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**Studying Abroad for Transformational Learning Opportunities to Build Cultural Intelligence**

**ABSTRACT**

Recent research points to questions on the value for students studying abroad while in college. Our conceptual paper links the transformative learning theory to the three dimensions of cultural intelligence to highlight the value of study abroad to provide life-changing learning opportunities. Through disorienting dilemmas and a process of cultivating critical reflection, study abroad students will generate new meaning schemes, or “habits of the mind” to view the world. In addition to critical reflection, the role of emotions plays a critical role in the development of self-awareness. These transformational learning experiences interconnect with the three-dimensional model of cultural intelligence through the cognitive (head) with critical reflection, affective (heart) through emotions and practical (hands) with engagement. In this way, cognitive, affective, experiential and active learning interests are fully expressed, which assumes that people learn, think, feel and act differently. Furthermore, the model describes the three major components of cultural intelligence suggesting development in cultural intelligence can have influences on transformative learning and vice versa.