The development and delivery of a short, multi-dimensional Study Abroad programme with a twin focus on intercultural skills and employability

Gerard Clough[A]	A	Senior Teaching Fellow for the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills, Royal Holloway, University of London
Norlene Conway[B]	B	Senior Teaching Fellow for the Centre for the Development of Academic Skills, Royal Holloway, University of London
Justin O'Brien[C]	C	Professor, Director for Undergraduate Students, School of Business and Management, Royal Holloway, University of London
Silke Placzeck[D]	D	Head, Centre for Development of Academic Skills, Royal Holloway, University of London

Abstract

This instructional innovation paper reflects on the development and delivery of a short-term Study Abroad programme that responded to twin currents in UK higher education: internationalisation activities that seek to build the competence for negotiating cultural difference and a growing imperative to develop graduate employability for those about to enter a competitive, globalised workplace. Positioned within the literature of experiential learning and global citizenship, the paper outlines the rationale and implementation for an assessment centre approach to programme recruitment as well as a three-phase curriculum comprising (1) online and F2F pre-trip preparation, (2) a week-long study visit to Berlin and (3) a post-visit reflection articulated through critical-reflective writing and a group project exhibit. While the trip to cosmopolitan Berlin offered a useful real-world case study to explore, the main source of intercultural learning was located closer to home in the experience of students working together in project groups of diverse membership.

The Global Leadership Programme (GLP) was an extra-curricular Study Abroad initiative for undergraduate students approaching their final year at Royal Holloway, University of London. The programme, staged over six months including a week-long trip to Berlin, comprised 75 hours study time and so constituted the college's very first short-term Study Abroad programme. Although the GLP was funded for just two cycles (2016 and 2017), the experience provided programme developers with a number of insights which this paper aims to share.

We begin by relating the programme to key literature on intercultural education as well as the realities of a marketised UK higher education system which has given increasing prominence to employability as a desirable graduate outcome (Dacre Pool & Sewell, 2007). Subsequent sections outline core learning activities and integrate student testimony for support and discussion. To end, we take a Kolbian approach (1984) to reflect back but also look forward, identifying elements in the programme that show the way to a more sustainable pedagogy with greater reach in which the locus of intercultural education moves from learning abroad to learning at home.

Establishing objectives for the programme

The idea that travelling abroad can have an educational purpose has a considerable history. The Grand Tour during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries afforded an aesthetic, linguistic and (sometimes) sentimental education for the offspring of the upper classes (Towner, 1985). Although some of this purpose still lingers on, Lewin (2010) argues that globalisation and a rise in opportunities to go abroad has shaped different objectives for initiatives that combine travel and study. These initiatives aim to deliver rich cross-cultural experiences for student participants that not only bolster knowledge but boost communicative and social confidence, enhance openness and curiosity, and strengthen critical awareness of self and others (Murphy-Lejeune, 2003; Neiva de Figueiredo & Mauri, 2013). In short, while the aim of the Grand Tour was to secure an entrée into polite society, the 21st century study trip seeks to provoke attitudinal change and the acquisition of the skills and competences that allow us to engage constructively with an inter-connected world (Kauffmann, 1992). Such objectives are often linked to the notion of global citizenship which promotes "social justice and sustainability, coupled with a sense of responsibility to act" (Reysen & Katzarska-Miller, 2013, p. 858). Martha Nussbaum (2002, p. 289), a noted global citizenship advocate, suggests a pedagogy that fosters personal development in three areas:

(1) the Socratic ability to criticize one's own traditions and to carry on an argument on terms of mutual respect for reason;

(2) the ability to think as a citizen of the whole world, not just some local region or group; and

(3) the "narrative imagination," the ability to imagine what it would be like to be in the position of someone very different from oneself

While global citizenship may have a laudable ethical objective in what Nussbaum calls the 'cultivation of humanity', there are other reasons for setting up a Study Abroad initiative that arise from the rather less rarefied conditions of a marketised university sector. Jones (2013) notes two currents running through the sector: the increase of university internationalisation activities and, at the same time, growing demand for graduates "capable of operating in culturally diverse contexts" (p.95). In exploring the beneficial relationship between these two currents, she identifies a remarkable alignment in the skill sets developed through international mobility experiences and the soft skills urgently required by employers in the knowledge economy. Her inference is that this alignment may offer dual advantage. Through the development of intercultural competences and skills, students enhance their employability in a competitive job market while the university gains benefit too in terms of key metrics (related to, for example, employability and student experience) at a time when institutional survival, in the UK at least, depends increasingly on league table positions. Of course, the tenets of Nussbaum's vision of an altruistic liberal education that advances a global good may not sit easily with such self-interest but the link between study abroad and employability is difficult to ignore and as Jones suggests, may be fruitful.

When devising our programme, the two currents identified by Jones were instrumental in shaping its underpinning objectives. The two central aims of the GLP were to:

- start building the competence for negotiating cultural difference through the tools of experiential learning and reflection (Otten, 2003).

- enhance employability by developing the professional and leadership skills valued in the global workplace including working effectively in groups of diverse membership (McGill & Beatty, 2001).

Curriculum design and pedagogy

What is the character of an effective Study Abroad pedagogy? The literature suggests three central elements. At its heart is an experiential design allowing students to transform doing into learning via a process of critical reflection that proceeds from concrete experience to observation and conceptualisation and thence to application of what has been learnt to fresh contexts (Kolb, 1984). Learning is deepened when students feel empowered to mould

this process to their own purpose (Lutterman-Aguila & Gingerich, 2002, p.46) and connect together three important dimensions: the interpersonal, the intrapersonal and the cognitive (Gillespie et al., 2009). A further element identified by many educators (Che et al, 2010; Brigham, 2011; Broom & Bai, 2011) is the role of disequilibrium (or perturbation) - moments of personal struggle or difficulty that can, if adequately supported through the learning environment, provoke attitudinal and intellectual change. Such features then are central to effective Study Abroad pedagogy but, when time is scarce, need to be harnessed to a coherent and efficient curriculum structure that can enable programme objectives to be met.

The curriculum of the GLP followed a three-phase orientation-trip-reflection pattern (see Sachau et al., 2009; Broom & Bai, 2011; Richards, 2013; Montrose, 2015; Pasquarelli, 2018) in which care is taken to establish balance between opportunities for intercultural experience and structured reflection. As the next section of this paper discusses in further detail, the orientation phase of the GLP focussed on developing critical engagement with key programme themes, the trip (or encounter) phase in Berlin provided a rich case study to investigate and the final phase provided space for students to make sense of the programme experience while reflecting on their own personal development.

1. Orientation
JUNE-AUGUST
Meet group members online and build a picture of Berlin as a meeting point of cultures.
Agree a project question for the residential trip.
Learn about intercultural working through online activities and a simulation exercise at the pre-departure workshop on campus.
Start writing the reflective journal.

2. Encounter
1 WEEK IN SEPTEMBER
A full programme of visits and meetings with people from a range of communities in Berlin.
Collect evidence to help answer agreed critical focus question.
Analyse and discuss findings at regular group meetings.

3. Reflection
SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER
Evaluate how Berlin has responded to cultural difference.
Reflect on personal responses to collaboration with students from other disciplines.
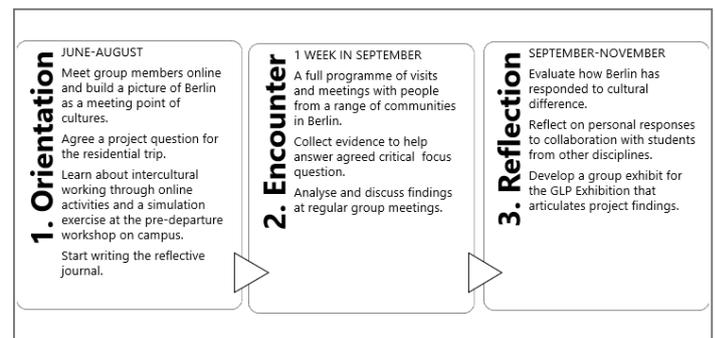Develop a group exhibit for the GLP Exhibition that articulates project findings.

Figure 1: Curriculum design

The usual impetus for developing intercultural competence on a Study Abroad programme is the experience of being abroad itself: once dislocated from familiar surroundings, students need to make cultural (and often linguistic) adjustments and that, so it is argued, leads to appreciation of other world views and so to an awareness of the way culture shapes thought and behaviour of oneself and others. However, Scharoun (2016, p. 87) notes that it is not only interaction with the culture of the host country that is useful but also the interaction within the study group. For the GLP, it was this group interaction that provided the mainspring for developing intercultural skills and understanding. Students were purposely recruited in equal numbers from the university's three faculties (arts and humanities, sciences, and social sciences) in order to ensure a mix of disciplinary perspectives. Project groups were then carefully composed to ensure that there was diversity of disciplinary background, gender, age, ethnicity (39% of participants were from ethnic minority groups) and nationality (21% of participants were from outside the UK). Group tasks required students to work together, resolve differences and draw on an array of

perspectives and skills in a collaborative project. Through group work, students experienced both the challenges and rewards of working with peers who saw the world differently. While learning about each other's perspectives they also experienced times when it was difficult to rub along together: the disequilibrium that is central to Study Abroad pedagogy.

The curriculum aimed to bring together mixed group work and the trip to Berlin in a way that was mutually illuminating. Students would be encouraged to make connections between the experience of encountering difference at a local, personal level (group work) with observation of societal responses to cultural difference on the larger canvas of multi-cultural Berlin, past and present (the case study). The sum of this approach was an integrated, multi-dimensional model of intercultural education in which the intrapersonal, interpersonal and cognitive, as well as local and global, were tied together.
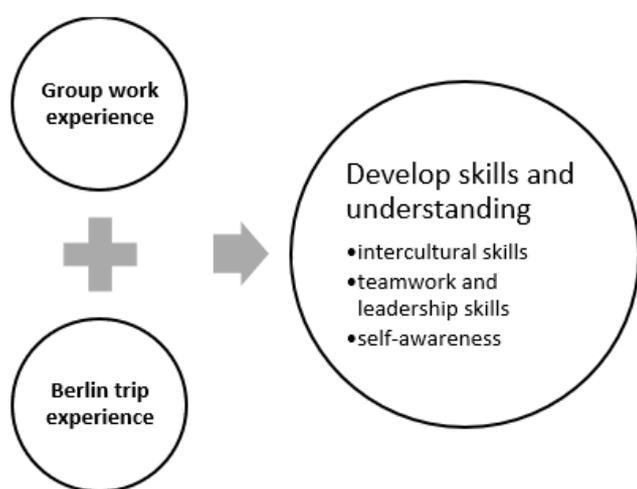

Figure 2: Programme concept

The design outlined here would also serve the employability objective of the programme. Learning to negotiate difference in groups of mixed composition enables the building of intercultural competence which, in turn, prepares students for the global workplace. Group work fosters other competences and skills valued by employers including planning and priority setting, problem-solving and evaluation, managing work-flow and time management skills (Watson, 2002). Further, the thread of reflective activity running through the programme sought to instil practical ways for students to develop awareness of self and others in the learning process. Knowing how to reflect on experience and use that reflection to make key improvements is not only a valuable intercultural asset but is useful in most professional settings.

Assessment centre selection

With the goal of enhancing employability in mind, we developed an Assessment Centre Day experience which would closely mimic the real-life challenges of a job selection process. Good et al. (1990) and York (1995) report the benefits to university students of such hands-on experience (ibid, p. 141) while The British Psychological Society (2015, p. 4) cite the developmental pay-offs for centre candidates of self-insight. In short, the Assessment Centre Day served as a useful instrument for selecting 20 successful candidates for the programme while the experience itself provided students with a real world primer on what to expect in a competitive job market.

The selection process followed a two-round process. For the first round, the programme was heavily promoted across campus via the college's webpages, social media and through staff recommendation in lectures, seminars and tutorials. Students interested in competing for a place on this all expenses paid programme were directed to an online application form in which they had to relate the programme's stated objectives and learning activities to their own personal development and life goals. This written task - part personal statement and part discursive essay - provided space for candidates to reflect in some depth on topics central to the programme (e.g. citizenship, leadership, negotiating cultural difference) as well as demonstrate a sensitivity to audience by writing in a suitably formal, concise style.

Short-listed candidates were invited to attend a second selection round, an Assessment Centre Day, comprising a full schedule of individual talks, problem-solving role-plays, interviews, psychometric tests and reflective writing. These varied exercises were devised in consultation with key sources of expertise in the college, both academic (the School of Management) and professional (the Careers and Employability Service and the Organisational Development team) in order to ensure an authentic recruitment experience. To further widen the impact on student learning, MBA and PhD students were invited to volunteer as assessors, following an approach outlined by York (1995). The student assessors found this novel, table-turning experience both enjoyable and useful.

On the day, individual performance was scored against detailed criteria to determine whether candidates demonstrated a set of desirable attributes: a professional attitude and demeanour, the ability to critically reflect on personal experience and, importantly, a willingness to work collaboratively and engage in new, challenging experiences. At a final assessor meeting following the Assessment Centre Day, scores were moderated and additional consideration was then given to the profiles of top ranked candidates to ensure that there was sufficient participant diversity.

As a selection tool, the variety of assessment activities (individual and group, oral and written) provided a rich picture of candidate performance. However, assessors noted that it was sometimes difficult to discriminate between competence and potential. If a candidate fell short in one of the activities by not demonstrating the ability to reflect critically, problem solve or collaborate with peers, how could we determine if they, nevertheless, had the willingness to develop those attributes and skills once on the programme? This was a concern given that students with the potential for personal growth would benefit most from a programme with avowed developmental aims.

Notwithstanding the above caveats, the experience of attending such an event proved valuable for all for all participating students. Ugne reflected the views of many GLP students:

> It was my first experience of what the actual assessment centres are like in real life...I think, it really provided great practice of how to deal with tasks like interviews, group exercises and reflection.

Yasmeen admitted to a deal of apprehension about the assessments but concedes that:

> ...as the day went on, I realised it wasn't quite as terrifying as I initially imagined, and in fact, I left the centre with much more confidence in my own abilities. I am glad that the assessment centre was a part of the programme, not only has it prepared me well for future assessment centre days when applying for jobs, but it also made making it onto the programme feel that bit more deserved...

Phase 1: Berlin trip orientation (June - August)

Study Abroad educators emphasise the importance of pre-trip preparation. Koernig, (2007) views preparatory activity as key to the development of rapport among student participants and also between students and staff facilitators. Likewise, in their survey of short Study Abroad programmes, Mills et al (2010) identify the role of pre-trip sessions in teambuilding as well as in developing knowledge and understanding of the trip destination. In line with these objectives, the goal of the GLP pre-trip phase was to enable participants from diverse backgrounds to bond together in the development of a group research focus which would inform their visit to Berlin. This entailed exploring topics central to the programme curriculum during a three month summer vacation period, first through a series of online activities and then through an immersive role-play simulation on the day before departure.

At the outset of the GLP in June, participants were asked to work within four assigned groups and complete tasks hosted on the college's VLE as well as take part in two webinar meetings. In the first weeks online, participants engaged in ice-breaker exercises included the creation of My campus world, a personal, impressionistic map of the college in which places of social or educational importance were identified. These annotated maps were posted to a VLE pin-board and then presented and discussed within project groups as part of the first 'getting to know you' webinar. While such warmer activities aimed to foster closer ties, there was a concomitant focus on relevant theory so, for example, students discussed short introductory readings and TED talks which addressed concepts (from the fields of Management, Psychology and Education) underpinning leadership and effective group work. Other conceptual elements of the programme were also explored through readings and discussion, in particular notions of intercultural competence including Bennett's developmental continuum (1993) that proceeds from ethnocentrism to ethnorelativism. Collectively, these activities sought to help students "increase their own self-awareness and identity, such as who they are in the world, how they have been culturally conditioned to respond to others, what their own world views are" (Pasquarelli, Cole, & Tyson, 2018, p. 84) or as Zemach-Bersan (2009, p. 318) puts it: "before they unpack their bags in foreign destinations, students should be required to unpack their [own] culturally and subjectively based assumptions".

To assist the process of developing critical self-awareness, participants were asked to keep a reflective journal in which to jot down their immediate responses to programme experiences, at first arising from interaction with fellow group members and then, later, encompassing impressions of Berlin. The VLE offered detailed guidance on the reflective writing process with examples of how regular journal entries could provide useful input for reflective composition when emotional responses in the moment are digested and form the basis for more measured, critical self-enquiry. A further prompt to critical reflection was an invitation to complete the self-perception component of the Belbin team roles test (Belbin & Belbin Associates, 2009). The test attempts to score questionnaire respondents on how strongly they express behavioural traits from an inventory of nine different team roles. This exercise proved popular, raising awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses but also provoking discussion on the importance of role diversity to effective decision making within teams.

The principal work for all participants was to formulate a critical focus question for group projects that would lend direction to the field trip to Berlin. The question needed to reflect a shared interest in an aspect of the city that could a) be explored during the trip itinerary and b) engage the expertise and skills sets of all group members. To initiate discussion, group members were asked to post 3-4 items associated with Berlin that excited their interest. It could be a line of poetry, a piece of music, a black and white photograph, a blog posting, a film poster, a building, a statistic - anything that conjured up Berlin for the student. The resultant Berlin Bricolage was discussed during the second webinar, themes of common interest identified and then followed up in online pin-board discussions with the goal of producing a draft focus question in time for the day of departure. Reflecting later, GLP student Niccola underscored the usefulness of these online activities:

> I found the webinars and the exercises ... helpful, as I was able to reflect on what my previous conceptions of Berlin were and gain an idea of what I was expecting from the city. It helped to clarify what I associated most with Berlin, from the capital of Hitler's regime, to the Wall, to the underground cultural scene that gave birth to Bowie's *Low* and Iggy's *Lust for Life*. It also enabled a chance to see what my group's perceptions of Berlin were; it provided a platform to discuss what we wanted to focus on and it helped to create a rapport within the group.

The pre-departure day marked a switch from a digital to a F2F environment. The relationship-building gradually

fostered online over the preceding weeks was given new vigour through a morning of immersive role-play activity and an afternoon of reflective discussion. The activities that constituted the Two Tribes role-play aimed to explore the link between cultural values and social behaviour (see also Boston & Wildenthal, 1991; Moffit, 1985; Shirts, 1977). The cohort was split into two tribes and each assigned a set of cultural values aligned with attributes in Hofstede's six dimensions of national culture (2011). These values were mapped onto distinctive locations in our campus geography: the clinical, high-tech environs of a new lecture theatre complex for the individualist A tribe and the shady forest setting of an old Victorian out-building for the collectivist B tribe. Once established in their assigned homelands, tribes were asked to devise a wedding ceremony that embodied their cultural values. This required a series of developmental steps: group discussion to decide on a set of representative wedding rituals, role allocation and improvisation, rehearsal (making use of assorted props and costumes), and, finally, a performance of the ceremony itself. For the performance, selected members from each tribe took on the roles of in-laws and travelled across campus to take part in the counterpart ceremony as wedding guests. A narrative complication was then introduced: the wedding party visitors were asked to seek asylum with the host tribe. Staff facilitated the activity, with a remit for only light touch interventions, a role that was essentially limited to introducing each task briefly, establishing an emergency stop protocol and then standing back.

In the afternoon de-briefing, students were encouraged to critique the broad-stroke cultural values enacted in the wedding ceremonies and also explore how tribal affiliations shaped behaviour, informed how one tribe saw the other and led to very different solutions to the asylum crisis. While many students enjoyed the ceremony activity, some found it unsettling, but, in the ensuing discussions, most felt that the experience had provoked thought on core themes relevant to the programme and the upcoming visit to Berlin. Yuki commented:

> ...it not only served as an ice-breaker activity but also as crucial learning material to grasp how one's cultural values and norms are constructed by the surrounding environment ...After finishing all the pre-departure tasks, I started imagining the scale of anxiety and stress that refugees feel on a daily basis.

Phase 2: Berlin encounter (one week in September)

When designing the programme, we gave significant thought to the choice of trip destination. Budgetary constraints meant that our choices were limited to European cities that could be reached within a flight time of an hour or two from London. Berlin immediately struck us a likely contender: it was affordable and offered a good fit for a programme that aimed to explore a range of responses to cultural difference. With its fractured history, Berlin is a city of contrasts, a place known for intolerance and persecution as well as redemption and creative regeneration. In short, it offered participants a rich case study to investigate.

Over the week, participants were taken to some of the key historical sites - including the Sachsenhausen concentration camp and the Topography of Terror museum - to reveal the dark undertow of Berlin's history during the Nazi and Cold War periods. But it was important to hear the city's other stories too and so there was a major focus on contemporary Berlin that involved meetings with community leaders working in deprived neighbourhoods, city planners formulating housing policies, business people addressing workplace diversity, and inspiring figures with refugee backgrounds leading projects that foster integration between locals and incomers. Outside the schedule of meetings and visits, participants were encouraged to record impressions of what they witnessed at street level: the way, for example, victims of the Holocaust were memorialised in shiny brass embossed letters on cobblestones or, in neighbourhoods to the west of the city, the way Muslim minorities were depicted in anti-immigration AFD posters hung from lampposts beside kebab shops.

Koernig (2007) urges trip planners to strike a balance between structured 'academic' activities, visits, and free time. In particular, he cautions against packing too many outings into each day and so not allowing enough time for reflection. This advice was sometimes difficult to follow on a trip which aimed to deliver a rounded picture of a complex, historical city within the space of just a week. On most days, at least two visits were organised with time given on three evenings for reflection, structured discussion and continuing work on group projects. This meant that the week in Berlin was often described as powerful and intense. It was only much later, in less hurried conditions, and with some distance, that students were able to take stock fully and interpret the week.

For many students, the honesty in which Berlin addressed its troubled past provoked critical reflection on values at home. For example, Aleeta compared the surprising way Berlin addressed the Holocaust with the situation in her own country:

> I began to see a pressing need for an iconic monument, memorial or historical venue in Pakistan that recognises the horrors of the 70-year old Partition, and to argue for a culture that does not romanticise martyrdom in the name of the state/religion, and sees how every life lost was precious, and maybe even avoidable. I will use this insight in the future when exploring new places, or re-analysing familiar ones - as the degree of acknowledgement of the past appears to be a way to assess a country's collective values.

Students found some initiatives both inspiring and thought-provoking. For Heena, a refugee-led enterprise centre provided a positive story of personal transformation:

> The visit to the Migration Hub inspired me by looking at people who have worked hard to achieve so much, not just for themselves, but also in helping other people living through similar experiences. It also gave a reality to the idea that the people who are suffering are not, or should not, be defined simply by this singular experience.

Others were spurred to reflection by the meetings and workshops with community leaders. Deon, for example, was moved to re-conceptualise his ideas of what makes an effective leader:

> The [Berlin]examples...demonstrated that you do not have to be the stereotypical, charismatic figure that many ideas of a leader rest on. A leader can be someone who demonstrates a desire to support others, to guide others and to show a way for others to follow. This is not necessarily by authoritative displays, but by example, pursuing a just cause that resonates with others and by acting on the behalf of, and for the benefit of others...I for one believe a good leader is one who can inspire, not just direct.

Phase 3: reflection (September - November)

This phase of the programme required participants to make sense of their programme experience: the intellectual, emotional and sensory input from both the Berlin trip and six months of group work. Students were involved in two streams of work (see illustration below). For the group work stream, participants were asked to collaborate over 4-5 scheduled evening meetings in order to progress the development of a formal exhibit that would articulate the findings of their Berlin project in a format that was polished and engaging. And for the individual work stream, participants were asked to produce a short essay reflection that offered a probing personal account of their programme journey.
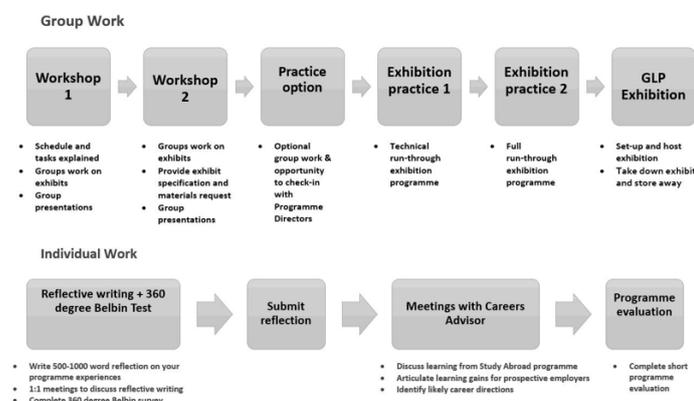

Figure 3: Group and individual work streams for the final phase of the GLP

Group work stream

Skills for employability – a key theme of the Assessment Centre Day and later explored in pre-trip activities and in meetings with Berlin professionals – was a major part of the group work stream. The exhibition, a culmination of each group's project work, was to be delivered within the formal setting of the college's prestigious picture gallery before an invited audience of academics and senior management. Exacting professional standards would therefore apply in a range of areas. Students had to manage their time carefully according to a tight group schedule whilst factoring in competing academic priorities. They also had to decide on a compelling format that combined text, visual media and performance while ensuring expenses did not exceed strict budgetary limits. Communication skills had to be honed to explain sometimes complex findings to a knowledgeable, enquiring audience, and self-presentation, in attire and in behaviour, had to be smart and demonstrate appropriate interpersonal skills.

Invariably, the most demanding challenge, as the date of the exhibition loomed, was that of working together effectively under pressure with peers from different disciplinary perspectives as well as contending with differences in social and (often) linguistic background, emotional maturity and work ethic. However, this challenge offered the richest seam of learning for meeting the twin outcomes of developing intercultural and employability skills. Some of the earlier discussion on working with groups of diverse membership was re-visited but this now had immediate practical relevance. At the scheduled workshops, participants not only discussed exhibition requirements (product) but were also asked to consider ways of resolving team issues that stood in the way of excellence (process).

Individual work stream

In the work to be completed individually the process of transforming personal experience into self-learning was assisted by a number of inputs. Students could take advantage of the second part of the Belbin team roles test, a 360 degree report in which classmates, friends and relatives are invited to offer honest observations on the test-taker's role behaviours. There was also an opportunity to have a one-on-one advice session with the Careers and Employability Service to discuss the impact of the programme on career choices. While these inputs were useful in raising self-awareness, significant attention was given to the manner in which experiences can be sifted critically with the help of a set of directive questions. The diagram below offered a useful starting point for students to begin thinking about a process for introspection.
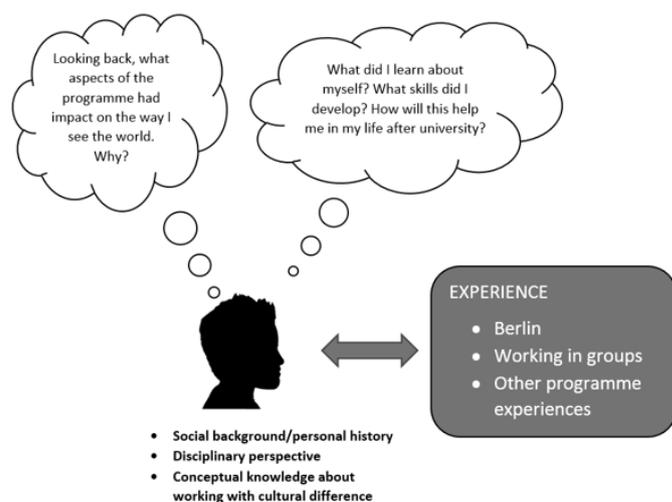

Figure 4: Reflection guidance

In the resulting reflective essays, a few clear themes emerged. First, the majority of students cited the importance of group work to their personal development. Mollie summed up her learning thus:

> Overall, I have identified three key aspects I have learnt throughout my entire journey on the Global Leadership Programme that have either affirmed my beliefs or challenge the way I think: history is important, individual experiences matter and diverse teamwork is the key to success.

Niccola viewed working together in mixed groups as an opportunity to acquire new skills:

> I have had to learn how to effectively communicate with a variety of people in different ways and listen to others in order to present our project well. Our group has been effective in utilising our different skill sets, whether it is through design or structuring our project, I feel as if we have all had a great deal of input into how we present our project. I have really enjoyed working with my group and feel we have pushed each other to think about issues differently as well as worked together to explore the issues most fascinating to us about Berlin.

For many, working in groups of diverse membership galvanised thought on career trajectory as Amie attests:

> The programme has certainly made me more aware of my position in a team; I am confident in leading tasks with a more creative or abstract focus, but am happy to collaborate to get things done. It has also made me aware of my interest in business. As a result of this, I have looked into a career in commercial law as a solicitor, a job where teamwork is crucial.

For Joanna, the GLP suggested a path that would enable her to pursue her passions:

> It has inspired me to research writing as activism which coincides wonderfully with my dissertation topic....not only that but I am more enthusiastic than ever to give back to those around me and am considering a life in volunteering or not-for-profit

While students identified the developmental rewards of group working and an increasing awareness of career pathways, there were a significant number that mentioned quite profound attitudinal change as well as a growing sense of personal confidence. Yasmeen finished her reflection with these words:

> Overall, the GLP has provided me with many valuable experiences that have changed my ways of thinking about key issues and equipped me with skills that I think will allow me to approach new situations and cultures with more confidence.

Sophie too, looking back at the programme in its entirety, concludes:

> On reflecting back to the interview process and applying for the GLP, I was definitely unsure of what to expect and this then in turn made me nervous that the programme would not benefit me entirely in the ways I had hoped. These hopes were to build my confidence in speaking to others, working as a team and also working as an individual, all whilst grasping and taking in historical and cultural experiences. However, now that the programme has finished, I can confidently say that I was completely wrong in my hesitation. The trip to Berlin and also the process leading up to it has acted as a catalyst to all of these skills which I had wished to gain or improve and has allowed me to develop much further as an individual...

Conclusion

Recollecting the GLP with the tranquillity afforded by the passage of a couple of years, it is clear that the experience of programme design and delivery raises a number of questions, especially for a faculty team new to the field. Although the stated objectives communicated succinctly the intercultural and employability focus of the GLP, faculty and students were sometimes perplexed by the title of the programme itself. At an end of programme focus group, students felt that 'global leadership' suggested a business or corporate purpose that could alienate many prospective candidates while others felt that it connoted an elitist aim: an exclusive training course for the world leaders of tomorrow. A title more closely connected with the tenets of global citizenship (Falk, 1993) would perhaps have been better but then, as Zemach-Bersin (2009, p. 315) points out, global citizenship is a contested idea and is, moreover, ill-defined and insufficiently understood.

Another issue related to the role of Programme Directors in mediating and facilitating learning with the aim of giving power to the students in order to provide them with opportunities to grow (Broom & Bai, 2011, p. 50). In feedback, some students said they expected more overt direction from faculty in leading learning, and when group disagreements occurred, there was a further expectation that faculty would step in to troubleshoot. Such expectations ran counter to the aims and pedagogy of the programme but, in hindsight, more could have been done to explain our facilitating role at the very outset of the programme so that students could appreciate the developmental value of students addressing group conflict through their own resources.

The GLP was an extra-curricular programme and as such did not need to follow an assessment scheme that allocates grades against set marking criteria. The group project provided a clear developmental thread and the overwhelmingly positive reception of project findings at the exhibition provided members with a tangible measure of success. At an individual level, the critical-reflective essay enabled students to discuss their progress over six months and identify key points of learning. From a quality assurance

point of view, a focus group and programme evaluation survey (48% student participation rate) was administered over both cycles. The survey identified areas for improvement (largely administrative) and also highlighted strengths: 100% of survey respondents strongly agreed or agreed that the GLP enhanced employability while a similar figure felt that it enabled development of intercultural competence (62% strongly agreed, 26% agreed, and 12% were neutral). However, evaluation - whether of student development or of programme quality – was based wholly on subjective means of assessment. To achieve a more comprehensive picture of programme achievement, it would be useful to augment self-reports with more objective assessment approaches. This might involve adoption of commercially available assessment tools such as the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) (Hammer et al., 2003) or the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) (Davis & Finney, 2006).

Looking back, perhaps the most significant challenges facing the GLP were the inter-related issues of cost and reach. The cost of travel, accommodation and subsistence for the trip to Berlin meant that only 20 students (from a year group of approximately 3,500) could be funded on the programme. The withdrawal of that funding from an external benefactor then led to its eventual demise. However, the limited reach of the GLP always made the justification for the programme questionable: no matter how valuable the intercultural learning was, it would only ever be available to a select few. Teekens (2013) asks, "what do we do with the vast majority of students who are not exposed to intercultural learning and an international experience?". For the GLP, there is no adequate answer to this question at least for the programme as it was then configured. But perhaps we should take heart from Jones (2013, p. 102) who urges us to extend the benefits of an intercultural education beyond the mobile few to the many. Her solution is simple. "We should make better use of the multi-cultural contexts in our universities and in the local population".

Such an internationalisation at home approach has several advantages. Intercultural education is no longer dependent on funding from financial benefactors or students able to afford expensive foreign travel. By shifting the location for intercultural education closer to home, costs are saved, and so programme reach can be extended. Further, the pedagogy outlined in this paper would be especially relevant as the main source of experiential learning would be found in local diversity (Peng et al., 2015): students from across social, disciplinary and ethnic divides working together and learning from each other. For case studies on how communities respond to cultural difference, a short ride to one of the many multi-ethnic neighbourhoods in nearby London would provide rich exemplars. In short, the main objectives of the GLP – the development of intercultural and employability skills - could be achieved without the need for foreign travel. After all, the goal of building intercultural competence is not dependent on boarding a plane to a foreign destination but a flight of a different kind: an imaginative stepping away from familiar ways of seeing and looking at the world through the eyes of others.

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