

Critical Thinking Skills Expressed During a One-Month Study Abroad Experience

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Introduction/Need for Study

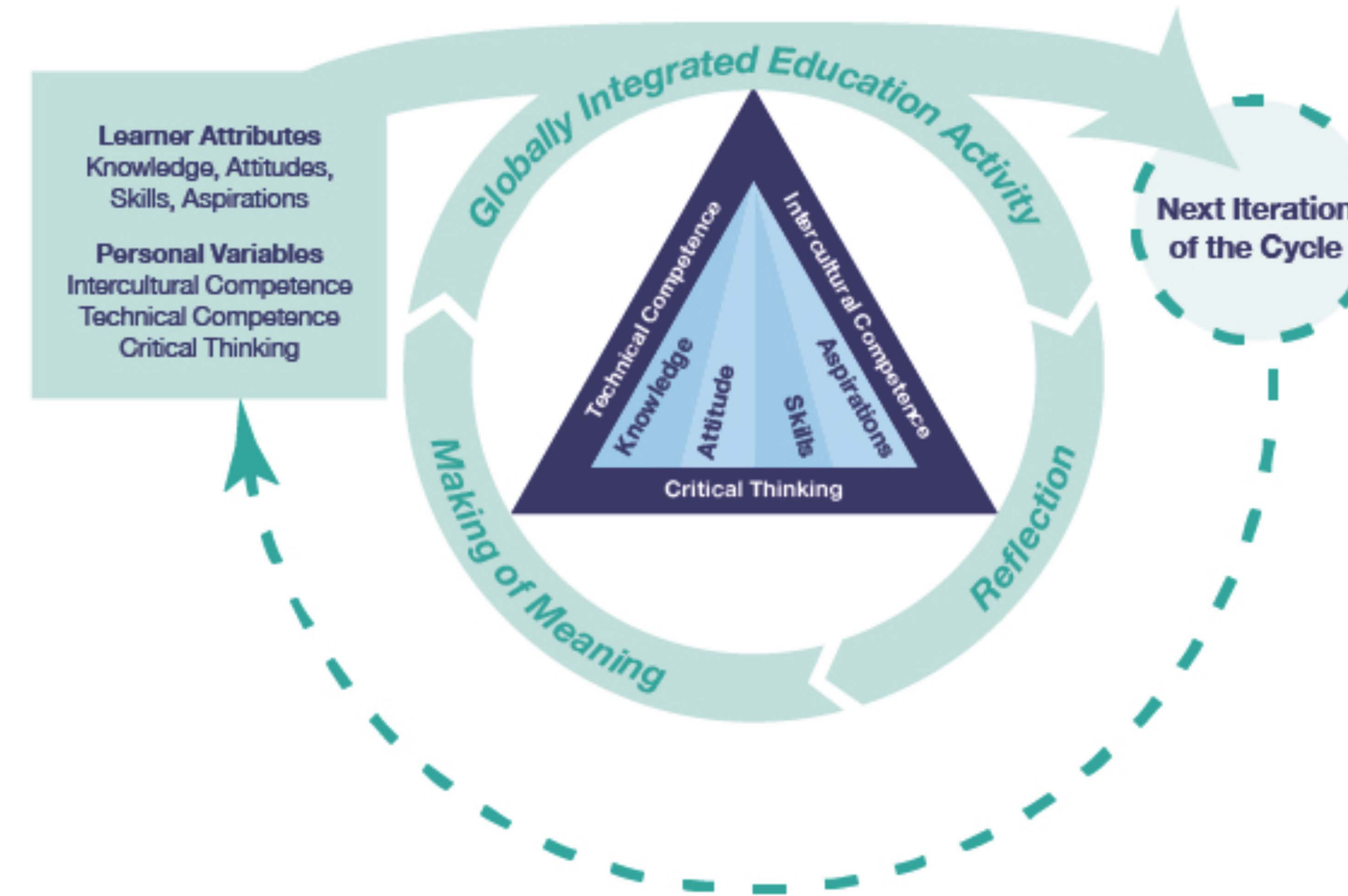
“Globally competent students will become globally competent citizens” (Russo & Osborne, 2004).

- Through these experiences, students are able to gain important skills that can enhance their
- Students’ ability to reason through critical thinking skills can directly be influenced through a student’s participation in a study abroad experience (Rodriguez, Stedman, Mott, & Harder, 2014).



Study Abroad & Critical Thinking

- Applied within a framework designed for maximizing educational objectives of globally integrated educational activities
- Promotes recognition of learner attributes, designed activities, technical competence, intercultural competence, and critical thinking through reflection and meaning making
- Critical thinking can be categorized into skills with additional sub-skills considered to be essential for critical thinking. Study abroad can enhance many, if not all of these skills.
 - Interpretation, Analysis, Evaluation, Inference, Explanation, and Self-Regulation



Conceptual Model for Studying Globally Integrated Education Activities



Method of Reflection & Analysis

- Students traveled to India for a one-month period of time during the summer
- Visits were made to various nonprofit providers across three states
- Students were asked to reflect using guided prompts (see handout) once per week
- Using content analysis, reflection statements were categorized by critical thinking skill expressed
- Multiple reviewers confirmed each statement
- There were a total of 20 participants (16 female and 2 male)

Findings/Outcomes

Reflections from early in the experience were oriented toward comparing India to other places (interpretation and analysis)

- *“This reminded me of the adoption of local gods and goddesses in Buddhism in Thailand.”* (discussing a flag post)
- *“To think that this was just one hospital in one small area of India... put into perspective just how many people in the world aren’t receiving adequate health care.”* (after visiting local hospital)
- *“... [women] holding some of the most important government positions. On the other hand, many women are expected to do as they are told...”* (in visiting Dehli)
- *“I couldn’t help but hope my american-dollars-turned-rupees would hold up as sufficient... I couldn’t afford much after the coffee I bought.”* (after visiting local mall)



Later in the experience students transitioned from interpretation to evaluation and self-regulation

- *“The women dress so joyful... color is an extension of culture, self love, and self expression. No more black for me!”* (after visiting the country)
- *“... I’ve come to realize I need to stop. We are so spoiled in the United States.”* (reflecting on accommodations)
- *“India is a world away from the US, but we are all people, we need to what we an to do good for all people. I need to do what I can to reevaluate what I complain about.”* (reflecting on trip)
- *“I need to remind myself of what I do have rather than what I don’t.”* (after visits to Dehli)

Overall it was clear that students were practicing their critical thinking skills, as they related to experiences during their trip. This confirms the connection between study abroad and critical thinking skill development