Students’ Self-perceived Teamwork Skills Growth From Study Abroad

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Teamwork Skills

- Research shows students participating in study abroad programs increase their teamwork skills.
- Teamwork is noted through:
  - Confidence
  - Common Goals
  - Active Participation
  - Comfortable Environment
  - Adaptability
Study Abroad Experience

- Texas A&M's Costa Rica Study Abroad Program focuses on diversity of people and culture as it relates to United States’ and international agriculture.

- Students experienced unfamiliar environments where they collaborated to accomplish tasks.
Facilitated Teamwork

- Purposeful reflection sessions helped students achieve a greater understanding of how to apply their teamwork skills.

- The research was conducted to describe students’ self-perceived teamwork skills from short-term study abroad experiences.
Methodology

- Case Study Approach
- Pre- and post travel reflections on one’s self-perceived teamwork skills
- Two Cohorts ($n=55$)
- Content Analysis
  - Students’ pre and post travel reflection logs to help understand self perceived teamwork skills.
Reflection Process

- Identical sets of questions, pre- and post-travel, helped students reflect on their self-perceived abilities to work in team settings.

- Pre- and post-travel results were compared to determine if perceptions of teamwork changed after the study abroad experience.
Results

- Content analyses of pre-travel results showed students’ teamwork beliefs were related to confidence, collaboration, and adaptability.

- Content analyses of post-travel results showed students’ teamwork beliefs were related to confidence, collaboration, and contribution as most important to teamwork settings.

- Adaptability, which was more evident in pre-travel perceptions, was replaced by contribution as a critical teamwork component identified in post-travel perceptions.
Recommendations

- Implement the ‘Teamwork Skills Survey’ in all Texas A&M University Short Term (~2 weeks) Study Abroad Experiences.

- Educators should help students understand the importance of adaptation and contribution during study abroad programs.

- Communicate to other study abroad programs the impact that quality teamwork skills have on daily life.