

# **Interculturalizing the European Study Abroad Experience**

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# Interculturalizing Study Abroad Background

## ➤ Recent publications by Milton:

“A Conceptual History of Intercultural Learning in Study Abroad” in Hoffa & DePaul (Eds) *A History of U.S. Study Abroad, 1965-Present*. Forum for Ed Abroad: Frontiers (2010)

“Paradigmatic Assumptions and a Developmental Approach to Intercultural Learning” in Vande Berg, Paige, & Lou (Eds) *Student Learning Abroad*. Stylus. (2012)

*Revised Edition, Basic Concepts of Intercultural Communication: Paradigms, Principles, & Practices*. Intercultural Press. (mid-2013)

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad Background

## ➤ Recent publications by Ida:

*La Comunicazione Interculturale: Competenze e Pratiche* (Intercultural Communication: Competence and Practice). Roma: Carocci. 8<sup>th</sup> edition. 2005.

*La Differenza c'è. La gestione della diversità nell'organizzazione dei servizi.* (There is a difference. The management of diversity in the organization of social services and healthcare). Milan: Franco Angeli. 2009

“Embodied Ethnocentrism and the Feeling of Culture: A Key to Training for Intercultural Competence” in Landis, J. Bennett, & M. Bennett (Eds) *Handbook of Intercultural Training, Third Edition*. Sage. 2004. (with Milton)

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad Assumptions

- Intercultural learning both in the sense of practical skills (intercultural competence) and as a part of multicultural/global citizenship (intercultural consciousness) is one of the goals of study abroad
- There is a need for some level of educational intervention for intercultural learning to occur
- We could be doing a better job of this

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

## Introduction

- The case for embodied experience as the motivation for study abroad
- Perceptual strategies for setting up embodied intercultural learning (well-known tools in a new context)
- Social media as detemporalizing/delocalizing experience
- Strategies for using new media to support embodied intercultural learning in European study abroad

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

## The embodiment of culture

- Final goal is learning the feeling of the ongoing process of construction of categories and forms
- This generates flexibility to create different forms and to feel forms in a different way.

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

## Three Keys to Intercultural Experience

- Seeing culture
  - Proper level of analysis
  - Dynamic boundaries
- Watching interculturally
  - Identifying relevant cultural differences
  - Predicting misunderstanding
- Adapting to context (not assimilating, not acculturating)
  - Development of intercultural sensitivity and competence
  - Mutual adaptation creating 3rd cultures

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

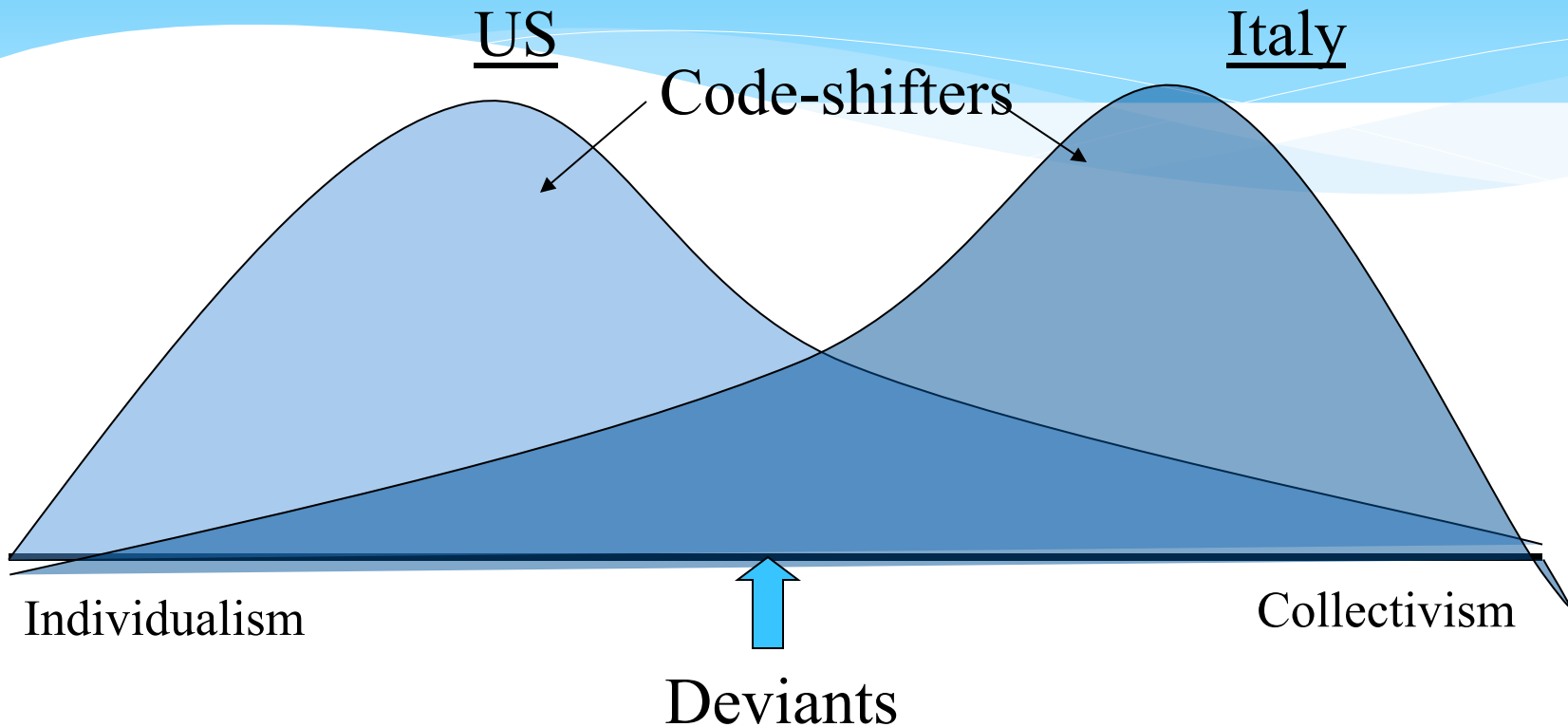
## Levels of Analysis of Culture

- High level analysis: Institutions and institutional power (international relations)
- Midrange analysis: Coordination of meaning and action, cultural worldview (intercultural communication)
- Low level analysis: Individuals and personal characteristics (cross-cultural psychology)
- Combined High & Low level: critical theory, power and privilege (cultural studies)



# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

## Making Cultural Generalizations



# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

## Culture or culture?

### Big “C” Culture



***Cultural institutions:***  
what people create

For example:  
music  
dance  
heroes and holidays  
history  
economic system

### Little “c” Culture



***Cultural worldview:***  
how people behave

For example:  
social rituals  
nonverbal behavior  
communication style  
thinking styles  
cultural values

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

## Constructing “culture”

The coordination of meaning and action maintained by groups of people interacting within a boundary

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Types of boundary include:

- \* Nationality e.g. Italian, U.S. American, Kazakhstani
- \* Ethnicity (National, Regional, Tribal) e.g., Russian, European, Kurdish, Jewish
- \* Ethnicity + National European or African American, Turkish German, Albanian Italian, Russian Kazakhstani
- \* Regional e.g. East/West Germany, North/South Italy
- \* Organizational e.g. oil companies, educational institutions, governmental agencies
- \* Functional e.g. engineers, accountants
- \* Other culture categories e.g. class, gender, sexual orientation, ...

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

# Learning to culture-watch

- Etic categories constructed for identifying relevant cultural differences and cross-cultural interaction analysis
  - Language Use, eg ritual greeting
  - Nonverbal Behavior, eg turn-taking
  - Communication Style, eg linear/circular
  - Cognitive Style, eg deductive/inductive
  - Cultural Values, eg individualism/collectivism

# The Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)

Perceptual Experience of difference



**Denial**

Recognizing the inevitability of diversity

**Defense**

Identifying and evaluating specific cultural groups

**Minimization**

Reducing prejudice by emphasizing commonality

**Acceptance**

Attributing equal human complexity to different cultural groups

**Adaptation**

Generating appropriate and authentic alternative behavior

**Integration**

Natural inclusion of cultural context into ethical decision-making

**Ethnocentrism**



**Ethnorelativism**

# Listening to music

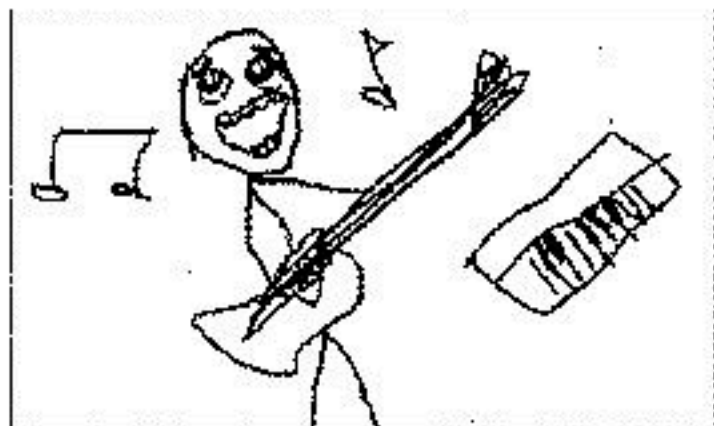
15 years ago

now

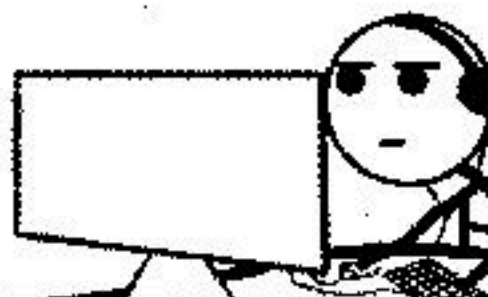


Playing  
music

15 years ago



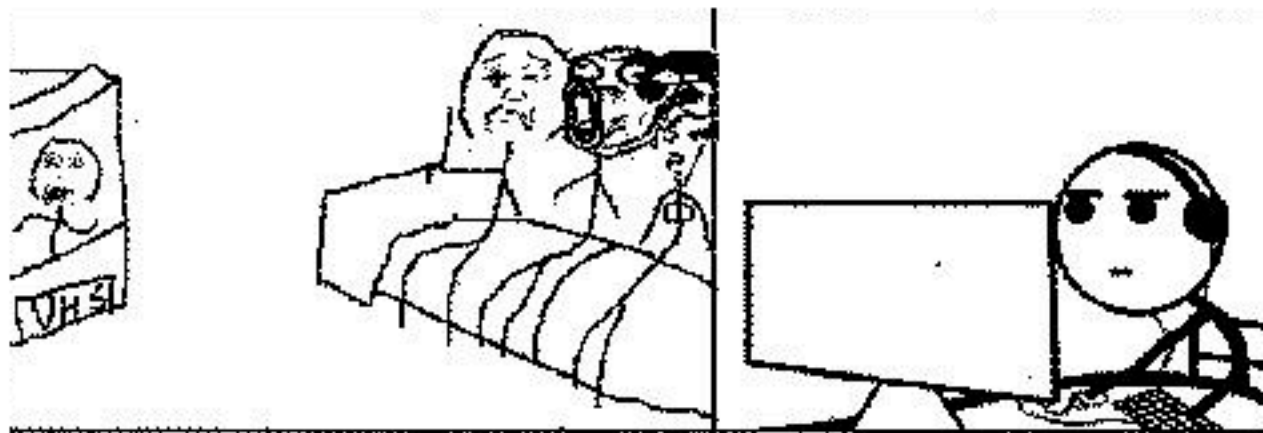
now



15 years ago

now

Watching a  
movie





Calling a  
friend

15 years ago



now



Calling a  
friend

15 years ago



now



# Interculturalizing Study Abroad Access in Europe and the USA

(source: mediatrendwatch, sept. 2011)

- \* In 2010, the highest shares in the Netherlands (91%), Luxembourg (90%), Sweden (88%) and Denmark (86%)
- \* In the USA, 78,2% of population (march 2011)

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

## Time spent online (2008)

- \* Americans rank 5th worldwide, at 30% of leisure time spent online-virtually tied to Italy (31%), Spain and Australia (29%).
- \* N.1 is China

## Interculturalizing Study Abroad

# Use of internet communication

messages, chats, blogs and social networks by age (2010)

\* EU 27: 16-24 80%

\* 25-54 42%

\* 55-74 18%

\* USA: 12-24 major block of users at 23.4% of the total

# Interculturalizing Study Abroad

# Social networking

- Europe is currently the second largest digital market behind Asia Pacific and Europeans continue to embrace new online and mobile offerings.
- Social networking is on the rise in Western Europe (more than 100 million internet users visit social networks at least once a month)

# The case of exchange students: they need

- \* Contact with friends and family back home
- \* Networking with other exchange students
- \* Making new acquaintances

# Making new relationships via virtual reality

- \* POSITIVE: Browsing other people's profile pages: students could find peers in surroundings who are similar to them
- \* NEGATIVE: 59% of surveyed teenagers say they limit their profile to friends only (Lenhart, 2007)



# Engaging one's social life online

- \* NEG: Lack of time to interact with host environment
- \* NEG: Lack of interaction strategies
- \* POS: layer of information given by social networks about the social fabric of schools
- \* POS: uncertainty reduction (H.Hesse, 2007)

# **Interculturalizing Study Abroad**

## **Strategies for balancing virtual and physical engagement**

Intentionally making space for straight embodied experience (temporal, local) in

- assessing internal changes in feeling
- differences in experiencing space and time
- ways of being/presenting self differently with others