Welcome! Please Prepare to Join our Poll!

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Reimagining the Wheel: Innovations in Learning Abroad

Maritheresa Frain, Ph.D., IFSA
Kara Taylor, Ph.D., Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis
Christopher Van Velzer, Ph.D., IFSA Shanghai Global Flagship
On our relationship to ‘wheels’…

Wheel as a monolithic metaphor of human invention:

We are so accustomed to relying on its purpose and usefulness that it simultaneously limits us in considering other possibilities…

What ‘wheels’ can be reimagined in individualized learning?
Wheel #1: The ‘Challenge’ with Challenge and Support in Individualized Learning

- Focus is on the necessity of challenge for growth
- Readiness: openness to new experiences, respond to challenge
- Support keeps extraordinary challenge from being overwhelming (incapacitating, regressing)

Dr. Nevitt Sanford
“The Theory of Challenge and… huh?”
The ‘Challenge’ with Challenge and Support in Individualized Learning

Self and Society, p. 90
“… the principle of challenge and response. This approach to developing the individual grows out of the belief that people do not change unless they encounter a situation to which they cannot adapt with the use of devices already present. They have to innovate, to generate some new response to meet the new situation offered them.”

Dr. Nevitt Sanford
“The Theory of Challenge and… huh?”
The ‘Challenge’ with Challenge and Support in Individualized Learning

Self and Society, p. 94, emphasis added
“To summarize, the institution which would lead an individual toward greater development must, then, present him with strong challenges, appraise accurately his ability to cope with these challenges, and offer him support when they become overwhelming.”

Dr. Nevitt Sanford
“The Theory of Challenge and… huh?”
Reimagining “Challenge” in Individualized Learning Through Critical Reflection

Challenge (high level) is necessary for all growth…

Attentiveness to individualized learning means:
1) Challenge needed for individual growth is different for all
2) Our individual identities shape all learning and perception
3) Critically reflecting on these individual factors is both a source of challenge, and way to promote readiness for growth
How Individualized Identity Factors Shape All Learning

Parable of the Blind Men and the Elephant
How Individualized Identity Factors Shape All Learning

1) Human perception always mediated by language (and culture)
2) Initial ‘textual’ encounters shape lenses for perceiving future encounters
3) Ground on which we stand to engage others not level
4) “Self-Awareness” is elusive (ongoing, changing)

*International Education in Global Times*
What makes reflection **critical**?

In individualized learning, critical reflection invites us to continually reimagine the wheel (our own wheels, or tools for navigating and making sense of the world we are in) – by explicitly questioning ideology, power, our own assumptions, status, biographies, and relations to others.

(see Brookfield, 2009)
Learning Abroad Strategies
We Teach Who We Are

Whoever our students may be, whatever the subject we teach, ultimately we teach who we are.

Parker J. Palmer
Let’s hear from you.

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What's one new thing you have learned this year?
If you were studying abroad today, what would you want to learn?
Reminder - Let’s get started!

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Which of the following are among the most salient of your personal social identities? (you may select more than one)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identity</th>
<th>Code</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Emotional, Developmental (Dis)Ability</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Language</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-Economic Status</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual Orientation</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Origin</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious or Spiritual Affiliation</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What words are synonymous with privilege to you?
What socioeconomic status most informs your identity?

- Lower Class
- Lower Middle Class
- Middle Class
- Upper Middle Class
- Upper Class
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opinion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oh, Hell Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rarely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Why Narrative Critical Reflection?

- Bruner (1987) suggests that our autobiographical narratives—or “the stories we tell about our lives” (p. 691)—guide our decisions and actions.

- In fact, teachers’ narratives have been linked to their beliefs and classroom practices and conceptions of teaching and learning (Milner, 2008).
Questions to Ask…

1. What is your racial background? How do you know?
2. In what ways does your racial background privilege you (or not) in society?
3. How and when did you first see yourself as a racial being? How do you know?
4. What is your socioeconomic background? How do you know?
5. What was your socioeconomic background growing up?
6. How has your socioeconomic background influenced your educational opportunities?
7. In what ways do your race and socioeconomic background share your worldview, what you do, how you experience the world, and what/how you teach?
The How: Phase 1

- **Phase one:** Ask an open-ended question that provokes personal stories and interrogation of memberships in various communities as well as assessments of privilege.

  - What is the most salient community you are part of and how does it impact your understandings of teaching and learning? Answer this question with a vignette with a viable example.
I stood in front of the dated classroom tucked in the back, near the exit, of Farrington Elementary School. I took note of this exit just in case things went south--me humoring myself on the way in. White, black and brown faces stared at me waiting for me to speak. Two girls whisper, “is she a student-- why is she standing?” I repeated to myself, “I am Kara. I am black. I am a woman. I am a teacher ed scholar. I am Kara and I am black. I am Kara and I am a black woman. I am Kara and I am a black woman who is teacher ed scholar. I am worthy and qualified to be here.” My lips became heavy, but I managed to pry them open to introduce myself and greet the class. “Hey everyone. My name is …” I paused. I thought of the implications of my next words and the constant reminders from the black women in the department that my words and introductions create different senses of capital with students. Though I came from an arena where my professors were Nate, Jim and Becca-- I am not them because I am Kara, a black woman and a teacher ed scholar. I repeated those words of affirmations to myself. I spoke strongly, “my name is Dr. Taylor”.
The How: Phase 2

- **Phase two:** Reread your story to look for aspects of privilege and loss/gain social capital.
  - Ask yourself what implications does your membership in communities impact your experiences? What are things you struggled with and why?
I stood in front of the dated classroom tucked in the back, near the exit, of Farrington Elementary School. I took note of this exit just in case things went south--me humoring myself on the way in. White, black and brown faces stared at me waiting for me to speak. Two girls whisper,” is she a student-- why is she standing?” I repeated to myself, “I am Kara. I am black. I am a woman. I am a teacher ed scholar. I am Kara and I am black. I am Kara and I am a black woman. I am Kara and I am a black woman who is teacher ed scholar. I am worthy and qualified to be here.” My lips became heavy, but I managed to pry them open to introduce myself and greet the class. “Hey everyone. My name is …” I paused. I thought of the implications of my next words and the constant reminders from the black women in the department that my words and introductions create different senses of capital with students. Though I came from an arena where my professors were Nate, Jim and Becca-- I am not them because I am Kara, a black woman and a teacher ed scholar. I repeated those words of affirmations to myself. I spoke strongly, “my name is Dr. Taylor”.
The How: Phase 3

• **Phase three:** Share and create communal understandings.

**Discussion Questions**

- What understandings did you gain about your privilege and gain/loss of social capital?
- What did you struggle with or succeed at in this vignette?
- How do these understandings impact your understanding of teaching and learning?
- Why is this work necessary for equitable teaching?
Example: Identity Maps in IFSA Shanghai Integrated Learning Portfolio

• As part of a semester-long learning portfolio, students are prompted to critically reflect on individual identity at beginning and end of term.
• Visually present, and textually explain, before/after changes
“But the paradox of education is precisely this—tht as one begins to become conscious, one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated.” - J. Baldwin

"Raya con Dios... Si Dios quiere"

Catholicism

Travel

Family

Gladys

Alessandra Severin

Aarthi

Claudia Edwin

Alexis Kazi

Anthonella Neah Kevin

Aaron Briana

Lainy

Jessie

Idaliz

Sophia Erika

Sarah

Mariama Liz

Mindy

Ellen

Honduran-American

Agrarecida

Bushwick
"The paradox of education is precisely this - that as one begins to become conscious one begins to examine the society in which he is being educated."

- J. Baldwin

End of Term: Map 2

Leave better than you were
“The biggest contrast between these identity maps is the white empty spaces I have intentionally left blank. These areas are related to the image of overlapping question marks that represent all I don’t yet know and all I have to discover. The empty spaces are my way of giving room to the things I have left to learn. This is a notable difference than my first map because I was proud of the things I knew and also afraid of leaving empty spaces and what that meant.”

- “Rosa,” IFSA Shanghai Student
Learning Plan - Complete

1. Academic goals while abroad
   a. Become fluent in Spanish.
   b. Gain historical perspectives about my host country while actually living there
   c. Get over my self-consciousness about speaking Spanish aloud

2. Personal goals while abroad
   a. Develop personal relationships with the locals
   b. Explore, explore, explore
   c. Get over my self-consciousness about speaking Spanish aloud

3. Professional development goals (while abroad and when returning home)
   a. Learn how to adapt quickly to a new environment
   b. Learn how to communicate effectively in Spanish

OPTIONAL: If you already know specific actions you plan to take to reach your goals, please list them below.
1. Hope to volunteer in the community at least once a week (maybe a public health or mental health organization?)
2. Be willing to make a fool of myself when trying to speak Spanish but still really trying
3.
4.
5.

OPTIONAL: Please share anything else about your goals for study abroad. For example: timelines for accomplishing your goals, specific resources or guidance you plan to seek out on site, or obstacles that may stand between you and your achievement of goals.
Accessing IFSA Learning Plans
In Closing…

Key Takeaways and Action Steps:

1) Continue engaging in this process of critical reflection yourself (we can’t ask others to do what we have not done).

2) Practice modeling vulnerability and authenticity in how this is shared in a communal (institutional, class, workshop) setting.

3) Think of implementation. How might critical reflection on identity be employed at your institution in preparing for and returning from study abroad?
Thank you!

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself.

— Maya Angelou —

nothing will work unless you do