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INTRODUCTION

In the milieu of the wide-spread accord regarding the critical importance of multicultural competencies in psychology and education, the effectiveness of higher education pedagogy for student learning outcomes remains a challenge (Collins & Pieterse, 2007; Estrada, Durlak, & Juarez, 2002; Kerl, 2002; Stebnicki & Cubero, 2008). The traditional on-campus course format that has dominated teaching of multicultural competencies in higher education proved to have considerable limitations (Coleman, 2006; Collins & Pieterse, 2007; Rowell & Benshoff, 2008). Among multiple constrains, this format allows for minimal opportunities for experiential learning, a pedagogical approach with a potential to strengthen learning outcomes through student engagement (Alexander, Krucek & Ponterotto, 2005; Chen, Jones, & Moreland, 2014). In contrast, community service learning (CSL) offers a valuable alternative to traditional on-campus courses as a platform to engage students in authentic learning and to facilitate student personal cultural growth and interactions with diverse populations (Collins & Pieterse, 2007; Rowell & Benshoff, 2008). Similarly, the international service learning (ISL) approach combines personal multicultural growth and traditional academic instruction with the community-based services in an international context (Annette, 2003; Bringle & Tonkin, 2004; Krely, 2011; Swazo & Celinska, 2014). Importantly, ISL that connects international travel, education, and community service has led to enhancing student worldwide awareness and intercultural empathy (Crabtree & Sapp, 2009; Ibrahim, 2012; Parker & Dautoff, 2007).

This study was designed to analyze student perceptions of their learning experiences in the context of internationalised courses that utilized international service learning approach. In particular, the study aimed to: (1) identify the student learning outcomes with most self-reported growth, (2) describe the mechanisms perceived by students as enabling these learning outcomes, and (3) identify the course curriculum activities and materials that students perceived as most contributing to their learning outcomes. As a result, the study may provide valuable insights into the effects of internationalised course pedagogy on student learning outcomes, particularly for increasing student learning in the domain of multicultural competencies.

METHOD

The internationalised courses in this study applied two major pedagogical approaches. First, the on-campus course curriculum was delivered face-to-face prior to the international experience using a variety of traditional learning activities and assignments. Subsequently, the international course components were delivered in the host country inclusive of international service learning activities, visits to native cultural communities and events, and semi-structured interactions in local communities.

The participants were 21 graduate students (in counseling, psychology, and education) who attended a private university located in a Midwest metropolitan area of the USA. The participants represented diverse ages, ethnicity and cultural backgrounds. The participants responded individually to the Post-trip Reflection and Evaluation Questionnaire, a written semi-

structured response instrument, first by rank ordering the items according to a specific criterion and then by writing short answers to the questions. All questionnaire responses were read and coded separately by two readers utilizing the inductive analysis and thematic representation methods (Aurebach & Silverstein, 2003). Inter-rater agreement was established at 100 per cent through discussions and revisions.

RESULTS

The study results identified the student learning outcomes with most self-reported growth, with varied results for the course concepts (theoretical understandings) and the course skills (practical applications). For the course concepts with most self-reported gains, students attributed their learning outcomes to a broad-base deepening understanding of the concepts' meanings. In contrast, the concepts with less self-reported learning as well as the skills with most self-reported gains were associated with multiple specific mechanisms that enabled student learning. The mechanisms that were most frequently reported include becoming more open-minded, challenging own worldview and biases, respecting each individual's uniqueness, and acquiring insights into diversity. Overall, students' self-analysis of acquiring new skills was superior to that of gaining new conceptual understandings, perhaps due to more observable nature of the course skills as compared to the course concepts.

Furthermore, the study results identify the course curriculum activities and materials that students perceived as most contributing to their learning outcomes. Students' perceptions of the contribution of the on-campus course curriculum activities and materials suggest the importance of three pedagogical factors: (1) multiple opportunities to extend course concepts and skills and apply them to personal experiences, (2) situating learning in the context of non-judgmental and meaningful reflection on self and others, and (3) intellectual rigor of content. On the other hand, students designated the following international components as mostly contributing to their learning outcomes: (1) interactions and experiences within local communities, (2) immersion in a foreign language, and (3) service learning activities. The contributions of international course activities and materials pointed out that their perceived value was predominantly connected with: (1) experiential nature of learning, (2) self-reflection (3) exposure to novel cultural circumstances, and (4) awareness of universality across cultures.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The identified student self-reported learning outcomes and experiences in internationalised courses suggests that this format may provide a valuable enhancement to the traditional on-campus counterpart. In particular, the internationalised course approach affords unique opportunities for experiential learning and self-reflection in novel cultural contexts that are not accessible within the on-campus course format. Consequently, internationalised courses may facilitate additional learning mechanisms associated with expanding students' worldviews, challenging their biases, and experiencing cultural diversity through such activities as international service learning and interactions with unfamiliar cultures and languages. However, learning experiences associated with such mechanisms are maximized when mediated through extensive and explicit faculty guidance to facilitate student self-reflection and learning. In particular, learning within the international course component may be facilitated by situating exploration of pre-conceptions, self-growth, unfamiliar culture and language, and complexities of diversity within a novel and challenging international context. Furthermore, the conceptual and pedagogical framework of the internationalised course is critical to promote a rigorous

construction of off-campus learning activities such as interactions within local communities and language immersion experiences.

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