Self-Identity
Understanding Cultural Heritage Prior to High-Impact Educational Experience
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“I feel better prepared to go travel the world, having a stronger sense of who I am and where I come from.”

Cultural Heritage

- Integrated pattern of knowledge, beliefs, and social norms
- Values, goals, and practices, that define individuals' characteristics
- Aids in the self identity of an individual and provides a sense of belonging
Method

- The "My Cultural Heritage" is an instructional activity that deepens learners' understanding of their cultural legacy

- Essays from 34 participants in two agricultural study abroad programs were analyzed

- Family origin, history, traditions, and norms were investigated

"This research has stimulated my interest in searching for more information about my family history, and compels me to want to learn more about my own peers and others I meet."
Purpose

Studying cultural heritage:

- Validates self-identity
- Creates a sense of culture to divulge a common aspect of interconnection
- Increases understanding of core ethics

"I have attained a greater understanding for how my families have come to be and how I identify myself."
Results

- Increased recognition of familial customs and norms
- Discovered family relatives and ancestral customs that contradicted current beliefs
- Understood how different cultures enhance our agricultural systems through their unique heritage

"I have a better understanding of our culture and a stronger appreciation of our family values."
Classroom Application

- Instructors can use cultural heritage investigations to deepen learners' ownership of self

- Creates an educational environment conducive to tolerance, teamwork, and achievement.
Future Research

- Investigate potential connections between cultural understanding and cognitive processes by students when experiencing intercultural communications activities
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