

Producing the Global Classroom: Exploring the Impacts of Study Abroad on Host Communities

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In an age of neoliberal reforms across educational contexts, internationalization efforts within higher education represent the hope for what education *could be* – the promulgation of mutual understanding and cross-cultural exchange amongst peoples of the world. Indeed, colleges and universities across the United States continue to place great emphasis on internationalization as a strategic way forward, often captured in institutional strategic internationalization plans, missions, and visions. Yet, the ubiquity of policy catch phrases such as "mutual understanding", "mutual exchange", "global citizenship", and the "global classroom" renders them largely ambiguous. Further, the good intentions embedded in this rhetoric can obfuscate the ways in which internationalization efforts, specifically study abroad programs, have evolved alongside a trajectory of broader university-wide corporatization which reinforces market-based, enterprise-driven, student-consumer orientations (Zemach-Bersin 2007, 2008).

While things like "mutual understanding" and "mutual exchange" are assumed outcomes of the study abroad experience, much of the evaluative research on US study abroad programs is one-sided, focused, almost exclusively, on the US participant (Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, and Klute 2012). Claims of mutuality are made casually with very little (or in most cases no) data to capture the experiences of those who are largely responsible for producing the "global classroom" abroad, including: host families, local instructors, and local on-site study abroad staff. Even for US students who study with their US teacher in relative isolation and who therefore may not engage with the aforementioned host community members, by nature of simply being abroad they too are interacting with local business owners, neighbors, and the city that hosts them. While

current research points to how the global classroom is *consumed* by U.S. students, that is, what and how they are learning abroad (Miller-Perrin and Thompson 2014; Vande Berg, Paige and Lou 2012) very little is known about how the global classroom is *produced* and how the study abroad encounter impacts various members of the host community. In order for study abroad and other internationalization efforts to bring the goals of mutuality set out in policy rhetoric to fruition, research must extend beyond US student participants to include those who produce the global classroom.

My project will trace the evolution of study abroad along the broader trajectory of neoliberal and corporate reforms in higher education in the United States (Giroux 2002) and explore the incongruence of internationalization policy rhetoric centered on "mutual understanding" with current one-sided, US student-centered approaches to study abroad research and evaluation. Empirically, the project will begin to fill the gap in host community perspectives on the study abroad encounter through in-depth interviews with and observations of host community members in two of the top ten most popular study abroad destinations for US students: San Jose, Costa Rica and Florence, Italy (IIE Open Doors 2014). Host community member will be defined broadly to include what I refer to as "intentional hosts", those who purposely engage with US students such as host families, local instructors who teach US students, non-US students who learn along-side US students, local organizations that host US student interns and volunteers, and local on-site study abroad staff; as well as what I refer to as "unintentional hosts", those who engage with US students only by nature of US student presence in the city, such as local business owners, neighbors, and members of civil society.

Flipping the script on typically US student-centered study abroad evaluation research by focusing exclusively on host community members' perceptions of the study abroad encounter will help to create a more accurate representation of the current nature of mutuality in two study abroad destinations. Doing so will increase our understanding of how the global classroom is produced and how diverse encounters with US students impact various host community members. Taking a more inclusive approach to study abroad research will hopefully encourage international education policy makers to strive for more complex ways thinking about global relations of power in the development, implementation, and assessment of study abroad programs.

Study Abroad Marketing and the Privatization of Global Citizenship” In *The Handbook of Practice and Research in Study Abroad: Higher Education and the Quest for Global Citizenship*, edited by R. Lewin, (pp. 303-321). New York, NY: Routledge, Francis & Taylor Group.

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