

The Global Perspectives Inventory – Initial Summary of Findings from the St. Lawrence Survey Administrations Spring 2010 through Spring 2011

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St. Lawrence University participated in the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI) between Spring 2010 and Spring 2011. The GPI is an online survey instrument offered through Larry Braskamp, Global Perspective Institute Inc. at <https://gpi.central.edu>.

The inventory is designed to measure a person's global perspective along three dimensions of global learning and development (comprising a total of six scales):

- A cognitive dimension (How do I know?) – Knowing and Knowledge scales
- An intrapersonal dimension (Who am I?) – Identity and Affect scales
- An interpersonal dimension (How do I relate to others?) – Responsibility and Interaction scales

Our survey administration included two components:

1. *Administration of the GPI as a pre- and post-study abroad instrument¹:*

Students were asked to complete the GPI as part of their pre-study abroad orientation (November – for Spring Study-Aboard and April for Fall-Study-Aboard.) The semester after students returned from Study Abroad, they were again surveyed through the Office of Institutional Research. The survey timing was similar (Nov and April) in order to measure the impact of study abroad after students had about 5 months to gain perspective. In total, 669 surveys were collected from 546 unduplicated students.²

2. *Administration of the GPI as part of the Spring 2011 Senior Survey:*

In addition, all seniors of the Class of 2011 were surveyed with the GPI as a supplemental question of the Senior Survey. A total of 485 students completed the GPI as seniors, including 254 students who had studied abroad and 231 students who had not.

Due to IRB concerns, all data (except for Spring 2010) were collected and analyzed locally. Our data was not sent to the Global Perspectives Institute (since we allowed missing replies). Scales

¹ Study Abroad in this analysis refers to semester-or year-long programs abroad only and includes international as well as our domestic off-campus programs.

² Since approx. 8% of students who study off campus study at more than one location, some cleanup was done during Summer 2011, assuring that pre-abroad replies only included students who had not studied abroad prior and that post-abroad replies were only reflections of students' first study-abroad experience as well.

were computed using the 2011-2012 Norms Guide and confirming methodology with Larry Braskamp.

In total, our dataset includes over 1,000 records of valid data, including records of 62 matching pre-and post test comparisons and 97 post-test - graduating senior comparisons. The data allow for both longitudinal and cross-sectional analyses. They also provide a first glimpse at differences by academic major/division and differences by program abroad.

Findings

1. Students who study abroad generally report increases in global perspective when returning from their semester abroad. Graduating seniors with study abroad experiences score significantly higher on all six global perspective scales than seniors without study abroad experiences do.

Differences in seniors can be caused by three factors:

- a. A self-selection process of who studies abroad or not (e.g. students who study abroad may already have a greater global perspective)
- b. A maturity or ‘general college’ effect: The global perspective increases regardless of study abroad experience and is impacted by courses, peer interaction and general maturity of students over time. In our dataset, the college effect is a maximum of 1 year (from 1st spr 2010 survey administration to 2nd time of survey completion in spr 2011).
- c. The study abroad experience, itself.

Here are some very approximate, estimated calculations of impacts based on our data:

Table 1. Net Gains of Global Perspective Due to Self Selection, College Effect and Study Abroad. SLU Data Spring 2010-Spring 2011

	Study Abroad	Self-Selection	College Effect
Knowing	0.1	0.3	--
Knowledge	0.2	--	0.2
Identity	--	--	--
Affect	0.2	0.2	--
Responsibility	--	0.2	--
Interaction	0.2	0.1	-0.1

(Data represents change in mean; data based on a 5-point scale)

2. GENDER: Regression analysis suggested that male students have significantly lower global perspective scores than women for cognitive knowing, interpersonal affect and intrapersonal social responsibility. However, there are no significant gender differences for cognitive knowledge, intrapersonal identity and interpersonal interaction.

3. MAJORS: For graduating seniors, the global perspectives vary by study abroad status, but they don't appear to differ much by the academic division of their major – yet students in interdisciplinary studies who studied abroad (specifically global-studies majors) have above-average global perspectives scores.
4. STUDY-ABROAD PROGRAMS: Conscious of sample size, data was disaggregated for eleven programs abroad. Some caution is warranted, due to small sample sizes. However, France is standing out as an exemplary program with large gains and high senior scores. Surprising are some of the low social interaction scores after re-entry, in particular for students who enrolled in the New Zealand, London, Denmark, Italy, Austria and DC programs.

Table 2. Rating of SLU Study Abroad Programs relative to GPI Score performance

Above Average	Average	Below Average
France	Spain	Australia
Nairobi	Italy	London
x	Thailand	New Zealand
x	Austria	x
x	Denmark	x
x	DC	x

5. BENCHMARKING: The 2011-12 Guide provides national “norms” data by class year and institutional type. The appended summary data report includes the GPI norm for seniors.

Table 3. GPI Scores of SLU Seniors Relative to the 2011-2012 GPI Norm of Seniors

Above GPI Norm	At Par	Lower than GPI Norm
Knowledge	Knowing Affect	Identity Social responsibility Social interaction

The low social interaction score is consistent with other research findings that SLU students have fewer voluntary interactions across difference than expected. It is also consistent with findings that SLU students learn through the curriculum a lot about diversity and cultures (thus the above-gpi norms score for knowledge.) However, other data such as the HERI Senior survey would suggest that SLU students have higher levels of social responsibility than these data suggest.

Conclusions

The GPI is a survey instrument that closely aligns with our University's learning goals for diversity and global citizenship development. Findings have lead us to ask two questions: 1)

should we change the program to better accomplish this goal and 2) should all programs automatically be allowed to fulfill our new diversity requirement?