Enriching & extending international learning through critical reflection & web-enhanced pedagogy

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Overview of presentation

- Curriculum design & development: An Outcomes-Based Assessment (OBA) approach
- A Reentry course for students with recent international experience (TDG funded)
  - Needs analysis/ rationale for course
  - Syllabus design and development
  - Assessment
  - Evaluation
  - Revision
What is OBA??

- Student learning needs
- Aims/desired learning outcomes
- Learning activities
- Feedback for evaluation
- Content/fundamental concepts
- Assessment
- Actual learning outcomes

What is OBA??
Why develop a course for students who have recently returned to CUHK after international experience (e.g., short-term study abroad, international exchange, service-learning, internship)?

What process should be followed?
Top 10 re-entry challenges

- Boredom
- No one wants to hear their international stories
- Difficulty explaining their ideas/feelings
- Reverse homesickness
- Relationships have changed
- People see “wrong” changes
- People misunderstand
- Feelings of alienation
- Inability to apply new knowledge and skills
- Loss/compartamentalization of experience

(’What’s up with culture?’ website, Bruce LaBrack)
Without guided, critical reflection, returnees...

- may ‘shoe-box’ their international learning as they become re-immersed in campus life;
- may become frustrated and overwhelmed by re-entry culture shock & identity misalignments;
- may miss opportunities to deepen, extend & share their L2/international learning with others (Johnson, 2002; Meyers-Lee, 2007, Paige et al., 2006).
Identification of the needs of CUHK returnees

Ethnographic investigations of short-term sojourners (2001-9) (CERG); mixed-method studies of the ‘whole person development’ of semester- & year-long exchange students (2009 – present) (Direct grant/ GRF);

Multiple sources of data: focus groups, interviews, surveys, diaries, reflective journals, participant observation (student sojourners/ returnees) offer a window into the sojourn/ reentry experience
Research-driven & Theory-based

- Findings of ethnographic and experimental-design investigations of Hong Kong sojourners
- Reflective, experiential Learning (J. Bennett, 2008; Kolb, 1983; Moon, 2004)
- Intellectual/ Intercultural Development (Perry, 1998; M. Bennett’s (1993) *Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity*)
- Education as transformation/ adult learning (Kauffmann et al., 1992; Mezirow, 2000)
- Poststructuralist notions of identity expansion (Hall, 2002)
Broad aims of new course

- Provide a forum for structured reflection on international/ intercultural/ L2 experience;
- Convert energy & enthusiasm into tangible plans for L2 use/ the continuing enhancement of intercultural communication skills;
- Consolidate & integrate international learning;
- Provide a means for returnees to share their experience with each other and future exchange students.
Intercultural Transitions: Making sense of international experience

This web-enhanced course is open to students in all Faculties with recent international experience (study abroad, international exchange, volunteering, service learning, internships, educational travel, work or residence abroad). It will provide a forum to exchange ideas about diverse international experiences. The course explores theories and models of intercultural (communicative) competence and intercultural transitions, employing a practice-to-theory-to-practice pedagogy. In relation to their own (and others’) international experience, students will explore such topics as language/culture shock, intercultural adjustment, reentry, identity expansion, and intercultural competence in a second language. Through critical reflection, reading, discussion, and writing, students will develop a deeper understanding of their international experience and discover ways to incorporate it into their CUHK life and post-graduation plans.
Desired learning outcomes for students

- assess their international/ reentry experience & articulate how it has affected their sense of self (identity)/ worldview;
- describe theories and models of culture shock/ adjustment, re-entry, identity reconstruction, intercultural (communicative) competence, and responsible global, intercultural citizenship;
- test these theories and models, using: their own international/ intercultural experiences, case studies, and narratives found in literature, media (e.g., online), interviews, and research reports;
- assess their cultural self-awareness & communication style & set realistic goals for further enhancement;
- integrate their international/ intercultural/ L2 experiences into their daily life/ plans for future;
- express ideas clearly in written and oral English.
Approach to learning

- Experiential
- Structured, critical, deep reflection
- Description, Interpretation, Evaluation
- E-learning
- Autonomous & personal
- Collaborative
- Discovery & transformation
- Process-oriented
- Practice-to-theory-to-practice pedagogy
Experiential Learning Model

1 EXPERIENCE
the activity; perform, do it

2 SHARE
the results, reactions, and observations publicly

3 PROCESS
by discussing, looking at the experience; analyze, reflect

4 GENERALIZE
to connect the experience to real world examples

5 APPLY
what was learned to a similar or different situation; practice

Applv Reflect
‘Practice-to-theory
to-practice’ pedagogy

- Links student experience with others (e.g., classmates’/ published sojourner accounts)
- Relates personal (oral & written) narratives to research publications (less personal)
- Brings student data into conversation with existing theories:
  - uses theory to illuminate
  - draws on data to challenge & builds on existing understandings of sojourn learning
Content/ Fundamental concepts

- The dimensions of intercultural transitions
- Intercultural contact and identity reconstruction
- IC adjustment and adaptation: Culture shock and recovery
- Intercultural competence in interpersonal relationships
- Homecoming, reentry, and identity issues
- Cultural marginality/ Feeling in-between
- Dimensions of intercultural (communicative) competence
- Intercultural, global citizenship
- Marketing international experience/ intercultural/ L2 communication skills
eLearning with Moodle

This eLearning platform (web-based course management system) is used for:

- course announcements;
- dissemination of lecture notes (ppt slides) & other course materials (links to websites);
- online discussion (Forum);
- blogging (e-journal entries & responses)
- student work submission.

Learning activities

- Discussions, analysis of readings & some lectures
- Weekly online reflective postings/ blogging (Moodle-facilitated) (Instructor, Ss & tutors)
- Reflective writing portfolio/ peer reviews
  - In-class writing workshops & peer reviews
  - Reflective Essays (gradually linking international experience with theories/ research/ readings)
- Group presentations to students who will go on exchange (sharing sessions at the end of term)
Feedback for continuous evaluation of course

- E-mail/ discussions throughout semester
- Midway through the course – Focused, brief survey
- End-of-course
  - Faculty of Arts course evaluation form
  - Separate survey on specific elements of the course
    (e.g., tasks, Moodle eLearning, writing tasks, peer reviews, project work)

Information is highly valued and will be used to revise/refine teaching methods, tasks, content and learning outcome statements.
Assessment scheme

- Participation: 10%
- Online reflection (Forum postings & blogs (ejournal)): 35%
- Reflective writing portfolio; essays & peer reviews: 40%
- Group presentation: 15%

(Sharing session with future exchange students)

*Linked to course philosophy/ activities
**Rubrics to assess reflective writing/ blogs/ oral presentations
*** Peer reviews throughout & Self-evaluation
Actual Learning Outcomes

- Participation in class & online (quality & quantity)
- Forum postings (quality & quantity)
- Moodle blog entries (quality & quantity)
- 3 reflective essays (quality, depth of reflection, mechanics, linking of experience with theory, etc.)
- Group presentation to future exchange students

* Most elements assessed with the aide of rubrics/ peer reviews/ self-evaluation forms that are available to students on Moodle at the beg. of the term.
A challenging pedagogy

- Experiential vs. traditional
- More learner-centered (less teacher-directed with teacher as facilitator not ‘sage on the stage’)
- Involves autonomous & collaborative learning
- Requires willingness to self-disclose/ critique/ share
- Necessitates climate of trust and sense of mutuality
- Extensive use of eLearning (Moodle resources, blogs, forums, websites) (requires technical knowledge & a considerable amount of time)
- Involves a significant amount of writing/ reading
- Pace more intense & personal (need time & space to deeply/ critically reflect, discuss & write)
Benefits of reentry course beyond individual students

- Should help students make the most of their international experience!
- Offers rich insight into the developmental trajectories of student sojourners & helps explain quantitative findings (e.g., surveys) in larger-scale study of international exchange;
- Provides an additional means of documenting education abroad learning outcomes/ the reentry experience;
- Will provide direction for the design and delivery of courses/ workshops/ orientations for future students who will venture abroad.
Thank you for your attention.

Any questions?