

FROM TOUR GUIDE TO TEACHER: DEEPENING CROSS-CULTURAL COMPETENCE THROUGH INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE- BASED EDUCATION

Douglas Allen
University of Denver

Murray Young
Bethel College

An old adage states: What one hears, one forgets; what one sees, one remembers; and what one does, one knows. This also summarizes the results of efforts made by business schools to develop global cross-cultural awareness in students.

What students hear about international business in the classroom is often forgotten as they struggle to bridge theory and real world practice. Meanwhile, students in programs involving international travel frequently see a new cultural world, often with visits to offices strikingly similar to those in their home country. Such a trip may be memorable, but does it transform? Does it really prepare participants to deal sensitively with cultures dissimilar to their own? Probably not, unless components are built into the travel that involve doing.

A new breed of programs seeks to build an active component into overseas travel. One, developed by the University of Denver Daniels College of

Authors' Note: Authors are listed alphabetically and wish to express their thanks to Carole Allen, Cindi Fukami, Tom Watkins, three anonymous reviewers, and *JME's* associate editor for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this article. Correspondence should be sent to Douglas Allen, Department of Management, University of Denver, 2020 S. Race Street, Denver, CO 80208; (phone) 303-871-2428, (fax) 303-871-2294, (e-mail) dallen@du.edu.

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Business, involved MBA students and faculty members in a variety of hands-on experiences during a sojourn to Mexico. In this program, experiential education was employed to design and deliver active learning. Specifically, the 8-day program (6 days on the ground and 2 travel days) involved four interrelated elements: (a) a living case study simulation; (b) a citywide "scavenger hunt;" (c) a social and economic development activity in a Mexican village; and (d) a series of visits to government and business sites. These activities created opportunities for discussion and firsthand experience of the many cross-cultural, ethical, and pragmatic business issues raised throughout the MBA program.

Background

Research and writing suggest that learning occurs more readily when students are able to experience (i.e., see, smell, taste, hear, feel) stimuli and actively participate in the education process. Active learning approaches are related to important educational concepts, such as critical thinking (Paul, 1990), situational instruction (Smith, 1989), experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and reflective judgment (King & Kitchener, 1994; Kitchener & King, 1981). With roots to Dewey (1933) and Bloom (1956), active learning approaches explicitly recognize the importance of hands-on exposure to progressively more challenging and complex problem-solving situations. Appendix A shows how active learning methodologies and practices compare with other educational approaches.

Active learning theory is increasingly employed by companies and universities to develop global leadership skills through face-to-face cross-cultural experience (Allen, 1991; Bartlett & Ghoshal, 1993; Tichy, 1992). Experience-based programs employing methodologies described in the right-hand half of Appendix A include the Global Leadership Program at the University of Michigan (Allen & Buhro, 1990) and in-house efforts, such as the High Tech Inc.'s Global Leadership Program (Tichy, 1992). Both of these programs offered intensive, hands-on experience in overseas locations for cross-cultural teams of executives.

The Mexico Sojourn—Background and Overview

Since the mid-1980s, the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver has been cited for its innovative, experiential-based curriculum (Deutschman, 1991; Lord, 1993). Five themes permeate both its course work

and required nonclassroom experiences: leadership and communication, values and ethics, cultural diversity, quality, and entrepreneurship.

The University of Denver's approach, even though it developed student skills in each of the five areas, did not adequately integrate the themes and prepare students to apply them in actual settings. Therefore, additional efforts were focused on the design and delivery of relatively brief but comprehensive 1- to 2-week learning experiences. The objective was to integrate the five themes with the more traditional MBA subjects while emphasizing their application to real-world problems. Though most of these programs have been conducted in the United States, one integrative experience was conducted in Mexico with a group of 35 participants (25 to 45 years in age), of which 35% were women; 20% were non-U.S. citizens.

The Mexico location was chosen for several reasons. First, it was a cost effective location that offered a genuinely different cultural environment and international experience without substantial travel from Denver. Second, the unfolding North American Free Trade Agreement offered a rich background for conducting a country analysis from the perspective of a U.S. company. Third, the University of Denver MBA program had several alumni able to offer substantial assistance in making contacts and setting up visits with businesses and government offices.

The Mexico sojourn contained four major design components, which supported the educational objectives of application and synthesis highlighted in Appendix A.

THE MACROCASE

A major organizing theme for the trip was a microcase (see Appendix B). This case was designed to involve students in a cross-functional analysis of a business situation flavored with strong cross-cultural and social responsibility issues. Students used the scenario of a manufacturing joint venture as a frame of reference throughout their visit to Mexico City.

Advance Preparation

Before departure, students were assigned to teams, each of which was required to analyze the macrocase business problem from a specific functional perspective (see Appendix C for an outline of questions and issues for each team). Teams were advised to collect substantial economic and demographic information on Mexico as well as data pertaining to their assigned functional areas before their departure. This preparation was intended for

teams to take better advantage of scheduled and serendipitous opportunities for additional data collection during the sojourn. Additionally, briefings from a Mexico country expert and Mexico's consul general to Denver offered opportunity to learn about Mexican history and culture and gather practical information intended to maximize the likelihood of a safe and healthy trip.

Team assignment offered a first opportunity for cross-cultural interaction because about 20% of the participants were international. International students were assigned across teams to maximize the internal, team-based, cross-cultural experience of both U.S. and international participants. A first level of cross-cultural learning took place as members viewed a third culture through their own cultural lens as well as through those of their team members.

On-Site Activities

Throughout the sojourn, teams met to compare notes and plan strategies for collecting information relevant to their portion of the macrocase analysis. Many demonstrated ingenuity in their investigations, finding informants at the hotel, banks, business offices, and other locations. By the end of the week, each team had compiled a strong database of information.

At the same time, the macrocase provided a framework for studying each of the sites visited. Question-and-answer sessions at each meeting offered opportunity to obtain information relevant to the team assignments. Therefore, each site visit was not only generically relevant to the group but also a specific resource for team analysis. Question-and-answer sessions were very dynamic because students had real questions for which they sought answers.

One student summarized the case experience as follows:

The case was a helpful tool in many ways. First, it gave us a perspective that sparked additional interest in the Mexican business and the economy. Secondly, we learned how important an infrastructure is to start up a business. Thirdly, we learned what is important for starting up a new business in a new country as well as the potential barriers.

Faculty comments were equally enthusiastic:

The students impressed me with their analysis of the project phases and with the intelligence of their questions. Each group went way beyond the simplistic approach of "asking the bellman" to in-depth research. Innovation and creativity were apparent.

During the final evening in Mexico City, each team reported their analysis to the entire group and offered recommendations from their assigned func-

tional perspective. Collectively, these reports offered a comprehensive assessment of the company's opportunity to expand into Mexico. When all presentations had been heard, all participants voted on the viability of the project from a general manager's perspective. In this particular case, the students were overwhelmingly convinced that the Mexico expansion was not practical for this company despite the Mexican economic environment.

GETTING SETTLED SIMULATION

The objective of this experiential exercise was to expand the students' cross-cultural learning early in their visit. The result was increased student confidence, capability to independently explore their surroundings, and a deepening of cross-cultural exposure.

During the first full day in Mexico City, the teams were given a list of 19 items to locate and purchase (see Appendix D). Teams competed to see which could purchase the greatest number of items. Some items on the list were familiar to the students but perhaps difficult to locate (such as a floppy disk or a spark plug for a U.S. car). Other items (such as *molé* spice and chocolate tablets) were typical Mexican items. A third group of items (such as breakfast rolls and light switches) were included as items that might be required soon after moving into a new area.

Time was given for teams to map out a strategy for finding the items. Some teams traveled together; others divided the list and set out in subteams. Teams were given about 6 hrs to locate their items. That evening, they gathered to debrief and to collectively determine which team had acquired the most items.

Six hrs earlier, students had hesitatingly wondered whether it would be safe to take the subway, whether they could find their way back to the hotel, and even whether it might make more sense to stay close to the hotel to avoid the difficulties (and dangers, both real and imagined) that might be experienced further out in the city. But by the time the group reconvened, all were feeling more comfortable in their new environment.

During the debriefing, students enthusiastically related a variety of experiences. Most had found all items but one (a nonexistent bus schedule). All had a variety of stories and insights to share.

One team outlined taxi strategy:

There are several levels of taxi service. The Volkswagen bugs are the most cost effective. They are cheaper and although they have the front passenger seat removed for easy access to the rear seat, we found that we could get all five

team members in the Volkswagen by putting three of us in the back and two up front on the floor next to the driver.

Another team found itself in a police station:

As we walked down the street, Bob smashed his head on a low sign over the sidewalk. A policeman immediately came up to us and insisted that we all go with him to the police station. We had no idea what was going to happen to us (particularly after we had been warned not to do anything that would get us in trouble with the law). While we were told to wait, Bob was taken upstairs and we didn't see him for twenty minutes or so. We were really worried. Then Bob came back downstairs. He'd been taken to the infirmary where his head was treated and bandaged for free. The policeman accompanied him downstairs and said if we wanted, for \$20 he'd be happy to change into civilian clothes and help us find the rest of the items on our list.

Some teams had discovered the Aurera Superstores and were impressed to find that it was as easy to locate the necessary items on the well-stocked shelves as in any U.S. discount grocery store. One group found a vendor in a subway station selling 3.5-in. floppy disks. Several teams visited car repair garages to obtain spark plugs. One particularly enterprising group negotiated with a local shoe shine man on the street to buy his can of black shoe polish.

The search for the items not only took the teams to a variety of vendors but exposed them to a Mexico City rarely experienced by the tourist or business traveler. The exploration delivered a deep exposure to culture and language in a fun, nonthreatening format. Traveling in groups of two or more, students helped each other solve the puzzle and deal effectively with a new, unfamiliar environment.

Student feedback indicated that the exercise was, in the opinion of many, one of the most important experiences of the trip. It facilitated close and immediate interaction with local people. The following comments are typical of the student response:

I think that the simulation was an excellent way to learn about how to get around the city and discover where important locations are. It forced us to immediately communicate with the local business people.

The hunt forced us to interact more closely with the Mexican people and showed us the importance of knowing the local language.

Noteworthy is the use of the word *forced*. Student feedback made it clear that the hunt moved students beyond their comfort zone. It helped establish new levels of student confidence in their ability to engage in cross-cultural interaction well beyond their own initial expectations.

To close the debriefing, a facilitator suggested that the students pause and think back to their arrival at the hotel from the airport. At that time, the students had been tired, jet-lagged, and disoriented as most international travelers are on their arrival in a new and unfamiliar place. One day later, strangers in a large city with an unfamiliar culture and language had experienced enough of their new environment to feel at ease. The hunt for the items on the list had not only been a fun learning activity in and of itself but it set the stage for further exploration during the rest of the students' stay in Mexico City.

THE MAZATLAN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

After 5 days in Mexico City (including the final report of the teams on Friday night), the group flew to Mazatlan. There, faculty members and students donned their work clothes to help villagers paint a school, clear brush, and plant trees. The village visit had been organized through the help of a charitable relief organization engaged in a variety of social and economic development projects. For many of the students, the village visit was perhaps the most powerful experience of the trip.

Students walked through the village into a school where the work was to take place. For many, this exposed them to poverty they had never before experienced. They were surprised to note that the village had no central sewer system and, although the village was electrified, most of the houses lacked basic amenities. More sobering was the fact that this was not one of the poorer villages in Mexico.

The students jumped into painting and tree planting. At first, students were disconcerted to see villagers, both young and old, standing and watching. Without much delay though, the friendly demeanor and the energy of the students became contagious and villagers, including many of the school children themselves, enthusiastically joined the students.

By the end of the afternoon, many students expressed regret that they had to leave so soon, that there was so much more that could be done. As they climbed back onto the bus to return to the hotel, many questioned their token effort in a village that could have used their help in so many ways.

That evening, most students ventured into Mazatlan to enjoy the tourist-oriented restaurants and night spots. Later, many students and faculty members congregated out on the verandah of the hotel overlooking the ocean and talked about their experiences. There was talk of the contrast between the village and the night clubs: two worlds residing in the same relatively small city. Working side-by-side with newfound friends in the Mazatlan village

even for an afternoon was an experience that some said would change their lives forever:

The most important thing I believe we did was the community service work. We helped paint a school and plant trees in an underdeveloped community. The businesses we visited (in Mexico City) will not be changed by our visit but I believe that the children from the community were affected in one way or another by our visit.

This added many dimensions. The community service work opened many of our eyes to the impoverished Mexican life, and made us feel great to interact with these people and know that we were helping their community. Very rewarding for them and for us!

The school project is an event I will remember forever.

Others sat on the verandah feeling frustrated by their week-long experience. They reflected on the pollution and crowding in Mexico City and the poverty they had seen earlier that afternoon in the village. They were haunted by the smiling faces of children who, happy and active, were growing up in difficult circumstances. Many of them returned home with more questions than answers:

Yesterday was a visit to a Mexican barrio in Mazatlan. I really had some trouble justifying the visit as an opportunity to conduct a community service, as my skills as a painter and tree planter are minimal. However, this exposed me to the great disparity in wealth in Mexico today. I will undoubtedly benefit from the experience but I can't really say I enjoyed it.

Through this experience, students began to sense the interconnectedness of the world and the fact that complex problems (such as pollution in Mexico City) or basic issues (such as providing a sewer system in the Mazatlan village) could not be solved through superficial gestures without global collaboration. For some, the trip helped develop a concern for humanity:

I sort of felt that the community service was a set up for a photo opportunity to make us look like socially responsible students, which gives us more benefit than I think we deserve. I hope the story does not serve to glorify the University of Denver but rather highlights the need for all of us to develop our ethics and social responsibility.

FIELD VISITS AND SOJOURN AGENDA

Selection of site visits and sojourn scheduling was designed to expose students to a variety of enterprises: government and private sector offices, local Mexican and multinational operations, and a number of cultural sites. The result was a tight schedule that emphasized real-time data collection by

team members during site visits as well as during limited daily and nightly free time. Unstructured time was positioned as an opportunity for teams to work on their assigned business focus as they explored their new cultural surroundings. The following is an overview of the daily activities:

Sunday. The group departed for Mexico City with stops in Mazatlan (to clear immigration) and Puerto Vallarta (to clear customs), arriving in Mexico City at 7:30 p.m.

Monday. The U.S. embassy conducted a briefing for information on the relationship between Mexico and the United States. Students visited Mexival (one of the large Mexican stock brokerages) and the ultra high-tech Mexican Stock Exchange; in the afternoon, the "getting settled simulation" helped students get out on their own in the city.

Tuesday. Students visited Arthur Andersen's Mexico headquarters for a briefing with several senior executives. A substituted trip took students to a historical convent outside the city for lunch, with the return trip meandering through small barrios and villages, giving the students opportunity to observe local living accommodations.

At Cifra (a \$2.8 billion Mexico-based retailer), students heard about market trends in Mexico from the perspective of local businessmen. Demonstrations of Cifra's new computer-aided retail management software exposed students to state-of-the-art inventory technology not yet widely used in the United States. A bus ride (including a lengthy period during which the bus driver was simply lost) got the students to the Universidad IberoAmerica almost 2 hrs late for a reception. There, the group was graciously received by senior faculty members and administrators who hoped to establish new ties between their own institution and American universities, including the University of Denver.

Wednesday. The first half of the morning was left unscheduled so teams could gather data on their business assignments. A Mexican government briefing on the current economic conditions provided projections for the country. Janssen Pharmaceutica offered perspective on joint venture opportunities and a visit to BaniMex introduced MasterCard and Visa's sophisticated tracking and approval operations. That night, an optional visit to one of the *zócalos* (or squares) in Mexico City resulted in an expensive lesson for faculty members and students alike: A combined bill for drinks and snacks at a local bar exceeded by about 300,000 pesos (\$100) the amount the group had expected to pay.

Thursday. On arrival at the Government Ministry of Tourism office, the group was informed that their meeting had been set up for Friday (notwithstanding the confirmation for the Thursday visit from the ministry received just the day before). To fill in the time, the group detoured to a curio market, which had been on the agenda for Friday. A visit to the world famous Anthropological Museum generated a sense of the rich history and current cultural diversity of Mexico. That evening, the University of Denver held a reception for the many organizations that had graciously hosted the group.

Friday. A return to the Ministry of Tourism provided tourism projections over the next several years. The rest of the day was spent at Teotihuacan—one of the most famous archaeological sites in Mexico. There, students wandered around massive pyramids and stone structures that had served a sophisticated civilization established long before European explorers arrived in what is now Mexico. For the students, Teotihuacan offered a combined sense of scale and history seldom, if ever, obtainable in the United States.

Saturday. The group flew to Mazatlan. The afternoon was spent working with villagers to paint a school and plant trees. Saturday evening was free for students to enjoy the town while juxtaposing their village work that afternoon with the glitzy night life of Mazatlan.

Sunday. The group returned home via a cumbersome (U-shaped) travel itinerary involving a substantial backtrack through Mexico City and Puerto Vallarta. The group arrived back in Denver late in the evening.

Design Fundamentals

Teachable Moments

In the above agenda, a sample of scheduling glitches and other vicissitudes encountered by the group is included to highlight their importance as often-missed learning opportunities. A key to converting a sojourn into a learning laboratory is to welcome unexpected glitches. These events often result in some of the most powerful teachable moments: Faculty members can leverage those occurrences into opportunities for discussion, feedback, analysis, synthesis, and learning. For example:

- We made the geographically short trip to Mexico City in 12 hrs with two sweltering stops at airports to clear immigration and customs. Students and

faculty members talked about the frustrations of travel delays and border-crossing formalities.

- Cancellations of "rock solid" appointments and delays/lateness of the bus offered opportunities for discussions focusing on the culturally relative concept of time and flexibility. It also offered the opportunity for faculty members and the tour director to model flexibility, ingenuity, and good humor.
- The cross-cultural shocks were not only experienced by Americans as they bumped up against Mexican cultural differences. The trip offered international students an opportunity to observe American interaction over an intensive, week-long journey. In one instance, a number of international students were shocked by an American faculty member's threat to leave students behind if they were not on the bus at a certain time. The threat was perceived as cruel and uncaring by these students from Southeast Asia, even though the faculty member intended only to convey the importance of punctuality.
- An evening's unexpectedly high bar tab allowed participants to internalize the importance of verifying food prices before ordering.

The concept of teachable moments is not an excuse for poor planning or sloppy administration. Rather, best efforts should be taken to maximize the likelihood of glitch-free travel. Teachable moments are most powerful when they occur in spite of good planning. Indeed, teachable moments can be purposely designed into the program. For example, the getting settled simulation offered a rich supply of these moments as students discussed their experiences during the debriefing.

Logistical Considerations

Transportation in Mexico City was organized through a local tour company. A bus and local tour guide met the group at the airport, transported people and luggage to their hotel, and served as the primary source of group transportation to the various scheduled destinations. Because meetings and bus travel would limit exposure to local culture, the schedule was interspersed with free time when possible to allow for firsthand exploration.

Choice of hotels was an important consideration. Some members of the faculty felt that the group should stay in a modestly appointed hotel that would in itself expose students to an additional level of cultural experience. Others believed that it was important to provide accommodations comparable with those encountered by most business travelers. Although the latter perspective prevailed (in Mexico City, the group stayed at the international business-oriented Hotel Krystal Rosa), the decision is representative of a number of issues whereby philosophical and operational alternatives must be

resolved. Appendix E offers an example of these trade-offs, using the hotel decision as a case in point.

Response to the hotel by students and faculty members was favorable and, in retrospect, even the advocates of the more modest hotel accommodations acknowledged that the business hotel had been the better choice.

An early breakfast was provided for students at the hotel before each day's activities began. When the schedule involved a full day's activities, lunch was provided en route. Students were on their own for some lunches and all dinners, which offered another opportunity for personal exploration, even as logistical complexity was reduced.

Another important logistical consideration involved student support. Over the course of the trip, several of the students and faculty members needed specific and immediate assistance. One of the international students, for instance (through no fault of his own), encountered potential visa problems that were only resolved after several calls and visits to the U.S. embassy with follow-up faxes and phone calls to the University of Denver International Student Support Office. The result was a smooth return to the United States despite the rather unhelpful (and incorrect) statement by U.S. embassy officials that the student could only return to the United States after reapplying in person at the U.S. embassy in his home country in Asia for a U.S. reentry visa. In another instance, a student received word that his small child had been injured in an auto accident in Denver. Without delay, the program director made resources available to the student to return home at the earliest possible time.

A variety of other issues arose along the way. In each case, the faculty members tried to respond with sensitivity. The student with visa problems who was at one point contemplating being stranded in Mexico City was assured that in the unlikely event this occurred, he would not be left alone. These problems themselves became potential teachable moments, depending on the way they were handled by the faculty.

Faculty Selection

An international sojourn represents an ideal way for faculty members with limited (or no) international experience to enhance their professional skills. But if the faculty team collectively does not have sufficient cross-cultural and international experience, the quality of the student experience suffers due to faculty member inability to discuss and process key occurrences along the way. Therefore, the faculty team comprised a mix of seasoned international

travelers who had lived overseas and other faculty professionals who had little or no prior international exposure.

Faculty cross-cultural and international experience was key to successful debriefings and discussions and was anticipated to be a key to further improvement in such programs. In a posttrip evaluation, one faculty member stated,

The combination of activities succeeded beyond my best expectations for a first-time tour. This is a great formula! However, as we increase the level of toughness, we have to be prepared to leverage the experiences with effective, powerful developing and processing of experiences.

Operationally, the experienced faculty members also felt comfortable taking an active role in problem solving and trouble shooting. For example, difficulties with student visas, logistical and scheduling changes, and other unanticipated challenges could be addressed by more than one faculty member. This multifunctional role of faculty was not only of help to the program administrator but, more importantly, modeled to students effective problem-solving behavior in a cross-cultural context.

Ability of faculty members to work comfortably and directly with students was deemed critical. It was also important that faculty members demonstrate a spirit of adventure. By doing so, a tone was set for a successful sojourn, despite any inconveniences. A close rapport developed between faculty members and students that would last well beyond the sojourn itself. In the words of one student:

I really appreciated getting to know the professors. Interacting with them as peers was a great experience. I feel that I now have more informal advisors or faculty I can turn to for advice or guidance.

Lessons From the Sojourn

At the end of the sojourn, students and faculty members were asked to evaluate their experience. The overall evaluation was favorable, enthusiastically endorsing the experience-based approach and offering suggestions and insights for future programs as outlined below:

Enhance pretrip preparation for active learning events. Students felt it essential for teams to meet before the trip began. Teams had been formulated

in advance, but not all teams held initial meetings. For future sojourns, we will structure time during the pretravel briefings for teams to meet, get organized, and systematically prepare for the macrocase simulation.

Offer language training. Most students believed that a crash course in “survival Spanish” would have increased their comfort level and effectiveness on the trip. Whereas an intensive course is not practical, we will investigate ways to provide basic language training in future courses.

Advance preparation need not be extensive. Though advance preparation is considered critical for expatriate and other extensive relocations, we believe that sojourn participants need not duplicate that amount of preparation. Whereas we encouraged students to prepare themselves through study and participation in some briefing activities (including discussions on cross-cultural communication and culture shock), the trip itself is good preparation for future cross-cultural encounters. As such, it systematically exposes participants to experiences helpful for learning about the culture immediately at hand and prepares students for the challenge of continuous learning at home and abroad.

Diversify program content. Students and faculty members believed it would be useful to expand the variety of experiences and visits available. Suggested additions included a manufacturing plant, interaction with union leaders and lower level workers, and an increased opportunity to visit rural areas. In regard to the latter, students suggested a “bookend” design, whereby an initial exposure to rural life would place the visit to high-tech companies in Mexico City in better perspective. The capstone social and economic development experience in rural Mazatlan was perceived as an effective vehicle for stimulating reflection and learning.

Offer more free time. Many participants felt that more unstructured time could have enhanced the opportunity for firsthand exploration and data gathering. As one faculty member observed:

While the corporate meetings certainly provided useful, timely information, the freedom to explore on our own was equally important (and appreciated). As a matter-of-fact, this “exploration time” was a great place to put my new found knowledge of Mexico to work.

Active learning enhances short-term international sojourns. In a short-term sojourn, it is tempting to reduce or even eliminate active learning content on the grounds that a more traditional tour is easier and quickly offers more breadth. Our experience indicates that the hands-on design was critical to compressing the time frame for cross-cultural learning. Although the result may be less systematic coverage of factual material, the experiential component deepens cross-cultural exposure to a level more often associated with longer stays. In the words of one faculty member:

Experiential learning remains the best form of education: my sense is that students learned more from the case, the scavenger hunt, the school project, and perhaps the visits to the temples and museums, than all of the "lectures" and presentations combined.

Conclusion

The experience-based approach to the Mexico sojourn changed the nature of the visit from a passive tour into a hands-on, cross-cultural experience that forced students beyond their comfort zones in a fun and exciting manner. The result was a pedagogical design that effectively achieved the application and synthesis educational objectives outlined in Appendix A. The sojourn had encouraged problem-solving and integrative behaviors. Likewise, the faculty role changed from that of lecturing tour guide to the more indirect role of facilitator, process consultant, and teacher consistent with the higher level educational methodologies also identified in Appendix A.

In their evaluation of the sojourn, students expressed satisfaction with the value of the trip and the learning they had achieved through an experience-based approach:

To be able to study issues in a theoretical way and apply them to real situations is by far the best way to gain a true education.

The opportunity we had to visit Mexico City will certainly become one of the cornerstones of my education.

Faculty members made similar observations:

International exposure will make our graduates much better managers in terms of operations. More importantly, they become "value sensitive" through elevated levels of cross-cultural understanding.

Indeed, the Mexico sojourn facilitated three levels of experiential cross-cultural learning: individual learning, as participants "bumped up" against new cultural practices throughout the trip; team learning, whereby teams of five (often containing international students) learned from each other's

diverse reactions to situations and worked together to solve the puzzle of interacting across cultures; and group level learning, whereby the larger group of 35 students and faculty members participated in a variety of collective experiences.

Many participants returned to Denver experiencing a sense of satisfaction with the depth of the experience they had gained during the week, along with a deep sense of frustration over the complexity of the problems and challenges facing those who seek to improve the material well-being of developing countries.

The rapid globalization of our economy has made international experience and cross-cultural competence increasingly valuable to businesses and managers alike. Paradoxically, companies are sending fewer expatriates abroad. If this trend continues, companies may well rely on universities to take more responsibility for preparing future employees for the cross-cultural demands of business. The active learning design of the Mexico sojourn offers one way in which students can gain this experience in a cost-effective yet powerful manner.

Appendix A
A Framework for Developing an Experience-Based Learning Event

Level of mastery	
Fundamental constructs	Knowledge
Formulation of objectives	Specific: Descriptive, definitional
Evaluation of objectives	Definitional
Active verbs in objectives	Compare, find, list, repeat, state
Participants' Roles	
Instructor's role	Low direct involvement
Learner's role	High, work with guided materials
Instructional Methodologies	Structured: Define/describe, describe/question, focused lecture, focused readings, programmed instruction
	Comprehension
	Specific: Reflective, problematic
	Conceptual
	Cite evidence, compute, describe, measure, prepare
	High direct involvement
	High, work with instructor led review
	Integrating: Describe/discuss, "what if" issues, simple problems, question/probe, guest speakers
	High indirect involvement
	High, work with instructor led simulations
	Experiential: Case studies, simulation, problems, group tasks, field trips
	Low indirect involvement
	High, work with personal applications of instruction
	Involving: Field work, internships, on-the-job training, consulting, residences

Focal area for the design of the University of Denver Mexico Sojourn

SOURCE: Adapted from Smith (1989).

Appendix B

Macrocase Scenario

Framework

You are a member of a project team exploring a joint venture with Mexican partners to manufacture air filtration devices. They are to be sold to consumers and businesses, principally in and around Mexico City. The device removes pollutants from the air, making breathing much healthier and more pleasant. Preliminary engineering studies indicate that home versions of this product can be sold for about U.S. \$100, with commercial versions selling for U.S. \$500-2,500. The U.S. participation in the joint venture will be up to 50% depending on what Mexican law will allow.

Five teams will be formed to explore specific aspects of the concept. Human resources, finance/accounting, legal, marketing, and manufacturing/administration issues are to be investigated.

Pretravel Preparation

Find out as much as you can before you leave Denver because you and your team will be going to Mexico to try to close a deal, and you will be there only a few days. Therefore, the more information you can accumulate before departure the better; it will make your time in Mexico much more productive. *In addition to the information suggested below, you should also find out as much as you can about your industry in Mexico (air pollution; filtration; small manufacturing).*

Information for the most current year is essential. Trend data may be valuable (i.e., how do the data compare with a year ago? Five years ago?). Locate data on the following:

Economic indicators

inflation rate
 GNP per capita
 trade balance
 foreign debt
 unemployment rate
 income distribution
 foreign investment levels
 economic growth rate

Demographic variables

population
 population growth rate
 population dispersion

How do these figures relate to the problem at hand?

Appendix C

Issues for Functional Teams

Each team is responsible for information gathering, which will assist you in assessing the viability of the project from your team's functional perspective. Collect as much relevant information before departure as possible, and develop an action plan for gathering additional information from on-site sources in Mexico City. The following questions, issues, and challenges represent suggested starting points for each team.

A. Human Resources Team

1. Which unions, if any, would represent various employee groups?
2. What are some of the employer responsibilities regarding minimum wages, employment taxes, retirement contributions, unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, and mandated fringe benefits?
3. What are "going wage rates" for (a) a middle manager in a manufacturing facility, (b) a secretary, and (c) a skilled laborer?
4. What cultural practices are relevant to management practice and policy (e.g., normal working hours; incentive versus hourly versus salary wage structures, etc.)?

B. Finance/Accounting Team

1. Obtain a loan application and a checking account application for accounts in a Mexican bank.
2. Where would you obtain the most favorable exchange rates and most favorable loan rates? What are current rates for each of these?
3. How does one go about establishing a line of credit?
4. What forms of insurance will you need to operate your business? What sources of insurance exist? What is the approximate cost of insurance?
5. What restrictions are there on the repatriation of profits?

C. Marketing Team

1. What are some specific sources and costs for the printing of bilingual business cards and stationery?
2. What is the cost of 1 min of advertising on television, and what is the name of a reliable advertising agency for your type of product?
3. What is the cost of a half-page ad in the local newspaper(s)? What can you find out about lead times, use of color, use of pictures, and quantity discounts?
4. Is there a next-day delivery service (such as the U.S. Federal Express) available in Mexico City?

D. Legal Team

1. What is the cost of legal assistance (rates per hr, for example), and what elements of the undertaking are attorneys required to perform?

2. What forms of business might be permitted (joint venture, partnership, incorporation, etc.)?
3. How does one get a business registered?
4. How does one register a trademark and what are the costs?

E. Manufacturing/Administration Team

1. How do you open a post office box and what does it cost?
2. How and where do you obtain telephone service, and what are the relevant costs?
3. What are reliable sources for sheet plastic and copper wire?
4. What are the monthly leasing costs of a 10,000 sq. ft., one-story building for manufacturing?

Appendix D Getting Settled Simulation

In the process of moving to Mexico City and trying to establish a business there, you find you need many things that either you left at home or that wore out after you arrived or that would simply make your life easier. Traveling in pairs or other appropriate groupings, your team must locate a source for and actually purchase the following items:

1. Wall light switch
2. Box of breakfast cereal
3. Ribbon for an IBM Selectric typewriter
4. Spark plug for any American car
5. Can of tennis balls
6. Man's business tie (to wear with a suit)
7. Package of *molé* spices
8. Note cards suitable for sending thank you notes
9. Airmail postage stamp
10. Calendar showing legal holidays for employees
11. Business card from an English/Spanish interpreter
12. Pack of chocolate tablets for making Mexican hot chocolate
13. Apple from marketplace
14. Pack of plain tortillas
15. Map of Cancun
16. Breakfast roll
17. 3.5-in. floppy disk
18. Bottle of Imodium A-D
19. Container of black shoe polish

Appendix E

An Example of Educational and Operational Trade-Offs

The argument in favor of the group's staying in a moderate hotel that catered to a local clientele centered on the cultural experience such a hotel would offer. Program participants would be able to interact more closely with local Mexican travelers, experience the accommodations and restaurants offered to local travelers, and perhaps be located in a more typically Mexican part of town. (The Hotel Krystal Rosa was less than two blocks from a Denny's, McDonalds, and other American chain restaurants.) Some faculty members suggested that the experience offered by the local-style hotel would be more conducive to firsthand exposure to local culture. Proponents of this design suggested that people can stay in international style hotels in the United States and elsewhere. To do so on a trip designed to maximize cross-cultural experience squanders an opportunity.

On the other hand, an equally compelling argument could be made in favor of the international-style hotel. For many participants, this was their first journey abroad. It made sense to provide them with a familiar home base from which to fan out and explore a new and unfamiliar country and culture. The international style hotel was also more likely to represent the level of accommodation most students could expect to encounter when they themselves were sent overseas on behalf of their companies. Providing the relative comfort of an upscale Mexican hotel, such as the Krystal Rosa, could increase students' future comfort level with and openness to international travel. Finally, the resources at the Krystal Rosa enhanced some of the teams' efforts to collect data. An interview with the hotel's human resource manager yielded important insight into the challenges of managing people in the context of the Mexican legal and economic environment. Other groups had members of the hotel staff help them identify businesses and services outside the hotel that served as useful informants. Because many members of the staff spoke English, it was easy for students to enlist their aid in a variety of organizational and information-gathering tasks.

Whereas some would argue that assistance from the hotel made the data collection process artificial, it is possible to argue that in a realistic scenario, any business traveler arriving in a new city should utilize all available resources. Certainly the English-speaking staff of the hotel represents one of those resources. Other program design features can be implemented to ensure that students do not become overly dependent on the hotel staff.

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