

〈Research Note〉

Study Abroad and Global Competency Education: A Holistic Approach to Assessment

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Abstract

The cultivation of global competence capacities is a fundamental aim of 21st-century education and study abroad widely promoted as a stage upon which these capacities can develop. It is argued here that efforts to measure the outcomes of study abroad could potentially overlook the full scope of transformations that occur as a result of the experience, including the development of interpersonal abilities related to global competency. A case is subsequently made that, to understand the role of study abroad in global competency education, evaluation processes must embrace a more holistic frame of reference that is informed by theories of learning and include a range of measures that can provide stakeholders in study abroad programs with a more comprehensive understanding of its outcomes.

[Keywords] Global competency, study abroad, assessment

1. Introduction

Global competency is a key educational objective for the 21st century, encouraging major reconceptualisations of established teaching paradigms at all schooling levels. Educators working in the domain of global competence education have adopted several approaches to meet this objective, approaches which typically include activities focusing on global awareness, critical thinking, intercultural communication, and intercultural collaboration. Meanwhile, in Japan, schools have responded by introducing specific programs in global citizenship (e.g. The University of the Ryukyus Global Citizen Curriculum), by encouraging students, in general, to think critically about global issues and self-reflect on their attitudes and beliefs about other people and places, and by fostering international connections to facilitate opportunities for intercultural interactions between Japanese students and their peers overseas.

In addition to these efforts, in Japan and many global contexts, initiatives at the

governmental and institutional level have sought to encourage students to look beyond their domestic educational spheres and to study abroad, by promoting the experience as a key platform not only for the development of global competence, but for self-growth, and career advancement. Due partly to the success of such initiatives, student mobility across national borders has been one of the defining trends in tertiary education of the past four decades (author, 2021). According to the 2017 edition of *Education at a Glance* from the International Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a report on educational trends, the number of higher education students abroad was around one million in the late 1980s and was estimated to increase to nearly five million by 2020—a rate of increase of 12% per year. By 2025, OECD has projected that the total number of internationally mobile students will reach eight million (OECD, 2017).

As international student mobility has continued to expand, some of those who work in the domain (e.g., Doyle; Steinberg; Magolda & Magolda, 2005; Roy et al., 2014) have identified a need for greater accountability in study abroad programs. Roy and her colleagues, for example, express the view that there is an "increasing need to assess the impact of education abroad experiences on student learning and development" (Roy et al., 2014) at government, institutional and personal level, so that validation can be found for the time, money and effort invested in them.

In parallel with this view, it is argued in the following that at Japanese schools also, comprehensive assessment processes need to be implemented to justify the personal, administrative and financial investments in study abroad programs by students, program administrators and sponsors. To this end, this paper examines current study abroad assessment paradigms and makes a case for a holistic approach that explicates the full breadth of the linguistic and non-linguistic transformations that take place as a consequence of overseas study, and which contribute to the development of global competency.

In the first section, the rationales for encouraging students to undertake the challenge of overseas study are examined, along with the need for study abroad program managers to make a full and proper assessment of the outcomes. Subsequently some existing assessment measures are examined, with the focus on methods currently used in various Japanese university contexts.

2. Study abroad

2.1 Shaping study abroad

One of the first issues in any discussion of study abroad is in finding a definition of what exactly is meant by the term. A review of the literature reveals many different terms used to describe the experience, including ‘student mobility’, ‘overseas study’, ‘academic migration’, ‘home stay’ and ‘overseas language immersion’. Clearly, while each of these terms refers in some way to education that takes place in extranational contexts, a phrase such as ‘home stay’ or ‘residence abroad’ emphasises the lived experience more than, for example, ‘overseas study’, and ‘overseas language immersion’ forefronts second language learning. The fact that such a variety of terms are encountered illustrates that study abroad is subject to differing conceptualisations at both personal and institutional level. For many overseas students currently studying in Japan it equates closely with economic migration, whereas study abroad for outbound students seldom leads to permanent relocation.

In this context, study abroad equates with student mobility, which in Kinginger’s definition is ‘a *temporary* sojourn of pre-defined duration, undertaken for educational purposes’ (Kinginger, 2000: 11). This succinct definition encompasses all the reasons that Japanese students embark on study abroad 1) to gain a foreign degree or qualification 2) to study under the provisions of an academic partnership within a home degree program (e.g. Kochi University International Education Program; c) exchange programs d) study abroad for the purposes of language learning (e.g., KU Global Communication program). On the other hand, it does not include the students for whom student mobility is linked to economic migration, nor those for whom study abroad is mostly associated with leisure and entertainment.

2.2 Study abroad: rationales, desired outcomes, trends

Working to this definition, the principal rationales for study abroad (and hence its desired outcomes) for the undergraduate student population can be seen to stem from several perceived needs in society and among the learners. These needs are summarised as follows.

- Increased global or intercultural competence, social responsibility, and readiness

to act

- Increased awareness of self, self-understanding, and self-other relations
- Reconstruction of one's self-identity
- Development of change agents-e.g., Contribution to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

Following these rationales, study abroad is promoted at colleges worldwide as an opportunity for general personal development, a means by which to equip oneself with the necessary linguistic and non-linguistic intercultural skills and interpersonal skills, and a mindset that are the key to success in a globalised world. In the US, students have long been encouraged to embark on study abroad programs, with particular attention drawn to the career-enhancement potential of the experience. In Europe, programs such as ERASMUS have been influential in promoting study abroad to the student population; meanwhile, in Japan, study abroad has been primarily rationalised as a chance for the development of English as Foreign language skills, with the opportunities for growth in non-linguistic domains generally much less emphasised.

Although rationalised in alternate ways, it is nevertheless a consequence of the vigorous promotion of study abroad in all of these educational contexts that, since the mid-1980s, there has been a substantial increase globally in the number of students who choose to study abroad, with numbers expected to rise even more by 2025. Due in part to the popularity of learning English, universities in English speaking countries are the most popular destinations. The United States attracts the most international students, with 691,000 students (22% of the total) studying abroad in the US during the 2009 to 2010 school year (IIE, 2021). Of students who study in the US, most go to California, New York and Texas, respectively. The world's second most popular study-abroad destination is the United Kingdom (12%), followed by Australia (6%) and Canada (5%).

For Japanese students, countries where English is the native language remain the most popular destination; however, in recent years there has been an increase in the number of students who choose to study the language in non-naturalistic contexts such as the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, where English is utilised as a lingua franca. At the same time, Japan is one country that has bucked the upward trend in

study abroad. Here, the numbers of students opting to enrol in *ryugakusei* programs has been in long-term decline. While the reasons are debated, at official level there has been a concerted effort to reverse this trend, for example with the offer of government scholarships, and initiatives such as the Tobitate Program and the privately financed Kakehashi Program.

2.3 Research on study abroad

As participation in study abroad has burgeoned, researchers have sought to examine the experience empirically. This literature spans five decades and over that time scale research has evolved along several trajectories, reflecting the different ways that the experience is conceptualised in different countries. The research encompasses studies on the effect of study abroad on such things as language acquisition, content knowledge concerning a specific culture or knowledge of global affairs, salient personality variables, intercultural sensitivity, or intercultural competence (Roy et al, 2014).

Understandably, a full review of this literature is beyond the scope of this article. For a good introduction to the field, there are several excellent critical reviews of study abroad research in print. These include Barbara Freed's landmark work (Freed, 1995) and more recently a volume by Martin Howard (2019). It is worth noting that research on intercultural competence has proved to be especially challenging, due to methodological challenges, not least among them the lack of a consistent definition. It is, therefore, not surprising that there is considerable variability in approaches found in the pertinent literature and comparisons across research projects can be challenging.

Meanwhile, Kinginger (2009) is an excellent historical critique of the research that has focused on second language acquisition; while focusing primarily on SLA, her study ably demonstrates the evolution of the field in general from its beginnings in the late 1960s. It reveals that, while the majority of research on study abroad has been with US students, studies in Europe, and Japan have also made a major contribution to the field. As Kinginger (*ibid*) also notes, in the US and Europe, there has been a tendency in the literature extolling the merits of study abroad for the non-linguistic benefits to be fore-fronted, with second language acquisition considered supplemental. The differing emphasis is reflected in the research on

study abroad in Europe and the US, which has focused primarily on investigating the non-linguistic outcomes. In Japan, by contrast, study abroad is very closely linked to the development of second language skills, and SLA has also been the focus of most related investigations. However, in contrast with the US and Europe, there has been little published research on non-linguistic outcomes.

This latter group of studies involving Japanese students form the more limited parameters of this review. Over the past two decades several scholars working in the Japanese context have investigated the effects of study abroad, including Iida, 2013; Iida & Herder, 2019, Hirai, 2018; Kobayashi, 1999; Kimura, 2006; Kimura, 2011; Matsumoto, 2012; Nonaka, 2005; Nonaka, 2008; Nonaka & Seki, 2016; Tanaka & Ellis, 2003. Because in Japan, second language acquisition has traditionally been considered the main purpose of studying abroad (Kinginger, 2009), most of these researchers have examined gains in language proficiency. In addition many researchers have used one or other of the standardised English tests to measure the outcomes, including TOEIC IP, TOEFL, EIKEN, and CELT.

Nonaka (2008), used the TOEIC IP to assess students' listening skills and found significant gains; however his previous study (Nonaka, 2005) did not show any L2 gains among participants on any section of the TOEFL ITP, even though students in both studies had similar proficiency levels and participated in similar SA programs. Matsumoto (2010), meanwhile, used the Secondary Level English Proficiency (SLEP) Test to measure the effectiveness of a four week short-term study program on English listening skill, and found significant improvements. Sasaki (2011, 2018) focused on the effect of the length of study abroad by measuring Japanese students' English proficiency and writing ability using the Cambridge English Language Test over ranges of study abroad duration and found that longer periods abroad to be more beneficial. In their study, Iida and Herder (2019) used the TOEFL iBT and TOEIC IP to measure the development of academic and general English skills among a group of 27 students who studied abroad for a year, and found that while general proficiency levels had improved, academic skills had not. Finally, Hirai (2018) has conducted a meta-analysis to clarify the effects of study abroad (SA) duration and predeparture proficiency on the second language (L2) progress of Japanese students of English. The results showed long-term study abroad significantly more effective in this regard, but that pre-departure proficiency is not a

reliable predictor of L2 gains.

While most researchers in Japan have focused on measuring the effects of study abroad programs on linguistic development, it is evident to many of those who work closely with study abroad students that the most tangible, and equally important, transformations that occur as a result of their experiences overseas are non-linguistic. Such non-linguistic transformations relate to the abilities collectively defined as global competence, as well as in terms of personal development. However, while for many individuals study abroad is an important stage in the development of such abilities, so far, there have been few attempts in Japan to assess them discretely, nor to measure them together with language development to evince the overall growth of the individual. The need for such a holistic approach to assessment is argued next.

2.4 Study abroad: The case for holistic assessment

Research has demonstrated that the linguistic and non-linguistic transformations that result from study abroad can be complex and diverse. However, they are also understood to be intimately interconnected, and explicable only by reference to the whole. For this reason, some educators began to identify a need to measure the outcomes of study abroad in a more holistic sense. In his 2002 study, Steinberg states

"...success cannot always be measured with grades and credits and students who may derive the greatest benefit from study abroad programs are not necessarily those whose grades are the highest, since their learning has taken place in less academically structured settings. The study abroad field needs to develop instruments to measure students' overall growth holistically" (Steinberg, 2002: 215).

Referring more specifically the development of intercultural competence, Magolda & Magolda have also argued for "a more holistic approach to assessing the study abroad experience that can "move beyond the vague, attitudinal responses and delve more deeply into student progress toward intercultural maturity" (Magolda & Magolda, 2005, cited in Doyle, 2009).

However, while the desired outcomes of study abroad are readily perceived, there are many complexities in developing an effective holistic assessment protocol

as it is clear that the transformations that take place are many and varied. To date, many instruments have been published that are designed to measure either a discrete or a set of learning abroad outcomes. There are tools, for example, that target language acquisition, content knowledge concerning a specific culture or knowledge of global affairs, salient personality variables, and for measuring intercultural sensitivity, or global competence (Deardorff, 2006). While these tools can provide important insights in specific areas of development, a holistic assessment must by necessity include a means of gauging both the personal and intercultural (non-linguistic) as well as the interpersonal linguistic spheres in which growth occurs. Some of the available means of assessing these are discussed next.

3. Assessing global competency

One of the issues that researchers confront when trying to create some form of intercultural competence assessment protocol is the absence of any clear definition of what ‘intercultural competence’ actually means. Several alternative interpretations have been put forward in the literature but, as Roy and her colleagues point out, “scholars use different definitions of terms, operationalize the same concepts differently, and do not always agree on what constitutes the core elements of intercultural competence, how these elements interact, and how the elements manifest in actual intercultural encounters”. For these reasons, thus far “we lack for an agreed upon definition of its constituent elements” (Roy et al, 2014: 2). While we continue to work toward a universally accepted definition of global competence, here the interpretation in the OECD Program for International Student Assessment Global Competence Framework (PISA) has been adopted. According to the PISA Framework, global competence has four dimensions; knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. In more specific terms these include “the capacity to examine local, global and intercultural issues, to understand and appreciate the perspectives and world views of others, to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different culture, to act for collective well-being and sustainable development” (OECD, 2018, online).

Fantini (2006) has published a comprehensive list of assessment tools that are specifically designed to measure intercultural competence. In the following, three in-service assessment tools are reviewed in brief, highlighting both their strengths

and possible limitations. As the ability “to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different culture” (ibid) is interpreted here to mean that second language acquisition is an integral part of global competency, some means of assessing the interpersonal linguistic skills that are pertinent to global competency are discussed.

3.1 Intercultural Development Inventory

Globally, the most widely used tool for measuring intercultural competence is the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), which according to the developers has been used by over 800,000 individuals throughout the world to improve intercultural competence; in its own words “the capability to shift cultural perspective and appropriately adapt behavior to cultural differences and commonalities” (IDI, 2020, online). The theoretical foundation for the IDI is the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS) created by Milton J. Bennett (Bennett, 1986) to define a six-stage continuum of intercultural competence (the ‘Bennett Scale’) in which the ethnocentric orientations (meaning that one’s own culture is experienced as central to reality) are denial, defense reversal, minimization, and the three ethnorelative orientations (meaning that one’s own culture is experienced in the context of other cultures) are acceptance, adaptation and integration (Hammer et al, 2003). The test is administered online as a 50-item questionnaire. After completing the test an individual is plotted on the continuum representing their cultural sensitivity, ranging from a mono-cultural mindset to an intercultural mindset. Student’s feelings and thoughts about cultural differences are also assessed. According to the developers, IDI has been thoroughly tested for validity and scientific reliability and validated across a wide range of cultures. They state also that it is used at over 170 universities in the U.S. and internationally. Some limitations are that the scales can be difficult to interpret, and test administrators require formal training in order to become certified. From a critical standpoint one major advantage is that it is available in Japanese, with the translation done using back translation protocols to ensure that translation remains faithful to the original.

After completing the questionnaire, test takers are provided with a 10 page personalised report, which contains detailed explanations about how to interpret the

report. One of the most interesting features of the IDI individual profile report is the use of perceived orientation (the word score is avoided) to reflect where an individual places himself/herself on the Intercultural Development Continuum, and the development orientation, which is the individual's actual positioning as assessed by the IDI. The difference between these two scores is termed the Orientation Gap, and the scale of the gap reflects the extent to which one 'misreads' (IDI, 2019:) how effective one is bridging across cultural differences.

Having these two scores is useful; firstly because there is a well-documented tendency among human beings to over-estimate their intercultural competence. This is linked to a tendency, in some situations, for humans to choose the answer that they believe the test maker wants to hear. These 'socially desirable responses' can call into question the validity of a data gathering instrument. For this very reason, in fact, tests of intercultural competence are often casually criticized as being "transparent." It is useful to note here that the IDI was found to be robust against the possible effects of social desirability, as tested using the short form (10-item) Marlowe-Crown social desirability scale (Marlowe & Crown, 1960) .

After the test, the IDI results report offers feedback suggesting on how the test taker might further develop his/her intercultural competence. The report also provides some suggestions for improving (i.e developing intercultural competence). No concrete examples of how to do so are given, and this is an area in which the advisers role becomes crucial. For example, were an individual student (or group) to be assessed as having a minimization orientation, the advise is to 'develop increased cultural self-awareness' and 'an increased understanding of culture general and culture specific frameworks'. This might be interpreted by an adviser by introducing them to activities that specifically target those areas.

3.2 Beliefs Events Values Index (BEVI)

In Japan, the most well-established means of measuring intercultural competency is the Beliefs Events Values Index (BEVI) . Toya & Toma (2019) , for example, used BEVI to measure the outcomes of the University of the Ryukyu's Global Citizen Program and to date it has also been implemented at Hiroshima University, Kansai University, Fukuoka Women's University, Tsukuba University and Sophia University. BEVI is a comparative instrument that is informed by

Equilintegration (EI) Theory. According to EI theorist and BEVI developer Craig Shealy, EI draws upon a wide range of theoretical, empirical, and applied perspectives to “explain the processes by which beliefs, values, and worldviews are acquired and maintained, why their alteration is typically resisted, and how and under what circumstances their modification occurs” (Shealy, 2004: 1075). As such BEVI evaluates basic openness; global engagement, such as receptivity to different cultures, religions, and social practices; the tendency to (or not to) stereotype in particular ways; self/emotional awareness; and worldview shifts. The Inventory includes four interrelated components: a) demographic/background items (i.e. age, gender, ethnicity, citizenship, and countries visited), b) life history/background questionnaire, c) two validity and eighteen “process scales”, and d) three qualitative “experiential reflection” items (Roy et al, 2014).

The full version of the inventory includes 494 questions, while there is a shorter, amended version containing 350 items. During the course of its development the BEVI has been revised and refined through multiple analyses and has been administered to nearly 2,000 undergraduates internationally. In terms of its strengths, the BEVI claims to measure actual effects of study abroad on changes in the students rather than relying on self-rating. It can also be adapted to suit particular needs of an institution. However, as with the IDI, it is often difficult to interpret some of its scales to students or faculty, and administrators also require formal training. Finally, at present the inventory is only available in English.

3.3 Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI)

Introduced by Braskamp, Braskamp, and Merrill (2007) the GPI is a self-report test that measures both student learning outcomes and student experiences; that is, it focuses on connections between student experiences on and off campus on the one hand and global student learning and development outcomes on the other. It is intended to help educators improve the learning experiences they provide students. The student experiences that are assessed relate to the curriculum, co-curriculum (out-of-classroom interventions and programs), and community. Also assessed are three dimensions of global learning and development: the cognitive dimension (including knowing and knowledge), the intrapersonal dimension (including identity and affect), and the interpersonal dimension (including social interactions

and social responsibility). Although three forms of the instrument exist the ‘Study Abroad’ form for students who have completed study abroad is most relevant to this context. It includes 76 Likert-Scale and demographic/background information items.

4. Study abroad and interpersonal growth

BEVI, IDI and GPI are just three prominent examples of the multitude of different tools that have been developed for the purpose of assessing critical aspects of global competence. However, those who work with study abroad programs will have observed that it frequently contributes to ‘dramatic’ personal growth, in terms of an individual’s sense of self and self-other relationships. These are summarised by Dirkx (2019) as

- A deeper sense of self-awareness and self-understanding
- Increasingly authentic relationships with one’s self and the “other”
- A transition from a more individually oriented sense of self to a more transcendent or communal sense of self

Whereas assessing personal growth is critical aspect of holistic assessment, only the BEVI appears to address this need. Also absent from the available tools is any means of assessing the development of interpersonal abilities; as argued in the following, such abilities are also a key aspect of global competency.

In the PISA declaration, the ability is “to communicate and behave in appropriate ways with those who are culturally different” (OECD, 2018, online) is identified a key aspect of global or intercultural competence. In another framing this could be termed interpersonal growth, or the process of developing and refining the methods with which one communicates with others. Communication abilities are by nature multimodal and, although perhaps alluded to in PISA Framework, the lack of any specific reference to second language skills arguably overlooks the importance of second language acquisition as a critical factor in the development of intercultural competence. In the context of this paper the two are considered mutually interdependent, following the argument that knowledge of other languages is inextricably tied, and in fact inseparable, to the development of intercultural

knowledge and empathy. In other words, if the desire is to foster individuals with the ability ‘to engage in open, appropriate and effective interactions with people from different cultures’, it is impossible to ignore the role of second language proficiency.

5. Study abroad and second language acquisition

For any assessment of second language proficiency to fit into the overall assessment framework of global competence, it is important also to identify the specific domains of language usage which collectively form the dimensions of intercultural communicative competence. Several researchers (e.g Ren, 2015) have identified social interactive and pragmatic competencies as most important in facilitating intercultural communication, particularly for students studying in a target community (Ren, 2015). In the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages conception, “a simple way of understanding the linguistic/pragmatic distinction is to say that linguistic competence is concerned with language usage (as in “correct usage”) and hence with language resources and knowledge of the language as a system, whereas pragmatic competence is concerned with actual language use in the (co-) construction of text.” (Council of Europe Language Policy Unit, 2018:137) As outlined in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, pragmatic competence includes learner’s knowledge of the principles according to which messages are: a. organized, structured and arranged (discourse competence); b. used to perform communicative functions (functional competence); c. sequenced according to interactional and transactional schemata (design competence) (Council of Europe Language Policy Unit, 2001: 123).

Moreover, learners must also develop both productive and receptive pragmatic competence if they are to communicate effectively. Productive pragmatic competence refers to the ability to vary one’s language uses appropriately according to the context to achieve a specific purpose (i.e, knowing what to say); receptive pragmatic competence entails the ability to understand language uses in context, including pragmatic comprehension and pragmatic perception. In other words, they need to understand what is appropriate (or inappropriate) to say in a given situation, as well as how it is said.

In summary, in addition to structural aspects of a language (e.g., phonology, vocabulary, and syntax), learners need to develop interlanguage pragmatic communicative competence to succeed in intercultural communicative acts. In other words, proficiency in a target language does not only involve grammatical competence, but it also requires pragmatic competence. It is worth noting that many of those who study abroad already prioritise gains in pragmatic communicative competence among their learning goals and, as many of those involved in study abroad planning have found, it is in this area that gains are often witnessed. Research on language acquisition during study abroad has provided evidence that the most significant gains tend to be in the areas of fluency, and in pronunciation (Kinginger, 2009). It could also be reasoned that, for most learners, such pragmatic language skills will ultimately be of most benefit.

5.1 Assessing second language pragmatics

This leads to the question of how best to measure such skills. While there are many standardised tests of general English proficiency, some of these have limited value in global competency assessment. Firstly, some tests are primarily focused on testing specific English knowledge. In the case of TOEIC, the focus is English for Business Purposes and only receptive skills are assessed. The IELTS and TOEFL are four skills tests of academic English, because they are used to vet applications by international students to institutions where English is the medium of instruction. The EIKEN tests more general English skills but leans heavily towards assessing linguistic knowledge. Overall, pragmatic communicative competence is not much emphasized in any of these tests. Within the grading rubric for speaking tests in EIKEN and IELTS 'fluency', which is defined in the CEFR as pragmatic communicative competency, is only one of the criteria.

In order to measure gains in pragmatic interlanguage proficiency that occur as a result of study abroad, program planners should perhaps consider alternative measures. In the following six methods for testing pragmatic second language skills that have been prominently reported in the literature to date are briefly described. Note that these are not tests in themselves but methods that researchers have adapted them to suit their own needs. Therefore, depending on the context and purpose of the intended assessment in which they are being used, there may be considerable

variation in item format, specific to the needs of the context of use. All the following testing methods are variations on the form of the discourse completion task (DCT), a type of pragmatic instrument that was first researched for its potential in English language assessment three decades ago (Levinson, 1975) and probably the most widely used data collection instrument in interlanguage pragmatics. Regarding their potential for application in Japanese university contexts, Hudson et al (1992), Enochs and Yoshitake (1996) and Yoshitake (1997), reported positive results in previous tests of the six assessments with Japanese EFL students.

Some examples:

- You are on your way to work but your car won't start. You see your neighbour get into his. He notices you and waves, so you decide to say ...
- Your advisor suggests that you take a course which you would rather not take because you think that it will be too difficult for you.
- You are at a friend's house for lunch.
Friend: *How about another piece of cake?*
You: _____
Friend: *Come on, just a little piece?*
You: _____

A student has borrowed a book from her teacher, which she promised to return today. When meeting her teacher, however, she realizes that she forgot to bring it along.

Teacher: *Miriam, I hope you brought the book I lent you.*

Miriam: _____

Teacher: *OK, but please remember it next week.*

Several different means of delivery have been developed, although the basic theme remains the same.

Multiple-choice Discourse Completion Task (MDCT)

Brown defined a MDCT as “a pragmatics instrument that requires students to read a written description of a situation and select what would be best to say in that situation from a set of choices” (Brown, 2008: 43) . The potential of MDCTs in language assessment has been explored in a variety of settings, including in a study by Brown with a group of Japanese students, and with examinees of more than one ethnicity, language, and proficiency level.

Oral Discourse Completion Task (ODCT)

Examinees listen to an orally described situation and record what they would say next.

Discourse Role-Play Task (DRPT)

Examinees read a situation description and then act out a particular role with an examiner in the situation.

Discourse Self-Assessment Task (DSAT)

Examinees read a written description of a situation and then rate their own pragmatic ability to respond correctly in the situation.

Role-Play Self-Assessment (RPSA)

Examinees to rate their own performance in the recording of the role play in the DRPT.

6. Conclusion

For scholars in many educational fields the underlying value of the overseas learning experience requires little affirmation, and something to which they also lend eager support. The domain of global citizenship and intercultural competence education has been particularly prominent advocate, as within these domains the learning by study abroad participants about other places, other peoples and oneself that are frequently witnessed is of fundamental value. As the number of college students choosing to spend at least some part of their undergraduate career studying in another country continues to grow, researchers have sought to critically evaluate both the design and the outcomes of study abroad programs. For many individuals study abroad is an important stage in the development of abilities collectively defined as global competence, and the assessment of such abilities a crucial means for such individuals to understand their growth as global citizens.

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