



Plymouth State
UNIVERSITY
Executive Summary

Defense Date August 11th, 2020

Title The Transference of Domestic Teaching Skills to International Settings Within Study Abroad Programs

Introduction

Study abroad programs and short-term international experiences have been a growing part of university programming for many students prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Plymouth State University runs multiple faculty-led study abroad programs or international experiences each semester. There are consistent themes that emerge as universal to providing high-impact learning opportunities for Plymouth State University students in an international setting.

Problem of Practice

It is unknown what resources or experiences faculty leader find most beneficial when developing and leading an international experience. Not knowing what resources and experiences are most useful in preparation and delivery of study abroad courses or programs is a problem because outcome quality for both students and the university hinge on faculty's ability to provide programming internationally.

Research Method

A qualitative, survey was used to identify themes regarding the practices or resources that faculty found most beneficial in leading study abroad programs or international experiences. An anonymous online survey was distributed to survey participants who were faculty members of Plymouth State University and had led a study abroad program or international experience within the past 20 years. Survey participants could also elect to participate in a follow up interview to discuss the themes that they identified in greater depth.

Summary of Findings

Key themes included the opportunity to spend time in the country before leading a trip there, the need for facilitated reflection during and after the experience, facilitated opportunities for cultural immersion, and the use of in-country providers to manage trip logistics and supplemental education opportunities for students. One additional finding was that the use of third-party providers in conjunction with Plymouth State University can raise the costs of international programs making the experiences cost-prohibitive to some students.

Limitations of Study

Limitations of this study include the fact that the data was collected from a singular university and only gathered from faculty members. Additionally, the 2020 COVID-19 virus may have impacted faculty participation.

Implications

The results of this study provide insight into the themes that help deliver high-impact learning experiences to students. The results of this study also provide Plymouth State University data regarding the factors that create high-impact international experiences for students. Plymouth State University should consider these themes in their requirements or faculty trainings prior to faculty members leading experiences for students internationally.