



**INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING COURSE OUTCOMES
RESPOND TO EMPLOYER PRIORITIES FOR NEW GRADUATES
OR
WHY EMPLOYERS RANK INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCES FOR
SOFT SKILL DEVELOPMENT SO LOWLY?**

M. Russell¹, P. Ebner¹, H. Oliver², and L. Snyder³

Purdue University

¹Animal Sciences Department, ²Food Science Department,

³Agronomy Department

YOU BE THE STUDENT BEING INTERVIEWED....

Question: Oh, I see you went to (Romania) on a summer Study Abroad class. Tell me about that experience. How was it?

✘ **Likely student responses:**

- + ...
- + ...
- + ...
- + ...



YOU BE THE STUDENT BEING INTERVIEWED....

Question: Oh, I see you went to (Romania) on a summer Study Abroad class. Tell me about that experience. How was it?

✘ **Likely student responses:**

- + ... Fun
- + ... Food
- + ... Hospitality
- + ... Sites, castles, etc.
= vacation?



SO, WHY DID 282 EMPLOYERS RANK INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE SEVENTH OUT OF SEVEN IN A FORCED RANKING OF EXPERIENCES IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES?

Comparative Analysis of Soft Skills: What is Important in New Graduates 2011; Crawford, et al. (ranked by N=282 employers) report co-sponsored by the APLU and the University Industry Consortium. Pg. 17

1. Related work or internship experiences
2. Teamwork experiences
3. Leadership experiences
4. Project Management experiences
5. Cross disciplinary experiences
6. Community engagement experiences
7. International experiences



SO, WHY DID 282 EMPLOYERS RANK INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE SEVENTH OUT OF SEVEN IN A FORCED RANKING OF EXPERIENCES IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES?

Skill Types Importance

Comparative Analysis of Soft Skills: What is Important in New Graduates 2011; Crawford, et al. (ranked by N=282 employers) report co-sponsored by the APLU and the University Industry Consortium. Pg. 10

- 1. Soft Skills**
- 2. Discipline Technical Skills**
- 3. Discipline Technical Knowledge**
- 4. Project Management Skills**



SO, WHY DID 282 EMPLOYERS RANK INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE SEVENTH OUT OF SEVEN IN A FORCED RANKING OF EXPERIENCES IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES?

Preparedness Rating Average by Employers

Comparative Analysis of Soft Skills: What is Important in New Graduates 2011; Crawford, et al. (ranked by N=282 employers) report co-sponsored by the APLU and the University Industry Consortium. Pg. 17

- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|----------|
| 1. | Technology Skills | 5.92/7.0 |
| 2. | Discipline Knowledge | 5.31/7.0 |
| 3. | Discipline Technical Skills | 5.28/7.0 |
| 4. | Soft Skills | 4.27/7.0 |



COMPARE THE STATED LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- ✘ Through participation in these classes, students are expected to increase their:
 - + ability to effectively communicate with others;
 - + capacity to work effectively as part of a bi-national problem-solving team;
 - + ability to think critically,
 - + apply their discipline science & technology knowledge, and
 - + solve real world problems.



SO, WHY DID 282 EMPLOYERS RANK INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE SEVENTH OUT OF SEVEN IN A FORCED RANKING OF EXPERIENCES IMPORTANT TO DEVELOPING SOFT SKILLS OF UNIVERSITY GRADUATES?

Forced ranking of seven soft skills by Employers

Comparative Analysis of Soft Skills: What is Important in New Graduates 2011; Crawford, et al. (ranked by N=282 employers) report co-sponsored by the APLU and the University Industry Consortium. Pg. 11

1. Communication Skills
2. Decision Making/
Problem Solving Skills
3. Self-Management Skills
4. Teamwork Skills
5. Professionalism Skills
6. Experiences
7. Leadership Skills



ANIMALS & FOOD SECURITY: INTERNATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING (IN HAITI & ROMANIA) AND SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE PRODUCTION IN THE TROPICS (IN COSTA RICA & PANAMA)

- ✘ Partnering with local NGO's and agricultural universities has allowed Purdue Agriculture faculty to directly engage students in service learning projects in which they work in bi-national teams with host university students and village leaders.
- ✘ Accepted students in both courses enrol in a one-credit preparatory class and then participate in the three-credit summer class in Romania or the one-credit winter-break class in Haiti
- ✘ and then following the Haiti winter break, they also take a required one-credit reflective follow-up class.

LEARNING OUTCOME ASSESSMENTS

✘ Include

- + a “preflection” assessment of their expectations
- + submitting daily journals reflecting what students learned or thought as a result of their work and
- + occasional guided reflective journals with sequential prompts about their thoughts and behavioral changes.
- + A post-reflective course evaluation



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS:

- ✦ N = 54 U.S. and 18 Romanian students
- ❖ 83.3% of the students stated that they were confident (61.1%) or very confident (22.2%) in their ability to apply social, economic and environmental principles in another country.
- ❖ 88.9% of these students stated that this ability has changed since before participating in this course.



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS:



- ✘ N = 54 U.S. and 18 Romanian students
- ❖ 100% of the students stated that their ability to communicate and work with individuals from different countries improved (72.2%) or greatly improved (27.8%) as a result of participating in this course.
- ❖ 94.5% of students stated that the experience greatly deepened their understanding of agricultural extension.
- ❖ 100% of students stated that the experience in the course broadened their knowledge of a range of cultures and an understanding of human values and diverse world views

QUALITATIVE PROGRESSIVE REFLECTIVE JOURNAL PROMPTS (I.E.):

- ❖ What is the major barrier to your working in this bi-national team and what are you doing to overcome?
- ❖ Explain how your communication is improving; staying the same; getting worse; as this work experience continues.
- ❖ How are your skills of working in a team being impacted by this experience?
- ❖ What skills (technical, informational, and people) skills are you developing? How?

QUALITATIVE PROGRESSIVE REFLECTIVE JOURNAL PROMPTS (I.E.):

- ❖ Use comparisons of change in individual responses from beginning to end of course
- ❖ Use reflective past post feedback of learning outcomes (1.5 – 2.0 years)
- ❖ Use word clouds or content analysis of responses
- ❖ Assess the elevator speech describing the class experiences

MESSAGE MANAGEMENT

- ✘ Make the learning outcomes part of the course preparation, assignments, and assessments
- ✘ Prepare the students in responding to inquiries about the course consistent with learning outcomes
- ✘ Develop videos ([Animals and Food Security in Haiti](#) , PowerPoint's, blogs, that tell the learning out come story rather than the fun
- ✘ Coach the students and give them the tools needed to promote and market their study abroad course as a professional and personal growth experience.

QUESTIONS?



- ✘ Service Learning Study Abroad Winter Break '11-'12, Purdue University

