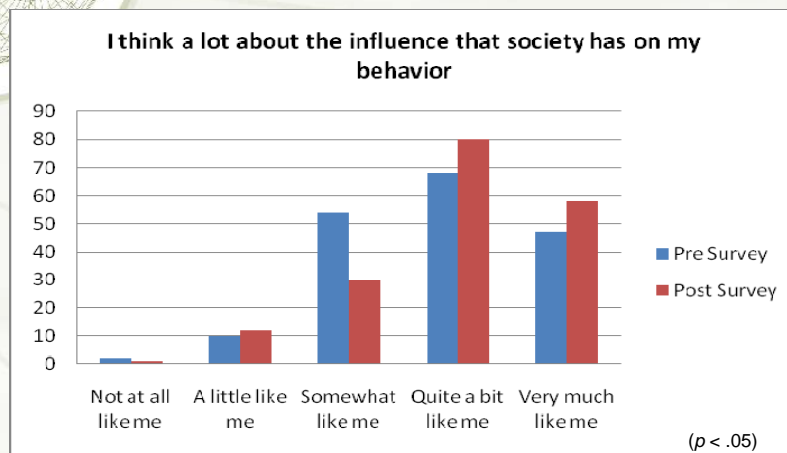
Survey data analysis method

- ★ Wilcoxon signed-rank tests to compare Pre and Post survey responses
- ★ Multiple regression analysis to investigate the relationship between students' experiences and their participation in the GIEU program

15



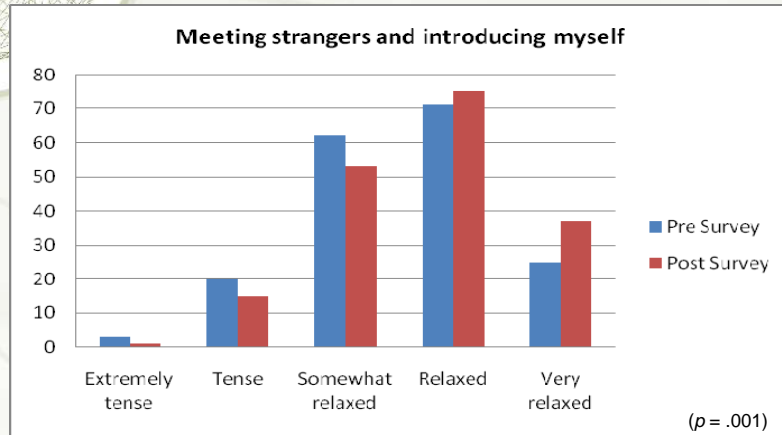
Preferences for Thinking and Acting



16



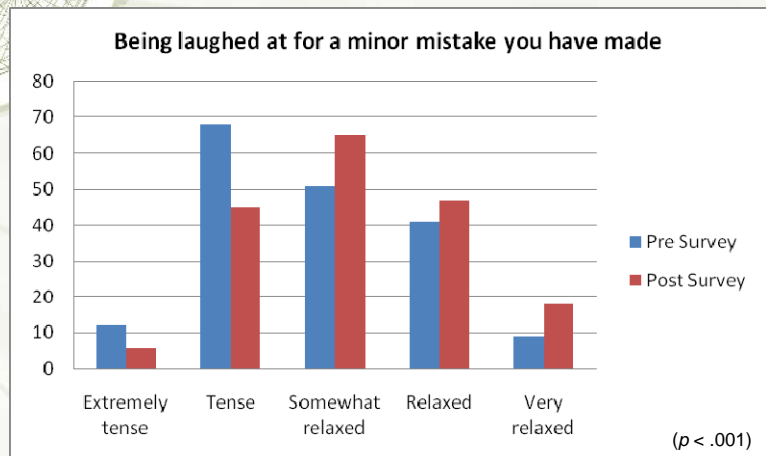
Intercultural Relations



17



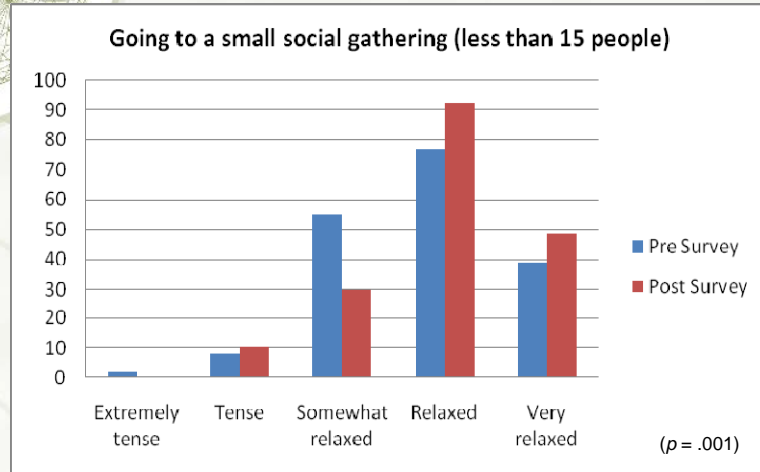
Intercultural Relations



18



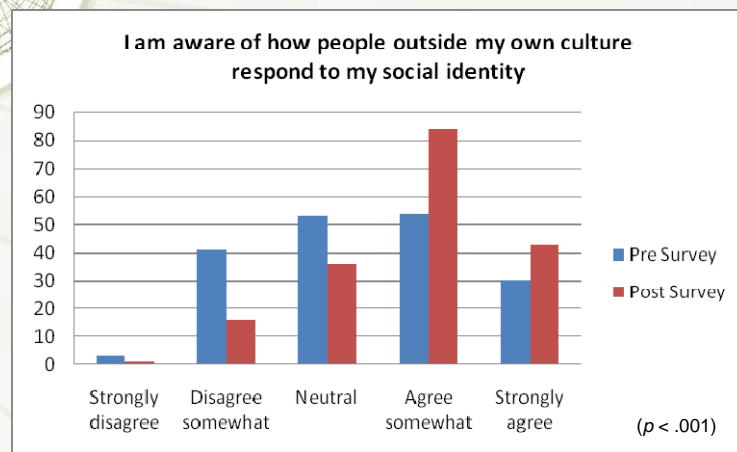
Intercultural Relations



19



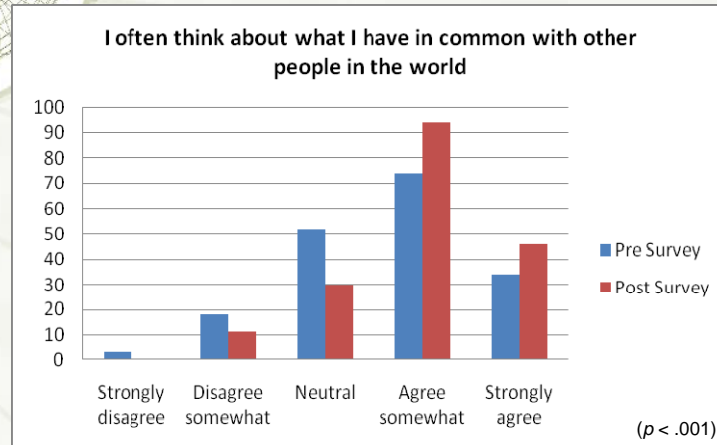
Intrapersonal Awareness



20



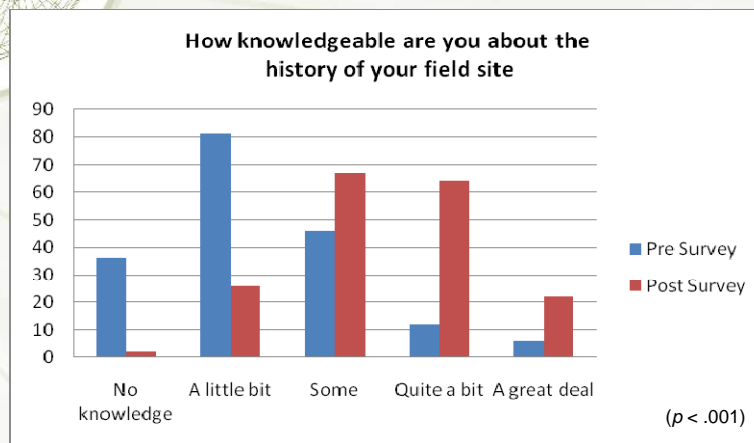
Global Awareness



21



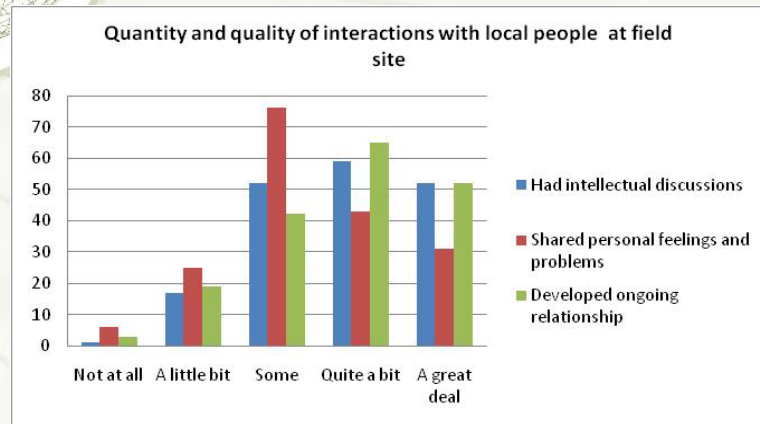
Cross Cultural Knowledge



22



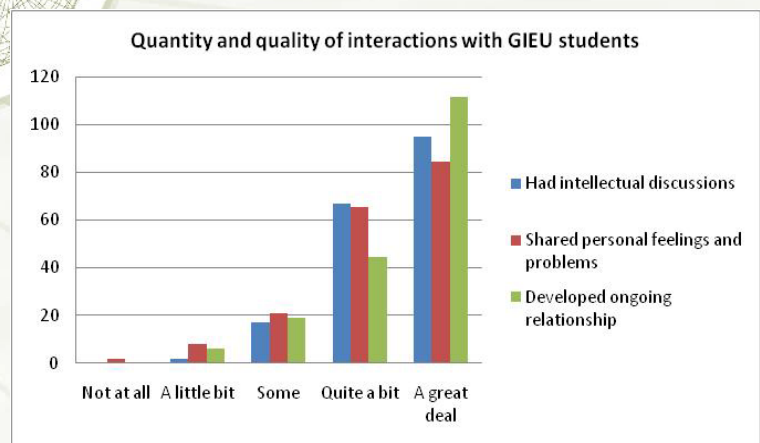
Interactions with local people at field site



23



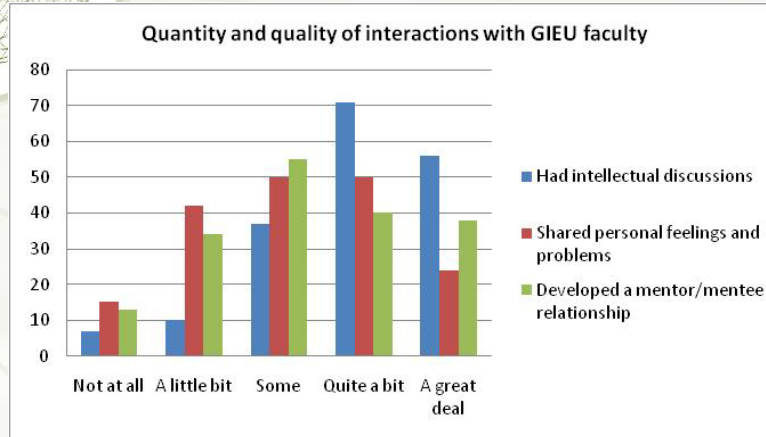
Interactions with GIEU students



24



Interactions with GIEU faculty



25



Factor Analysis - Global Perspective

- ★ Preferences for Thinking and Acting
 - ◆ Ability to think complexly
 - ◆ Ability to see multiple perspectives
- ★ Intercultural Relations
 - ◆ Positive cross cultural interactions
 - ◆ Intercultural anxiety: Meeting and communicating with others
 - ◆ Intercultural anxiety: Feeling different and targeted by others

26





Factor Analysis - Global Perspective

- ★ Intrapersonal Awareness
- ★ Global Awareness
 - ◆ Globalcentrism
 - ◆ Cross cultural knowledge

27



Factor Analysis - Students' Prior Experiences with Diversity

- ★ Cultural Experiences in College
- ★ Interactions with Others from Different Cultures in College
- ★ Perception that Faculty and Administrators Support Cultural Diversity
- ★ Perception that Campus Climate Supports Cultural Diversity

28





Factor Analysis - Students' Field Site Experiences

- ★ Took Part in Host Culture
- ★ Actively Tried and Learned New Things
- ★ Field Experiences With Daily Lives of Local Peoples
- ★ Positive Interaction with Student Peers at Field Site
- ★ Positive Interaction with Faculty at the Field Site

29

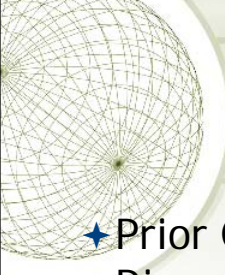


Regression Model

- ★ Student background characteristics
 - ✦ Gender
 - ✦ Students of color
 - ✦ Asian students
 - ✦ College (Language Science & Arts)
 - ✦ Income (Upper income)


30

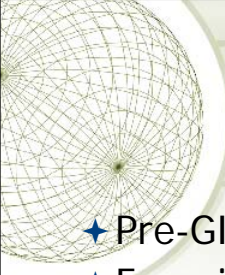




Regression Model


- ★ Prior Collegiate Experiences with Diversity
 - ✦ Cultural experiences in college
 - ✦ Interactions with others from different cultures in college
 - ✦ Perception that campus climate supports cultural diversity
 - ✦ Perception that faculty and admin support cultural diversity

31 



Regression Model

- ★ Pre-GIEU Measures of Outcomes
- ★ Experiences at the Field Site
 - ✦ Experienced daily lives with local peoples
 - ✦ Took part in host culture
 - ✦ Actively tried and learned new things
 - ✦ Positive interactions with student peers
 - ✦ Positive interaction with faculty
 - ✦ Participated in research activities
 - ✦ Reflected through journaling
 - ✦ Program year (2009)

32 



Regression Results (2003-2009)

- ★ Ability to Think Complexly ($R^2 = .296$)
 - + females
 - + positive interactions with student peers
- ★ Ability to See Multiple Perspectives ($R^2 = .289$)
 - + actively tried and learned new things

33



Regression Results

- ★ Positive Cross Cultural Interactions ($R^2 = .342$)
 - + experienced daily lives of local peoples
 - + participated in host culture
 - + positive interactions with student peers
 - + positive interaction with faculty
 - Asian students

34





Regression Results

- ★ **Anxiety Meeting & Communicating w/ Others** ($R^2 = .345$; "+" indicates feeling more relaxed)
 - + actively tried and learned new things
 - + positive interaction with faculty
- ★ **Anxiety Feeling Diff. and Targeted** ($R^2 = .361$)
 - females
 - + lower income
 - + participated in host culture
 - + actively tried and learned new things

35



Regression Results

- ★ **Intrapersonal Learning** ($R^2 = .232$)
 - + females
 - Asian students
 - + positive interactions with student peers
- ★ **Globalcentrism** ($R^2 = .342$)
 - + positive interactions with student peers
 - + reflected through journaling

36





Regression Results

★ Cross Cultural Knowledge ($R^2 = .280$)

- perception that faculty and admin support cultural diversity
- + experienced daily lives of local peoples
- + participated in host culture
- + positive interactions with student peers
- + positive interactions with faculty

37

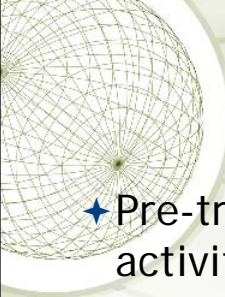


Key Takeaways

- ★ Experiences at the field site were all positive predictors of developing an integrated global perspective*
 - ★ The more a student actively participated in a host culture, tried new things, and experienced the daily lives of local peoples, the more he/she developed a global perspective.
 - ★ Positive interactions with students and faculty were also key.
 - ★ Reflecting through journaling predicted globalcentrism (e.g., "I am a citizen of the world.")

38





Implications for practice

- ★ Pre-trip orientation and preparation activities are *critical*
 - ✦ Encourage positive relationships among students and faculty prior to trip
 - ✦ Encourage students to “jump in” and participate in host culture
 - ✦ Encourage students to reflect through journaling
 - ✦ Recognize differences between males/females and race/ethnicities

39



UC275: GIEU Retreat

- ★ Readings on intergroup dialogue, service-learning, culture scholarship
- ★ Paired interviews, generative interviewing
- ★ Intercultural skill session
- ★ *Black Robe* and *Baraka* film and discussion
- ★ Multicultural ground rules
- ★ Introduction to reflective field journaling
- ★ Working through multiple identities
- ★ Crafting statements of purpose
- ★ Cultural/religious immersion project

40





UC275: GIEU Debrief and Symposium

- ★ Debrief held weekend before Fall term begins
 - ★ All students assembled to discuss and compare site experiences, prepare for Symposium, and share insights as they process their experiences
- ★ Symposium held in mid-Fall
 - ★ Academic conference where students present and discuss their GIEU field work with the U-M community
 - ★ Students create a conference poster and short abstract of their presentation.

41



Qualitative Analysis

- ★ Short open-answer survey responses, pre and post
- ★ Student journals
- ★ Faculty and student interviews

42

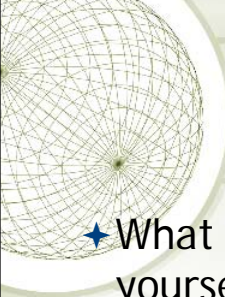




Pre Survey Responses (2009)

- ★ Why did you get involved in GIEU?
 - ✦ To gain intercultural experience
 - ✦ To learn first-hand about a new culture, to immerse myself in a culture
 - ✦ To experience something different
 - ✦ To “make a difference”
 - ✦ Love to travel
- ★ What do you expect to learn?
 - ✦ About the field site culture, beliefs
 - ✦ Cultural sensitivity, competence
 - ✦ About myself

43



Post Survey Responses

- ★ What do you think you learned about yourself?
 - ✦ My ability to adapt
 - ✦ How I interact with others, how to interact with others
 - ✦ That I love learning about other cultures
 - ✦ More about my social identity, self-awareness

44





Self Awareness

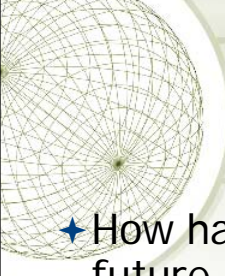
- ★ "I gained confidence in myself and I learned/realized my identity as an American. I also deepened my respect for other cultures."

- White/Hispanic female, junior, New Zealand

- ★ "I learned to be a lot more open to other cultures and ways of doing things. I felt that I was not culturally aware and open to new ideas. After the first few days I found myself to be a lot more open to group members and cultures." - African-American female, sophomore, Hawai'i

- ★ "I learned that I have always looked through the eyes of an ethnocentrist, and since the trip have completely changed and become aware of that." - White female, sophomore, Indonesia

45

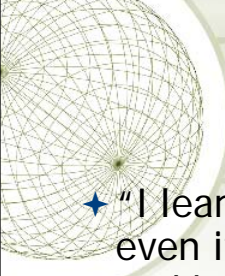


Post Survey Responses

- ★ How has this program influenced your future academic or career plans?
 - ★ Confirmed interest in international issues
 - ★ Want to live/work abroad someday
 - ★ More interested in public health, medicine, social work, non-profit work, public policy, human rights/social justice issues, international law, international development, education
 - ★ Realized importance of cultural competence

46





Global Awareness

- ★ "I learned how similar people can be even if they live in different conditions and have different histories." - White male, sophomore, Ecuador
- ★ "I was surprised to learn how much my similarities with the people I met outweighed our differences." White female, sophomore, Ghana (Kumasi)
- ★ "There's so much in common between cultures near and far. We all are citizens of the world and can learn from one another." - African-American male, sophomore, New Zealand

47



Understanding Student Motivations

- ★ Male students more frequently cited desire to gain skills and career motivations
 - ✦ Female students more often mentioned desire to "immerse" themselves in new culture
- ★ African-American students were often encouraged by a friend alumnus/ae to apply

48





In Their Own Words (2008)

Being at the University of Michigan and a minority, I have faced many challenges, but by this time in my life, I have started to be numb to a lot of things. In Brazil I was challenged in a different way, and it had a different impact on me...

I worry less about the "finer" things in life because they do not make the person. The most beautiful people who I met were the people who did not have a lot but had each other.

I went on the trip with the attitude that I knew myself and what I was capable of doing, but I found a whole new person that existed on accident. I did not mean to evolve into this new person but that is what occurred. [I am now] a person [who is] free from things that I did not know were holding me back.

- Black-American female, junior

49



In Their Own Words

This trip essentially reaffirmed what I want kind of person I want to be and what kind of influence I want to have on the people around me as well as the rest of the world... My GIEU experience helped me to see that there is so much more out there than first meets the eye...

I was absolutely a changed person when I returned to the United States from spending four amazing weeks in the Philippines... This trip caused me to stretch my comfort level and do things that I didn't think I would have otherwise been able to...

My GIEU experience taught me to look outside of the box and also to expand the group of people that I would like to work to help as a Social Worker... I believe that one person can make a positive difference in the lives of others and I hope to do that here in Ann Arbor and throughout the rest of my life.

- White female, junior

50



In Their Own Words

Throughout my life, [I heard] that the most meaningful experiences come when you place yourself outside of your comfort zone. My stubbornness often precluded me from heeding this advice. But for reasons I am still not sure how to account for, I continually put myself "out there" during my stay in New Orleans. I had serious doubts if I (a city boy [from Brooklyn]) would have any skills to contribute. Nevertheless, I did my best to learn and within minutes I was hanging dry wall with ease... and assisting the music teacher teach drums to the kids even though I was always a woeful student when it came to music.

Finally, I have always been an outspoken opponent of organized religion and believed little in spirituality. It was striking if not somewhat divine, how religion influenced the entire experience. Within days I found myself using God Bless you as a salutation, studying the bible, and participating in church services. While these interactions often made me feel uncomfortable and even combative as my positions presided in the minority, it was by far the most rewarding part of the trip. The three aforementioned experiences were undoubtedly my favorite and it is clearly not a coincidence that they all occurred when I felt most uncomfortable. The GIEU experience placed me in situations that no other class or extracurricular activity has before.

- White male, junior

51



How to get started with your own assessment program

- ★ What do you want to measure?
 - ★ Academic impact on students?
 - ★ Social impact (confidence, self-awareness)?
 - ★ Impact on career considerations? Post-college trajectory?
 - ★ Impact on faculty?
- ★ What methods will you use?
 - ★ Qualitative interviews, reflections
 - ★ Quantitative surveys

52





Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI)

- ★ www.ccaiassess.com
- ★ Can help identify current strengths and weaknesses for effective cross-cultural communication and interaction
 - ★ Emotional Resilience - ability to “bounce back”
 - ★ Flexibility/Openness - willingness to enjoy different environments/ways of thinking
 - ★ Perceptual Acuity - interpersonal sensitivity, ability to perceive accurately across cultures
 - ★ Personal Autonomy - how one maintains his/her identity in different environments

Kelley & Meyers (1995), Kitsanis (2004)

53

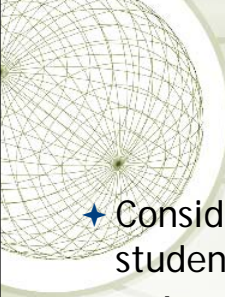


Intercultural Development Inventory

- ★ www.idiinventory.com
- ★ Measures individual and group orientations toward cultural differences
- ★ 50-item, theory-based instrument, currently in 12 languages
- ★ Generates in-depth graphic profile of an individual's or groups' predominant level of intercultural competence

54





Advice on how to start

- ★ Consider first conducting interviews with students and faculty
 - ✦ Assess how they describe their experiences, how their intercultural experience might have impacted them
- ★ No “one size fits all” approach
 - ✦ Tweak existing assessment measures to fit your needs
- ★ Share your process and results
 - ✦ Seeking Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval recommended

55



Good Luck and Thank You!

- ★ A.T. Miller, CGIS Director
- ★ Reggie Noto, GIEU Assistant Director
- ★ Edith Fernández, Pre/Post Field Experience Survey creator
- ★ Kate Thirolf, GIEU Assessment Intern
 - ✦ Email: kthirolf@umich.edu

www.gieu.umich.edu

56

