

The American University
Center of Provence

Experiment in
Holistic Intervention

Proven Strategies for Effective Intercultural Learning Abroad

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WISE Conference 2015

Behavioral Tendencies

in American Students Abroad

- o English speaking
- o Adhering to the American student group
- o Excessive travelling
- o Taking academics lightly
- o Reproducing familiar patterns with the backdrop of an exotic setting
- o Viewing (and judging) the host culture from a safe distance
- o Staying very connected with friends & family at home



Qualities of Student Preparedness

Minuses (*Hinder* their ability to maximize learning abroad)



- o False notions of themselves (academic strengths, foreign language competence, level of independence)
- o False notions of culture and cultural difference
- o Generalization-phobia
- o Diminished interpersonal skills
- o Timidity / Fear
- o Strongly established sense of The Way Things Should Be
- o Defensiveness/ Attached to Personal Opinion
- o Internet addiction

Student Perspective

“In the beginning, students regularly saw their French language correspondents, and everything was great. But little by little, certain students stopped going.

I noticed that for the most part, the students in question were those with boyfriends or girlfriends back in the US, and that they preferred FaceTiming with the people back home or watching movies on Netflix instead of spending time with their French language partners.

Maybe you can ask future students: if your language partner sends you a text message at 9pm asking you to hang out in town, and you've just started watching "Breaking Bad" and you're tired, would you go, or not? What's more important?”

Gaby
AUCP Alum Fall 2014
Muhlenberg

Qualities of Student Preparedness

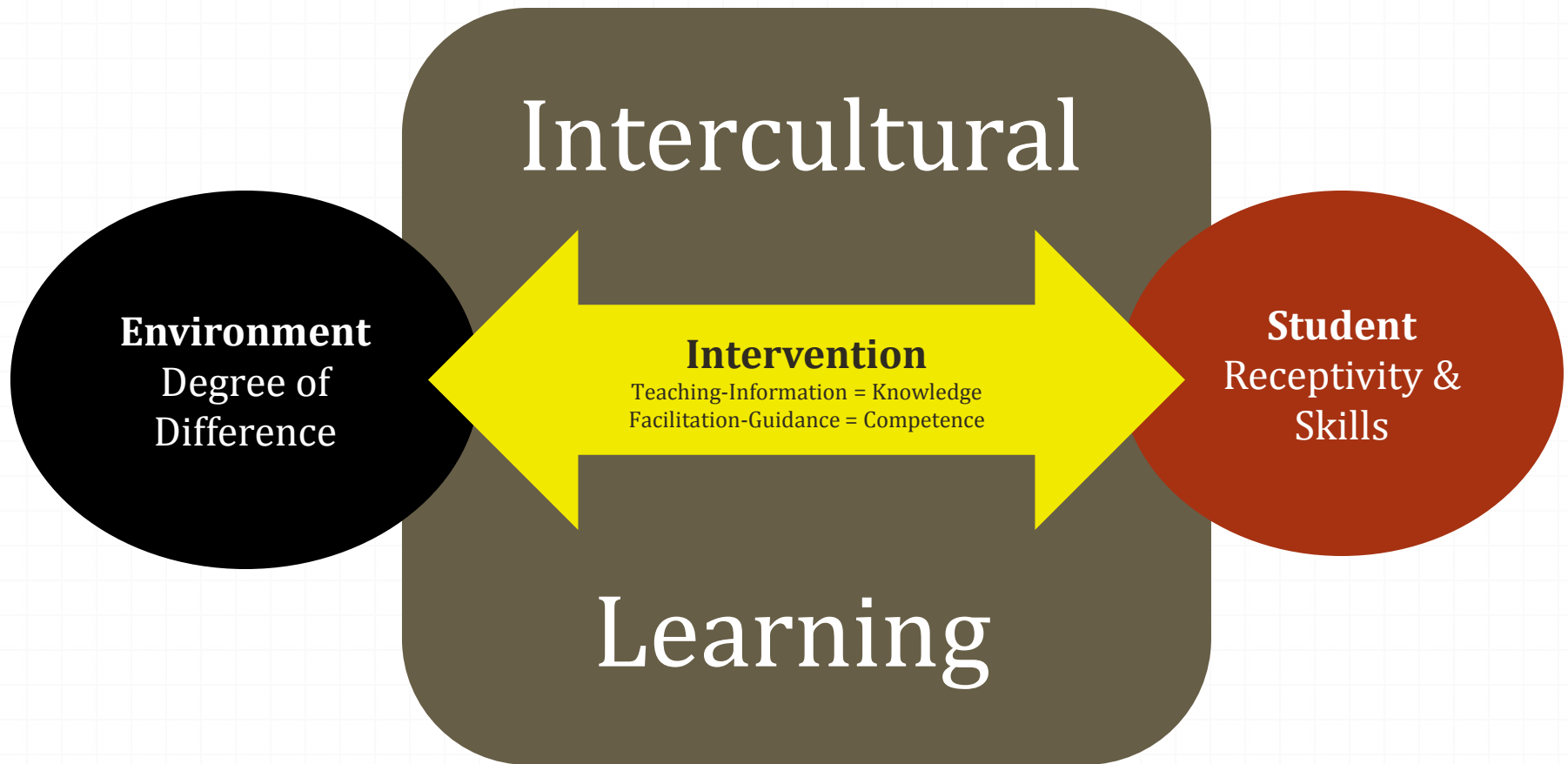
Pluses (*Sustain* their ability to maximize learning abroad)

- Motivated to succeed, to be liked
- Intermediate/High Intermediate target language entry-level
- Intelligent (academically solid 3.0 GPA)
- Open and adventurous
- Romantic and inspirable



Interlocking Strategies

Holistic Program Design



Intercultural Learning

- **Informs** about other cultures
- Fosters cross-cultural relations through the discovery of **commonality** (shared behavior, beliefs, and values)
- Stimulates interest in cultural **difference** (enriching and inspiring)
- Provides an unfamiliar interpersonal environment, **catalyst for adaptation** and personal growth
- Brings judgment and prejudice into **awareness**
- Cultivates understanding to **bridge** “us/them” polarities
- Broadens **perspectives**, not just repertoires of behavior
- Defines a **cultural identity**
- Develops **intercultural competence**

Intercultural Competence

Comprehensive Skill Set

Engaging holistically the head, the body, and the heart : the cognitive, the physical, the emotional/motivational.

P. Christopher Earley & Elaine Mosakowsky,
“Cultural Intelligence,”
Harvard Business Review
October 2004: 139-146.

“A change in the **feeling** of appropriateness”

Bennett, Milton J. & Castiglioni, Ida.
“Embodied Ethnocentrism and the Feeling of Culture.”
Handbook of International Training. Ed. Dan Landis, Janet M. Bennett, Milton J. Bennett.
Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2004. 249-265.

Intercultural Competence

- Experiential/Constructivist
- Holistic
- Developmental

Vande Berg, M. et al. (2012) Student Learning Abroad: “What Our Students Are Learning, What They’re Not, and What We Can Do About It ” (pp. 3-25).
Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.

Positivist Paradigm

It's the Place
that Counts



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Relativist Paradigm - Immersion

Proximity to Host Nationals



Dancing with the locals

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Constructivist Paradigm

Expanding limits of perception and interpretation



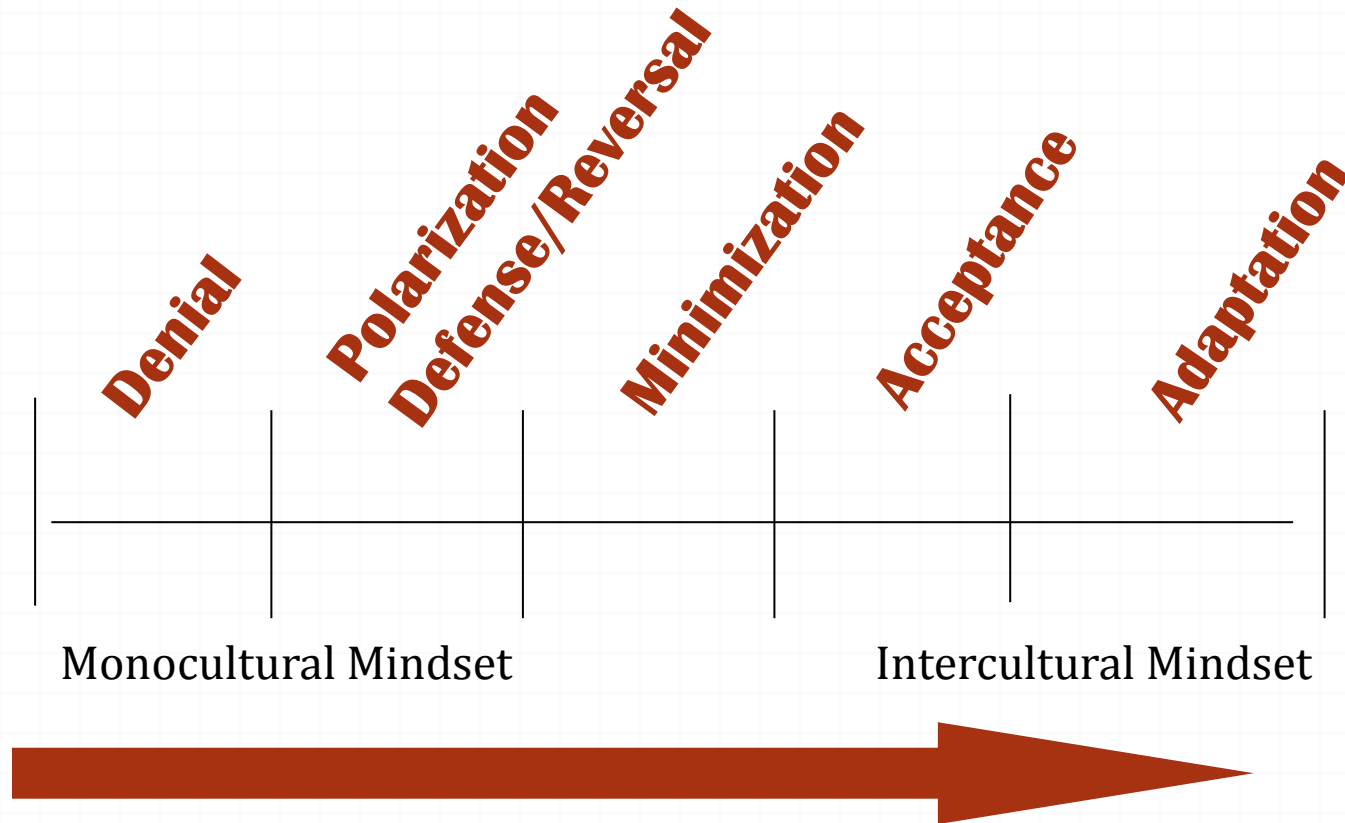
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Evolving Perspective

The Goal as Measured by the **Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI)**

Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)
Increasing complexity in the way cultural difference is *apprehended* (greater awareness) and *construed* (patterned with meaning)

Developmental Scale



Intercultural Development Continuum, modified from The
Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)
Milton Bennett, 1986

Seminal Research

The Georgetown Consortium Project* researched the learning of 1,300 students in 61 programs abroad.

- o 190 home institutions, several providers
- o \$550,000 Title VI funding
- o Two Learning Domains:
 - Oral Proficiency (seven foreign languages)
 - Gains in Intercultural Development

*Vande Berg, M.; Connor-Linton, J., & Paige, R. M. (2009). "The Georgetown Consortium project: Intervening in student learning abroad." *Frontiers*. Vol. XVIII, 1-75.

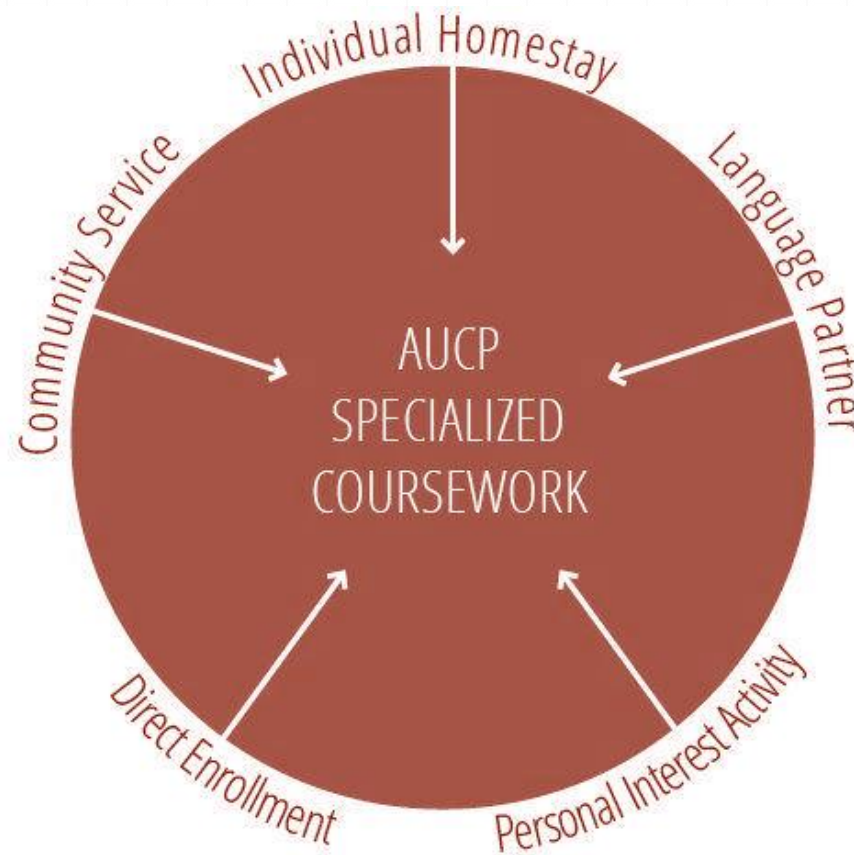
Comparative IDI* Results

	N° of Students	IDI Point Progress
Georgetown Study Students from 61 programs tested, including AUCP	1159	2.09
Georgetown Study without AUCP group	1050	1.32
AUCP Group In the Georgetown Study	109	12.47
AUCP Students since 2002		
Aix-en-Provence	695	13.09
Marseille	186	11.62

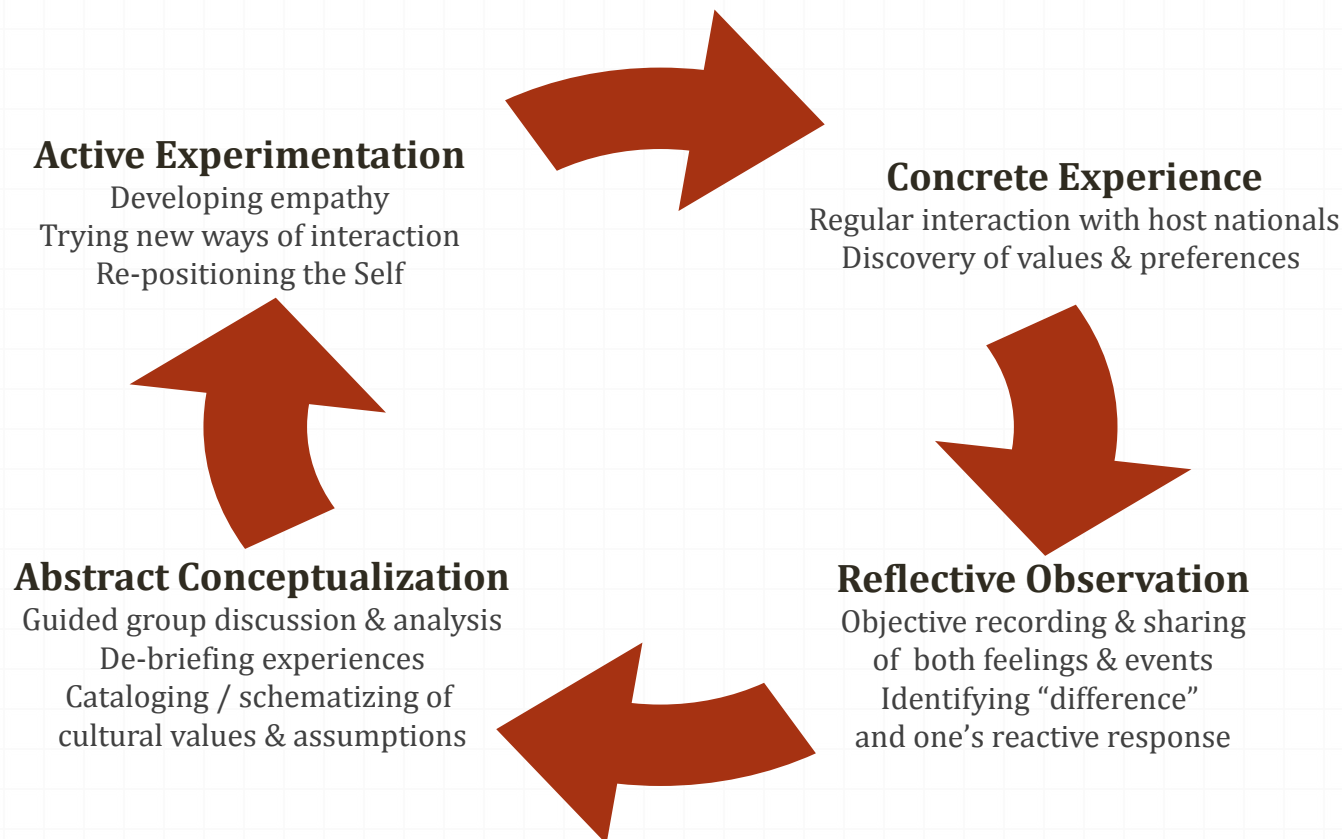
*The Intercultural Development Inventory
Mitchell R. Hammer, Ph.D., Milton J. Bennett, Ph.D.

AUCP French Practicum

Experiential/Constructivist Learning



AUCP's Implementation of David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle



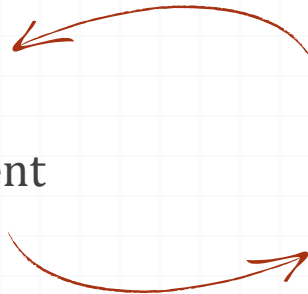
Experiential/Constructivist Learning Holistic Program Design

Concrete Experience Active Experimentation

- o In-house courses with local professors
- o Direction enrolment option
- o Community Service
- o Individual Homestay Placement
- o Language Partner
- o Personal Interest Activity

Reflective Observation Abstract Conceptualization

- o In-coming orientation
- o On-going orientation/
Intercultural
Communication Class
- o One on one Mentoring



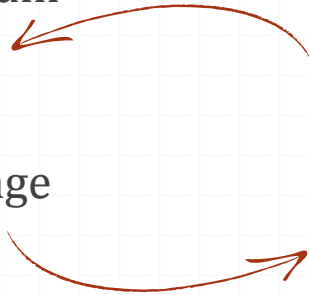
In-coming Orientation

Content

- Logistics
- Contractual Agreements
- Intensive French
- Why & How of French Practicum
- “How to” strategies for relationship building
- “How to” strategies for language learning

Goals

- Comfort & Safety
- Complicity vs Compliance
- Immediate language needs
- Influence of Culture
- Cultural Difference
- Student Responsibility
- Measurable Predictable Outcomes (TEF & IDI)



Etic categories

Identify differences that make a difference to interaction

- o Language Use
- o Nonverbal Behavior
- o Communication Style
- o Cognitive Style
- o Cultural Values

Gregory Bateson (1904-1980)

The word only exists as such—only has “meaning”—in the larger context of the utterance, which again has meaning only in a relationship.

Intercultural Communications Class

French (and North African) Cultural Patterns

Description :

Core-curriculum, required course taught in two weekly 90-minute sessions; explores objective (visible) and subjective (invisible) expressions of culture.

Lectures cover the values and assumptions that inform French societal systems and contemporary issues.

Small-group discussions introduce intercultural communications theory, providing an analytical “toolbox” of vocabulary and concepts geared to guide and inform the students’ evolving experience of France (and Morocco).

Sharpen Perception / Highlighting Difference

Storti, C. *Figuring Out Foreigners* (1999) Intercultural Press, Boston, MA; London, UK

Individual	←→	Group
Equality	←→	Hierarchy
Universalist	←→	Particularist
Task Oriented	←→	Relationship Focused
Tolerance for Ambiguity	←→	Need for Certainty
Action / Doing	←→	Planning / Preparation
Short-term Orientation	←→	Long-term Orientation
Formality	←→	Informality
Achievement Orientation	←→	Quality of Life Orientation
Monochronic (Fixed time)	←→	Polychronic (Fluid time)
Attained Status	←→	Ascribed Status
Man Controls Environment	←→	Environment Controls Man
Direct	←→	Indirect
Explicit	←→	Implicit
Emotionally Expressive	←→	Emotionally Restrained

Asking Right Questions & Cultivating « Witnessing Awareness »

○ Raymonde Carroll methodology for cultural analysis

Carroll, R. (1988). *Cultural Misunderstandings: The French-American Experience* (C.Volk.trans.).

Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

○ Thiagi: Six-point de-brief

Thiagarajan, S. (2004) *Six phases of debriefing*. Retrieved from

<http://www.thiagi.com/pfp/IE4H/february2004.html#february2004.html#Debriefing>

○ Rosenberg : Non-violent Communication

Rosenberg, Marshall B. (2003) *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. Encinitas: Puddle Dancer Press.

Raymonde Carroll's

Methodology for Cultural Analysis

- Seek meaning, not explanations: *how* meaning is produced, not *why* it is so
- Cultivate self-awareness (emotions & judgments)
- Be on the look out for the “bizarre” , sign of a new cultural context to be explored
- Imagine a context in which the “bizarre” becomes “normal”
- Identify a cultural interpretation that manifests elsewhere in the same culture, albeit in a different form

Thiagi: Six-point de-brief

People don't learn from experience; they learn from reflecting on their experience.

1) How Do You Feel?

Share strong feelings and listen without judgment.

2) What Happened?

Descriptively recall the series of events.

3) What Did You Learn?

Identify general principles based on the activity and discuss them.

4) How Does This Relate To The Real World?

Identify relevance to real-world experiences. Suggest that the activity is a metaphor and ask participants to offer real-world analogies.

5) What If?

Imagine alternative scenarios to speculate on how people's behavior would change.

6) What Next?

Apply insights to modify real-world behaviour.

One-on-one Mentoring

Rosenberg : Non-violent Communication

o What happened?

Identifies concrete actions we **observe** that affect our well-being

o How do you feel about what happened?

Identifies how we **feel** in relation to what we observe

o What would you like that you're not getting?

Identifies **needs**, values, desires, etc. that create our feelings

o What can you ask for?

Identifies concrete actions we **request** in order to enrich our lives

Identifying Honest Feelings

Observation/Description

- o Afraid, agitated, angry, anxious
- o Beat, bitter, blue, bored
- o Cold, confused, cross
- o Depressed, disappointed, discouraged
- o Edgy, embarrassed, exhausted
- o Fidgety, frightened, furious
- o Gloomy, guilty
- o Helpless, hesitant, hurt
- o Impatient, indifferent, irate
- o Jealous, jittery ...

Interpretation

- o Abandoned, abused, attacked
- o Betrayed, boxed-in, bullied
- o Cheated, coerced, cornered
- o Diminished, disrespected
- o Misunderstood, neglected
- o Patronized, provoked, put down
- o Rejected, taken for granted
- o Threatened, unappreciated
- o Unsupported, unheard
- o Unwanted, used

Rosenberg, Marshall B., *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*.
Encinitas: Puddle Dancer Press, 2003

Qualitative Assessment Results

AUCP Programs Aix & Marseille Fall 2014

85% of all students

agree/strongly agree that the Cultural Patterns course and their own direct experience allowed them to acquire valuable insights into values and beliefs that guide societal structures and relations.

Qualitative Assessment Results

AUCP Programs Aix & Marseille Fall 2014

91% of all students

agree/strongly agree that France and the French language and people will play an on-going and cherished role in their life.

Qualitative Assessment Results

AUCP Programs Aix & Marseille Fall 2014

96% of all students

agree/strongly agree that their semester abroad allowed them to grow personally in valuable ways.

Student Perspective

“The AUCP experience is the perfect balance of in and outside of the classroom learning. What I learned in the classroom was supported by what I lived outside of it, and my personal abroad experience was enhanced by the insights of my professors and peers.”

Stefani
AUCP Alum Fall 2014
Barnard College

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