

# Setting the Cornerstone

The Inception and  
Future of the Canadian  
Learning Abroad Alumni  
Community

# Une fondation solide

Création et futur de la  
Communauté  
canadienne d'anciens  
étudiants à l'étranger



uOttawa



Canadian Bureau for  
International Education  
Bureau canadien de  
l'éducation internationale



**SAINT MARY'S**  
UNIVERSITY SINCE 1802

One University. One World. Yours.

## Presenters

### **Sylvie Albert**

- Gestionnaire et conseillère principale (international), Université d'Ottawa  
Ottawa, Ontario

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- Project Manager, Saint Mary's University  
Halifax, Nova Scotia

### **Lisa Deacon**

- Content Manager, CBIE  
Ottawa, Ontario

# Overview

- The Importance of Reflection After Learning Abroad
- Links between Alumni Intercultural Competence, Citizenship and Employability
- Links with Innovation and Links with External Stakeholders (Employers, parents etc)
- What is CLAAC?
- Lessons Learned and Next Steps

# Importance of Reflection After Learning Abroad

- Learning is a process
- Experience alone does not equal personal development
- Reflection helps students:
  - Gain a critical analysis of their experience
  - Enhance the experience
- Increase the efficacy of the program
- Learning potential of re-entry is maximized when the students recognize the transferability of skills

# Internationalisation and Student Learning Outcomes (Jones, 2016)

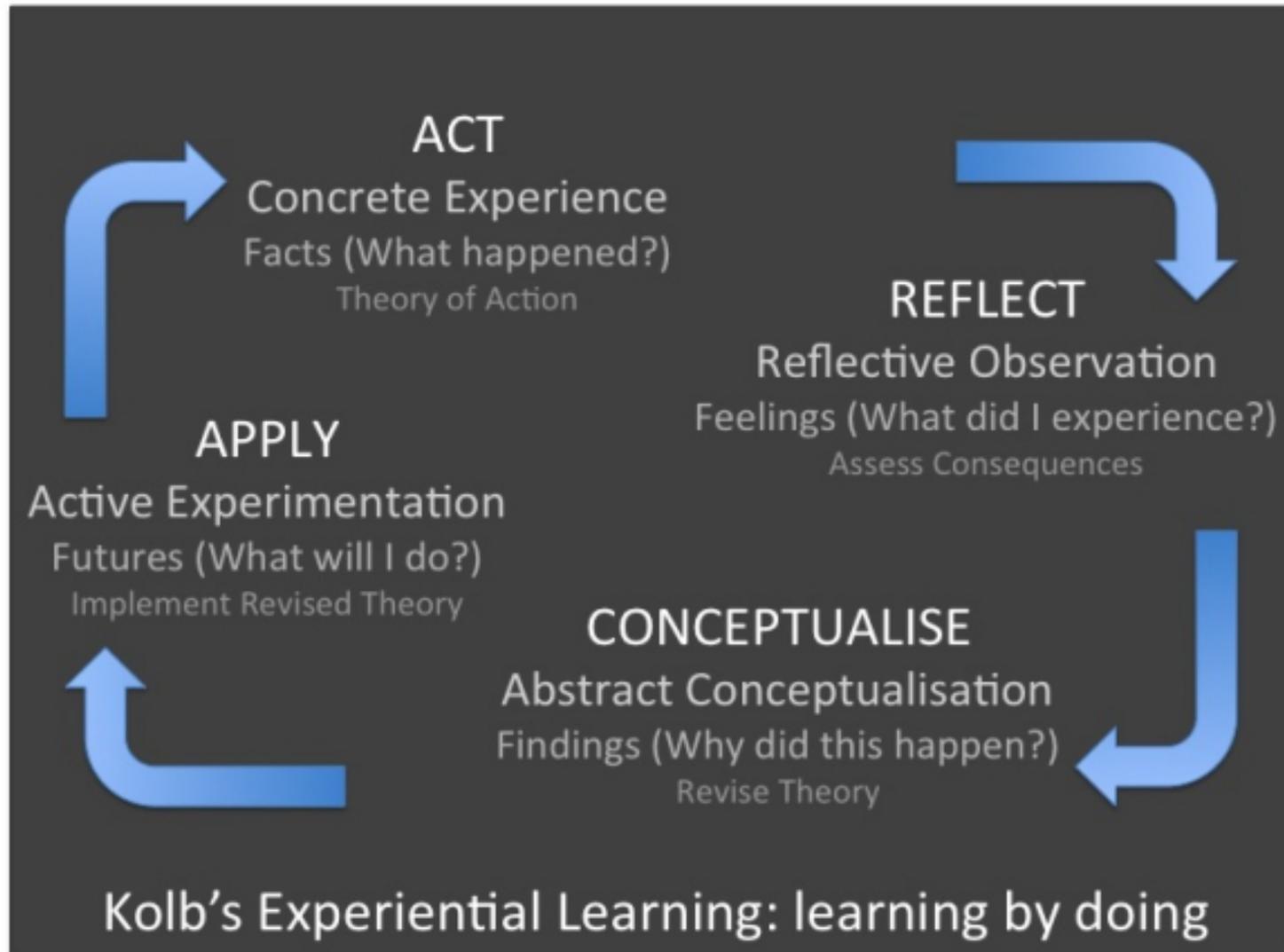
## Intercultural Competence Skills

- Confidence
- Willingness to take risks
- Patience,
- Sensitivity
- Flexibility and open-mindedness
- Humility and respect
- Creativity
- Managing Expectations

## Employability Skills

- Team work and team leadership
- Organisational skills and project management
- Problem-solving
- Networking
- Mediation skills and conflict resolution
- Decision making (and communicating decisions which may not be popular)
- Interpersonal skills

# What Students lose by not being engaged by their Institution Upon Return



## Discussion

*Does your institution have programming for students to reflect upon their experience once they have returned?*

# What are institutions losing by not engaging students upon return?

- *Augmentation de la concurrence des entreprises: Selon plus de 80 % des employeurs qui embauchent sur la base de l'expérience internationale et interculturelle.*
  - *Sondage auprès des employeurs de Léger Marketing pour Universités Canada, 2014*
- *Le Canada risque d'être devancé par les puissances économiques dont la Chine, l'Inde et le Brésil, à moins que les jeunes Canadiens n'adoptent une perspective internationale.*
  - *Sondage mené par le Bureau canadien de l'éducation internationale, Un monde à apprendre : Résultats et potentiel du Canada en matière d'éducation internationale 2014.*

# What are institutions losing by not engaging students upon return?

- « Keep investing in career [counselling], keep investing in digital [connections] and make sure this is not just an alumni experience but a Day 1 student experience, » says CarringtonCrisp, co-founder Andrew Crisp [...] on the importance of student satisfaction to alumni loyalty. In an online survey of 2,800 respondents from 89 countries, 82 percent of those identified themselves as highly engaged alumni report they are contributing in some way to their school's success ».
  - Jennifer Lewington, Special to the Globe and Mail, May 11, 2017.

# Discussion

*Have you tapped into learning abroad alumni to learn how they experienced the programming and support from your institution? What have you learned?*



Alida Campbell · **Group Owner**  
Project Manager at Saint Mary's University

... 5mo

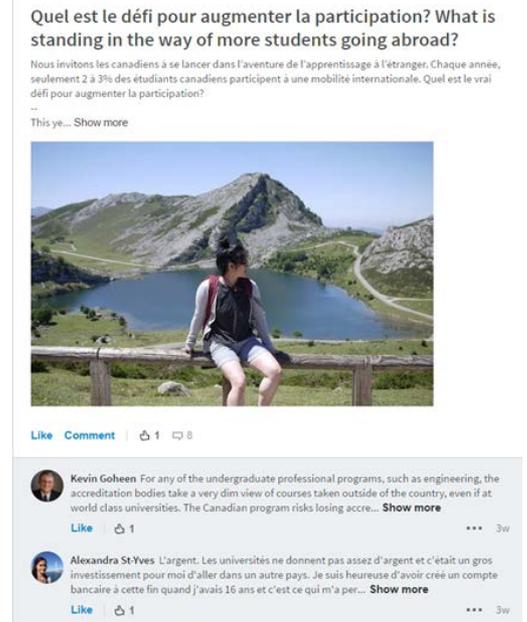
## Support from Institutions

Hey everyone, Bonjour à tous! Coming home from a Learning Abroad experience can sometimes be a bit difficult, and it's hard to know who will be there to support you. So our question this week is, What sort of supports do you wish your institution had upon your re-entry to Canada? Or, did they already have a great support program in place that helped you? Let us know! [Show less](#)

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# What is the Canadian Learning Abroad Alumni Community?

- A space for Alumni of Learning Abroad
- Momentum from national Learning Beyond Borders initiatives
- It is meant to facilitate Alumni to Alumni discussions and support
- Terms of reference, mission, mandate
- Launch date: April 3rd, 2017



# Analysis of activity and interests

- Preliminary discourse analysis on how alumni are engaging on the group
- April to September: 25 posts with 223 engagements.
- The group is now 400 members strong.
- Posts were mostly by the organizing team but member posting is on the rise.
- Alumni have a strong appetite for giving advice to students, sharing their story of where they went and what they did, and describing the skills that they developed while abroad. We have an opportunity to leverage this activity to reproduce positive storytelling and advising around learning abroad.

# Lessons Learned and next steps

- Members were least interested in contests and content that didn't ask them to engage (sharing videos, articles, etc.)
- Programming challenges

**Beth Alaksa** · Manager  
Coordinator International Mobility Programs at York University

... 1mo

### Outcomes!

We never know where a journey will take us. Today's question is about how your international experience has impacted your career.

What is your current employment status and in what field? Do you use your learning abroad experience in your current posi... [Show more](#)

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**Vivyn Zhou** Studying abroad made me really appreciate leaving home and exploring other countries or cities on my own. After coming back to Vancouver, I realized I wanted to try living in another place for a few months again so I started applying for i... [Show more](#)

[Like](#) | 2 | ... 1mo

**Jacquelyn Hoult** I work in communications. I learned how to speak french when I went to school in Switzerland during K-12. It gave me a love of the language and I went on to study french at university. I use it every day in my current position.

[Like](#) | 2 | ... 1mo

**Ian Smith** In 1979 I received a Commonwealth Scholarship to do a PhD in Cambridge UK. I would not be doing what I do now if I hadn't made the jump and left my comfort zone of friends and family in Canada. Life gives you what you put into it.

[Unlike](#) | You + 1 | ... 4w

**Deborah Thien** I received a Commonwealth Scholarship to do my PhD at Edinburgh, UK, 2001-2005. Currently, I direct a undergraduate Honors program and my own study abroad experiences have shaped my advocacy for a global honors track for my students.

[Unlike](#) | You + 1 | ... 4w

**Sherilyn Acorn-LeClair** I went to NZ as part of my co-operative education program during my undergrad. It was the stepping stone for my eagerness to explore the world. I am now a Coordinator of International Partnerships and Study Abroad.

[Unlike](#) | You + 1 | ... 4w

# How can you help CLAAC?

- Invite your Learning Abroad Alumni to join
- Post or comment on the feed
- Ask us about CLAAC!
- Engage your Alumni on campus

# Discussion

## ■ What next for CLAAC?



**Beth Alaksa** · **Manager**

Coordinator International Mobility Programs at York University

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**CLAAC is celebrating its 6 months anniversary and we want to hear from members of the Community.**

One of the reasons CLAAC was started was to be a resource for Study Abroad Alumni. Members could offer advice to each other. What's your current career planning question? Where do you want to go in your career? Both literally and figuratively. Let us know in the comments section.

**Unlike** **Comment** | You + 3 3

# Your feedback is important to us!

Please take a moment to submit the evaluation for this session.

Evaluations are found on CBIE's Conference app.

**Thank you!**