

Classdate research paper

[Life](#), [Home](#)



The Benefits of Study Abroad

Studying abroad is a practice that has existed for hundreds of years.

Universities in Europe began exchanging professors and eventually students began to travel to different countries for the purpose of formal education.

Out of necessity in the early days of specialties developing at universities, it was necessary to travel to obtaining the educational program you were looking for. In the United States, the practice began in 1875 at the Indiana University; students earned credit for organized trips to traipse around Europe in the summer (History of Study Abroad part 1: 1190-1900).

In the last few decades, exchange student programs have grown in popularity, variety and location. The most common type of going abroad is doing a semester or two in another country. Many universities have mutual programs with universities in other countries just for this purpose. Students can continue take required coursework and a new experience in a new nation. There are more casual summer programs and intensive learn the language programs. With the globalization of business, internships in foreign countries has grown in popularity. There are also many volunteer programs where a student can continue his studies while helping a community in need. Once thought as a privilege for the upper class, study abroad has become accessible for all students. According to Goodman, “ With more flexible and accessible options, the barriers posed by financial need, disabilities, race and ethnicity and sexual orientation are crumbling.”

The reasons for participating in these programs is widely varied. Some student are looking for personal growth, language acquisition, exposure to new cultures, different perspectives on

educational coursework, preparation for the global marketplace, and helping those in need while furthering one's career. For every motivation there is program suited to fit. The question today for university students is not "Why?" but "Why not!" According to an article by Goodman and Berdan, they state, "Despite the inevitable increasing global competition for jobs, American graduates lack the international experience, language capabilities and cross-cultural communication skills necessary to succeed in the global economy."

The most important reason to go abroad is personal growth. No matter what other motivation, growth will occur. According to McGourty, research has shown that students who study abroad shown an increase in the following personality traits: openness to experience; conscientiousness; extraversion; agreeableness and neuroticism (2014). Most students are in their late teen and twenties. People of this age are more open, transition easily. Factors that affect this psychological growth include: a new environment, exposure to a new culture, interaction and relationship development with new people. Another interesting aspect is the young adults become more independent abroad, they no longer have the built in support network they had at home. In studies and interviews, students who study abroad felt they matured, had become more independent and tolerant.

Personal growth is also enhanced by the making and maintaining of friendships and relationships with the people a student meets in a foreign country. Many students forge close friendships while overseas. Whether living in a private home to the dormitories, or sharing an apartment, the student abroad must make host friend in order to survive. Peers who guide a

student to the best places to eat, listen to music, go hiking often become close friends. This support is important when overseas. It is natural for humans to look for contact with others. These friendships often continue after a student moves back home. There also the other students one meets in class, as well as professors. This type of global networking is beneficial in the long run.

In today's global market and workplace, the acquisition of a second or even third language is critical for success. Companies have become international. Many smaller concerns must deal with suppliers or customers from other nations. Most multinational companies require a second language to secure employment. Today's savvy student knows where growth in their field is, geographically speaking. They can prepare themselves by learning another language in that market. Classes can be taken at home, but to truly understand the language one must be immersed in it. Technical language of a particular field such as engineering or architecture can only be learned when submerged in classes where the language is being spoken. Students who are immersed in a language learn not only technical language, but social language. They apply what they have learned in a classroom to life on a daily basis. This is a critical component in language acquisition. We use different types of language for various situations. How we speak in a university level course, address a friend's parents or exchanging ideas with our peers in a coffee shop are all different styles of the same language. For a student to fully comprehend and internalize a second language, time must be spent with native speakers in their own country.

Language acquisition is an integral part of culture. The reason language cannot be learned in the confines of a classroom effectively, is because it needs to be practiced in the cultural sense of a host country. The experience of being immersed in a new culture can be terrifying at first. The fear of making social mistakes or offending someone are real possibilities. It is important to be

prepared when going abroad to study some of expectations of behavior and cultural idiosyncrasies to avoid embarrassing and awkward situations. Most American student are educated in a system that teaches cultural diversity and sensitivity. It is one thing to hear about, but quite another to live it.

There are many aspects to culture: language, religion, customs, art and architecture. There also many subtle cultural differences: Jamaican children do not make eye contact with those in positions of authority and never touch the fruit at an Italian fruit stand, the owner will choose the fruit for you. Work ethics, physical contact are just a couple of areas of cultural difference a student might experience. Most students agree that after a prolonged stay in a foreign country they have become much more sensitive to authentic cultural diversity when they come home (Engle and Engle).

The opportunity to visit museums, eat in authentic restaurants, go to concerts and festivals and participate in local customs and activities is an experience every student should have. To have these experiences and make them personal changes us as humans. Our appreciation for other cultures as well as our own seems to increase after spending time abroad. Culture also plays a very important part in the world of business. To be able to successfully market one's self in the job market after competing school, an

experience of being overseas is a definite plus to a potential employer. It demonstrates that you are flexible and sensitive.

The educational outcomes of studying in a foreign university are also an important factor. Often, curriculums are different. Diverse teaching methods and the availability of resources not available at home create a challenging learning environment. Where else can you learn about the Mona Lisa and see the real thing or administer nursing care to a poverty stricken patient in a tropical climate. Learning takes on new dimensions and challenges when immersed in a program of study at a foreign university.

Volunteerism is another reason many students head abroad to study.

Programs that are designed to provide an educational experience in return for volunteer work are growing in popularity. Many student find this type of experience enlightening and empowering. Teaching and healthcare often have many opportunities for volunteering as their internship. Sometimes these programs are related to religious organizations. Missionaries originated the concept of going overseas to perform charitable work. Students who participate in these endeavors bring home the cultural experience on a very different level than the typical semester abroad. They provided meaningful help for people that helped to change and shape lives. This is an extremely satisfying experience.

I have already touched on the globalization of economies. The world marketplace is the new environment for business. In order to secure employment, a student must possess superior technical skills as well as social skills. Many student are not heading overseas to complete their internships. This opportunity allows a student to become immersed in

another culture through business. Culture, language and business practices are very different across nations. By participating in an internship abroad, a student is exemplifying the qualities of openness, cultural sensitivity and courage. These are all qualities employers look for in potential employees. The knowledge a student develops through an experience like this is invaluable to their personal and professional development. Business must be able to compete in the global market place. Technology has made it possible for an engineer in New York, to design a product for a client in Japan. A French website might sell jewelry hand crafted by the natives of Nairobi. The student in the job market who has an overseas experience will have an advantage over a student who does not.

The argument for studying abroad is a convincing one. The experience is both frightening and immensely satisfying. The advantages are personal, professional and cultural. Learning another language and culture, working for a company in a foreign country or volunteering where there is a need are profound experiences for a young adult.

References

Dwyer, Mary & Peters, Courtney, “ The Benefits of Study Abroad”.

<https://www.clarku.edu/offices/studyabroad/pdfs/IES%20Study.pdf> 8 Dec 2014

Engle, Lilli & Engle, John, “ Assessing Language Acquisition and Intercultural Sensitivity

Development in Relation to Study Abroad Program Design”

<http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ891458.pdf> 8 Dec 2014.

Goodman, Allen & Berdan, Staci. “ Every Student Should Study Abroad”. The

<https://assignbuster.com/classdate-research-paper/>

New York Times

<http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2013/10/17/should-more-americans-study-abroad/every-student-should-study-abroad> 14 May 2012.

“ History of Study Abroad part 1: 1190-1900”. <http://www.gooverseas.com/go-abroad-blog/history-study-abroad-part-1> 8 Dec 2014.

Richard McGourty. Does Study Abroad Accelerate Personal Growth? NAFSA Apr 2014 http://www.nafsa.org/Explore_International_Education/Trends/TI/Does_Study_Abroad_Accelerate_Personal_Growth/

http://www.nafsa.org/Explore_International_Education/Trends/TI/Does_Study_Abroad_Accelerate_Personal_Growth/