

Investigating Products, Practices, Perspectives in a Simulated Moving Abroad Project

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Abstract

This classroom action research explores discipline-based inquiry and learner assessment of intercultural competence in a simulated “Moving Abroad” project that is part of an undergraduate English-language survey class required of all world language majors and minors at a large public university in the Southeast. The project tasks students to adapt the ACFTL Three Ps framework (Products, Practices, and Perspectives) through simulated intercultural encounters. The study seeks to assess the ways in which the project generates evidence of learners’ development of intercultural competence and how participants perceive the project as meaningful. Data in the form of 124 student documents were collected and analyzed over four semesters in a mixed-methods approach. Preliminary findings describe the project’s merits, acknowledge the study’s limitations, and make recommendations for future practice and research.

Key words: Culture Standards; Products, Practices, Perspectives; Intercultural Competence

Introduction

This contribution is based on classroom-based inquiry and course design in an English-language survey course called World Languages and Cultures (WLC) that is required for all degree-seeking students with a major in the department of Foreign Languages at a large Southeastern university. The study is part of an ongoing focus on ways in which discipline-based inquiry may foster learners’ development of intercultural competence. It builds on findings from previous research that investigated the integration of intercultural competence as a dimension of language classes offered in a department of Foreign Languages at the levels of undergraduate courses and programs (Smith, 2014; Smith, 2015; Smith & Bley, 2012; Terantino et. al., 2013).

Specifically, this study investigates a Moving Abroad project in the WLC course which, as the mid-term assessment, forms an integral component of the course requirements. This project entails student-centered research in which learners explore a foreign culture in intentionally structured ways (see Appendix A: Moving Abroad Project) and then present their findings in written documentation and oral presentations. Guidelines for the Moving Abroad project are derived from a *Standards*-based approach to exploring culture informed by the *World-Readiness Cultures Standards* (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015). One of the key concepts in the

Standards-based approach to culture is the exploration of cultural products, practices, and perspectives in relation with one another. For the purpose of the Moving Abroad project, the 3 Ps are conceptualized as co-relational tenets in a framework, referenced henceforth as the 3 Ps framework (see Figure 1).

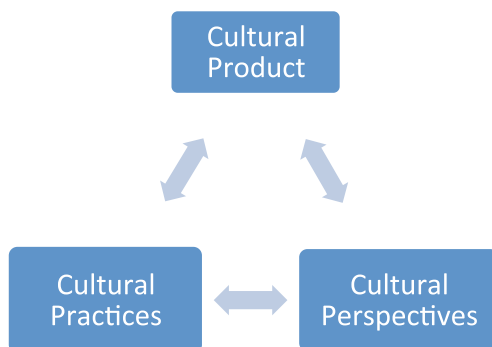


Figure 1. The 3 Ps Framework

In the Moving Abroad project, students adopt the 3 Ps framework to research a foreign language and culture of their choice in a simulation exercise that prompts them to imagine a potential visit, study abroad, or internship sojourn in another country.

The goal of this study is to understand the ways in which the 3Ps framework can be purposefully adopted in a structured and replicable approach to exploring cultures, i.e. via the *integrated* 3 Ps approach. The integrated 3 Ps approach is defined here as the methodological blueprint for exploring specific sets of 3 Ps, i.e. cultural products and their co-relational practices and perspectives. A set of 3 Ps is hence a discrete cultural product, the way in which it is generally used in the culture, and the prevalent beliefs or values that undergird the product and its uses (see Figure 2: The Integrated 3 Ps Approach to Culture: Example The *smart* Car Set of 3 Ps). By examining multiple sets of 3 Ps, learners can gain a deeper understanding of the culture they study.

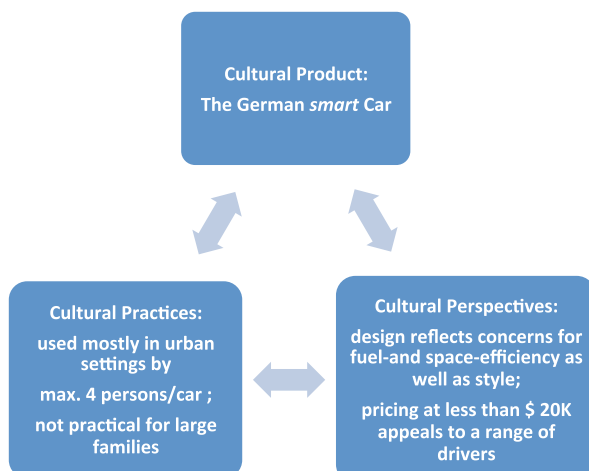


Figure 2. The Integrated 3 Ps Approach to culture: Example The *smart* car Set of 3 Ps

Literature Review

The 3 Ps Framework: Prior Studies

Over the past three decades, a growing body of scholarship in the field of Foreign Language Education has discussed the importance of developing learners' intercultural competence via the study of cultures and cultural comparisons (Dai & Chen, 2014; Jackson, 2014; Jandt, 2013; Neuliep, 2015). A number of collaborative publications generated by foreign language scholars and educators in the U.S. have affirmed the value of studying cultures via the 3 Ps and intercultural comparisons with the national *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* (ACTFL, 1996, 1999, 2006), currently called the *World-Readiness Standards for Language Learning* (The National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015).

The goal of the *Cultures Standards* is defined as "Interact with cultural competence and understanding" and distinguishes among "Relating Cultural Practices to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the practices and perspectives of the cultures studied" and "Relating Cultural Products to Perspectives: Learners use the language to investigate, explain, and reflect on the relationship between the products and perspectives of the cultures studied." (National Standards Collaborative Board, 2015, p.1).

The extent to which the 3 Ps framework is effectively integrated into classroom practice has been reviewed. While widespread and increasing awareness of *Standards*-based principles is documented (Phillips & Abbott, 2011), the need for more work with respect to integrating the *Standards* in post-secondary curricula is also reported (Dhonau, Cheatham, Lytle & McAlpine, 2011). One study of adopting the 3 Ps framework in French college-level culture courses illustrates curricular challenges of integrating the 3Ps framework as an integrated and triangulated concept (Cheatham, 2006). Recent studies find that practitioners tend to prioritize the teaching of cultural products and practices (Cutshall, 2012; Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014). Hoyt and Garrett-Rucks (2014) document a ratio of approx. 4:1 incidences for products vs. perspectives, and a ratio of 2:1 for products vs. practices being instructed in lesson plans by students in Teaching Methods courses. To resolve these discrepancies and to ensure the attainment of student learning outcomes in terms of intercultural competence, explicit protocols for assignments and assessments requiring the integration of all three tenets of the 3 Ps framework are recommended (Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014; Marrs, 2014; Maxey, 2014).

The 3 Ps Framework and Intercultural Competence

Conceptually, the 3 Ps framework (see Figure 1) aligns with core components discussed in intercultural scholarship. By comparing and contrasting products and practices and the perspectives behind them, learners identify relevant intercultural and intracultural similarities and differences. Since the 1980s, a growing body of scholarship has generated models and inventories of intercultural competence. Despite noteworthy distinctions among developmental and co-orientational models (e.g. Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), all the models describe the dynamic and interactional processes of negotiating meaning and behaviors effectively and appropriately in intercultural encounters (Bennett, 2009; Bennett, 2013; Deardorff, 2009;

Fantini, 1999). A learner's intercultural competence is said to develop through experience and changes in perceptions as the individual engages with difference (Bennett, 1993). Knowledge, skills, and attitudes complement and reinforce one another around the nexus of critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997; Fantini, 1999). This nexus, termed in Byram's model *savoir s'engager*, connotes the ability to identify and compare-contrast, for instance, the perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures (Byram, Gribkova, & Starkey, 2002). Learners can practice intercultural comparisons drawing from the 3 Ps framework.

Recent scholarship views the 3 Ps framework specifically in connection with the attainment of student learning outcomes related to intercultural competence (Gautier, 2009; Hoyt & Garrett-Rucks, 2014; Marrs, 2014; Maxey, 2014). On the one hand, the 3 Ps framework is assessed as purposeful in teaching and discussing cultural diversity (as both intercultural and intracultural differences and similarities in products, practices, and perspectives). Further, learners develop sociolinguistic practices as they engage in sociolinguistic comparisons (Marrs, 2014). On the other hand, the 3 Ps framework is viewed in connection with Edward T. Hall's metaphor of culture as an iceberg with its distinctions between visible and invisible culture (Cutshall, 2012). Cultural products and practices tend to be part of visible culture as they are more readily identifiable than cultural perspectives or beliefs, values, and worldviews, the domain of invisible culture. Critics of the Iceberg Concept note its potential reification of ontological, positivistic views of culture and failure to accommodate the study of culture as interactional processes (Bennett, 2013), a critique that can also be levied against a 3 Ps approach.

The 3 Ps Framework and Assessing Intercultural Competence

Among others, Deardorff (2009, 2011) and Fantini (2014a) have documented the inherent challenges in developing assignments and co-relational assessment tools in the field of intercultural competence. Interculturalists advocate that assessment of intercultural communicative competence (ICC) should build on agreed-upon definitions of ICC, that assessment is an articulated, ongoing and multi-dimensional process, and that the combination of assessment types, modes, and strategies be properly aligned with SMART (specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic, time-delineated) learning objectives (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2014a).

Assessment, done well, generates multiple indicators that "balance our subjective impressions" (Fantini, 2014a, p. 404) and follows the principle of data triangulation. Triangulation is a technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. Triangulation strategies used in the Humanities and Social Sciences (Rothbauer, 2008), derived from methods used in geometry and land surveying, have been adopted in Anthropology since the 1970s (Geertz, 1973; Holloway, 1997). Verification of information takes multiple data sources into account in order to explain the complexity of a phenomenon while adhering to a balanced approach (Altrichter et al.; 2008; Cohen & Manion, 2000; O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003). In research, triangulation leads to clearer, more accurate data. Similarly, in the integrated 3 Ps approach to language and culture teaching, the confluence of cultural information stemming from the learner's examination of sets of three Ps (the cultural product and co-relational practices and perspectives) generates a thick

description of the culture's richness, thereby fostering a deeper understanding of intercultural differences and similarities.

Rationale for the Study

This study seeks to understand the extent to which the 3 Ps framework can be integrated effectively in undergraduate coursework. In the survey course World Languages and Cultures (WLC), students progress in an intentional sequence toward the Moving Abroad project that challenges them to synthesize their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. One of the course textbooks, *Among Us* (Lustig & Koester, 2006), introduces learners to intercultural concepts (e.g. cultural identity, dominant value orientations in cultures, developmental stages in intercultural competence, continua of social categorizing, strategies for navigating intercultural encounters) via personal narratives and theoretical essays. Students practice articulation of these concepts in short classroom presentations, role play simulations, and reflective writing assignments. The second textbook, *Book of Peoples of the World* (Davis & Harrison, 2006), features 222 distinct ethnic groups in encyclopedic entries that are regionally organized and interspersed with short, critical essays exploring transnational phenomena in intercultural comparison (e.g. language loss, residential housing, music, written and oral traditions). By the time WLC students are assigned the seminal Moving Abroad project, they have already explored and practiced adaptation and transfer of abstract concepts to real-world social issues and to their own experiential contexts.

The Moving Abroad project asks students to select an ethnic group described in *Book of Peoples* (Davis & Harrison, 2006) in preparation for a simulated sojourn in the culture. In small groups or alone, learners research and submit written documentation of their findings and present on their chosen ethnic group in class. In this project, students introduce the culture they studied with two integrated sets of 3 Ps: one set must focus on the local language as the cultural product and introduce co-relational practices and perspectives; the other set of 3 Ps must illuminate a relevant cultural product of their choosing and explain in the integrated 3 Ps approach its significance within the culture and within an intercultural encounter. Thus, students identify relevant intercultural similarities and differences. Lastly, they are asked to list strategies and resources on which they can draw in order to navigate intercultural encounters successfully (see Appendix A: Moving Abroad Project).

To prepare for the project, learners review introductory materials on the 3 Ps framework and intercultural comparisons. The scaffolding materials include examples that offer a methodological blueprint for successful completion of the project. For instance, in the introduction to the 3 Ps framework, information about the Andean Aymara ethnic group, a transnational minority population in Bolivia, Peru, Chile, and Argentina, is shared. The lecture models the integrated 3 Ps approach with two sets of Ps. For example, the instructional materials introduce the Aymara language as a cultural product, a complex and sophisticated system of symbols. Next, the lecture summarizes facts on co-relational practices; e.g., data on language speaker demographics and instruction and/or use of the language. It then introduces cultural perspectives on the Aymara language; e.g., data on recognition of the Aymara language as an official language in the respective nation states, regulatory policies on acquisition/use of Aymara in comparison to other minority and dominant

languages. A second set of 3 Ps is shared to introduce learners to a cultural product that may be considered a significant staple for the Aymara; e.g., *chicha*, a popular, locally produced, fermented beverage. The cultural practices connected to *chicha* include, for instance, the widespread production and consumption of the drink in alcoholic and non-alcoholic varieties in the Andes. The co-relational cultural perspectives range from appreciation for the readily available, inexpensive beverage to usage of the word “chicha” as an adjective connoting something generally cheap, homegrown, or crude. In this example, learners become familiar with an ubiquitous target culture product, and they begin to understand the practices and perspectives toward this product of the Aymara. Arguably, the integrated 3 Ps approach can elucidate any cultural product in connection with historical and contemporary practices and perspectives to demonstrate the culture’s richness.

For the subsequent project segment of reflection and application, i.e. the intercultural comparison piece, the introductory information in the model lesson on the Aymara people identifies similarities and differences between and among cultures (i.e. between the target culture of the Aymara and the dominant culture of one of the surrounding nation states, and/or the learners’ home cultures). Intercultural comparisons may focus on sets of 3 Ps that foreground a cultural product such a “high status” drink for Andean populations, or on US American equivalents of *chicha*, for example “moonshine” or “Coca Cola” as examples of (once) locally produced beverages. Having identified correlative products, learners consider cultural practices and perspectives connected with these products. Alternatively, comparisons might focus on cultural perceptions of alcohol consumption and on co-relational products and practices that may be more or less valued in different cultures. The module rounds out by referencing selected intercultural concepts studied in *Among Us* (e.g., communication styles, gender role expectations, residential housing conventions), developing the students’ knowledge base of culture-general and culture-specific phenomena.

The identified concepts are presented within the context of serving a potential visitor who wants to navigate intercultural encounters effectively and appropriately, fostering in learners the ability to imagine themselves in a different cultural setting, engaging effectively and appropriately in intercultural encounters. The information shared is designed to pique each learner’s interest in the integrated 3 Ps approach and to bring the 3 Ps to life for the students. It is further intended to help students recognize and identify sets of 3 Ps in other cultures and make intercultural comparisons, developing learners’ knowledge, skills, and attitudes toward exploring other cultures in relation to their own.

Since one goal of the Moving Abroad project is to generate evidence of a learner’s ability to make intercultural comparisons and to identify similarities and differences between cultures, the project challenges learners at different stages of developing intercultural competence. As Hammer (2012) asserts, learners at the developmental stage of minimization are inclined to foreground commonalities among diverse populations; they benefit from the task of identifying intercultural differences. By contrast, students at the stages of polarization tend to focus on differences and are likely to be challenged when asked to determine intercultural similarities (Hammer, 2012). In completing the project, learners ideally personalize strategies and resources for navigating intercultural encounters. The students’ written docu-

mentation of their research and their oral presentations in class converge to produce a plurivocal and multi-perspectival commentary on the integrated 3 Ps approach to understanding culture and evidencing learners' culture-specific and culture-general knowledge as well as providing evidence of their level of intercultural competence. Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to generate answers to the two following research questions with a mixed-methods approach (Creswell, 2013):

Research Question 1. In what ways does the Moving Abroad project, drawing from the 3 Ps framework, generate evidence of undergraduate learners' intercultural competence, and

Research Question 2. How do undergraduate learners perceive the Moving Abroad project, drawing from the 3 Ps framework, as meaningful?

Methods

Participants

Across four semesters, fall 2013 (n=25), spring 2014 (n=14), fall 2014 (n=25), and spring 2015 (n=19), a total of 83 students enrolled in an undergraduate English-language survey class required of all world language majors at a large public university in the Southeast completed the aforementioned Moving Abroad project as a course requirement counting as a mid-term assessment of attained learning outcomes. Of the 83 students who completed the Moving Abroad project, 41 students submitted feedback on the end-semester course and instructor evaluations during the four terms under study, and a total of 33 comments addressed the Moving Abroad project either directly or implicitly in the evaluations.

Research Instrument

The study instrument in response to the research questions is a seven-item check-sheet created by the researcher (Appendix B), used as a rubric to evaluate the students' written documentation of the research conducted as part of the Moving Abroad project. It should be noted that the term "documentation" in the check-sheet refers to written evidence included in either the summary narrative or the Power-Point slides which students submit prior to delivering the oral presentation in class. The seven items in the study instrument capture salient project components. Items 1-6 on the check-sheet assess evidence that corresponds to the first research question, and Item 7 assesses evidence in response to the second research question. With respect to Research Question 1, Items 1-4 address students' documentation of the 3 Ps approach; Items 5-6 focus on learners' documentation of intercultural similarities and differences and strategies for navigating intercultural encounters.

Specifically, Item 1 on the check-sheet notes if the students addressed complete sets of 3Ps in their simulated intercultural encounter for the Moving Abroad project. The criterion of "set of significant other 3 Ps" in Item 2 evaluates the extent to which the documentation features a set of 3 Ps that is distinct from the required focus on the local language and reflects a culture-specific and, within the context of the project's simulated intercultural encounter, a culturally relevant set of 3 Ps. For example, a significant set of 3 Ps might be focused on food, greeting rituals, or residential housing. Next, the descriptor "followed the integrated 3 Ps approach" in Item 3 assesses the student's documented ability to showcase a cultural product and

its co-relational practices and perspectives (as opposed to a learner's documentation of unrelated 3 Ps).

For the next three items, Items 4-6 on the checklist (Appendix B), the wording "appropriate cultural content" evaluates the quality of the research and content information provided in the student's documentation, i.e. information that constitutes likely new knowledge to undergraduates enrolled in a 2000-level course, offering details on the 3 Ps that go beyond a superficial "tacos and tapas" level. Item 5, assessing the quality of students' research and content information on intercultural differences and similarities, looks specifically at the appropriateness of the cultural context for the 3 Ps set in intercultural comparison and contrast with the learners' own culture. Item 6 assesses learners' documentation of the ways in which they would navigate cultural differences based on the newly developed knowledge and resources.

Item 7 on the checklist corresponds with the second research question. It addresses the extent to which students include affective statements about the project in the documentation. The data generated in response to Item 7 prompted the researcher to evaluate additionally the students' anonymous end-term evaluations for evidence of affective statements over the study period.

Data Collection and Analysis

The study sample consists of two data sets generated in four WLC course sections over four semesters, i.e. fall term 2013 ($n=25$), spring 2014 ($n=14$), fall 2014 ($n=25$), and spring 2015 ($n=19$). Data Set #1 consists of 83 student submissions of the Moving Abroad project (project summary or visual medium) during the study period. Data Set # 1 was analyzed for evidence in response to both research questions. Data Set #2 is made up of 41 anonymous student submissions of end-semester course and instructor evaluations during the four terms under study, of which a total of 33 (or 80%) yielded evidence of affective statements. Data set # 2 was analyzed for additional evidence (in addition to Item 7 in the check-sheet of data set # 1) in relation to the second research question about student perspectives toward the project. Both data sets ($n=124$) were coded and sorted using a line-by-line coding technique (Charmaz, 2006). Incidences of evidence and non-evidence in correspondence with the seven items of the check-sheet were tracked: a total of 83 submissions (i.e. Data Set #1) in correspondence with Items 1-7; a total of 41 submissions (i.e. Data Set #2) in correspondence with Item 7 of which 33 submissions (or 80%) were analyzed for evidence in support of Research Question 2.

Content analysis of Data Sets # 1 and # 2 generated four recurring thematic strands among the affective statements as identified by the researcher based on the saliency of features in the comments. Statements include that the project was appreciated because it (1) met a latent personal or academic interest; or (2) fostered a new interest in the region of the world or the ethnic group's language and culture; or (3) allowed independence/choice in the exploration of the topic; or (4) accommodated completion of the assignment via a newly learned approach. Although Data Set #1 offered insights into students' attitudes about the project, the findings can only form a springboard for further investigation. Given that the affective comments were voluntarily shared in the graded project, the data were not considered reliable and a second data set was analyzed in order to generate more reliable results.

Data Set #2, consisting of students' anonymous end-term evaluations for the four terms, was analyzed for additional evidence of learners' affective statements about the project. Among the total of 41 end-term evaluations submitted over the study period (reflective of an average response rate of 46 % among course participants), only a subset of the learners' open-ended comments, i.e. 33 responses included affective statements.

In the qualitative analyses, each incident of evidence and non-evidence was given a full-number value. If documentation in Data Set #1 was co-authored by multiple learners, evidence was logged in accordance with the number of co-authors as if each learner had made a submission. Data were recorded and summarized for each term in both numerics and percentages. Percent averages were rounded up or down to the next full single-digit (i.e. 17.4 % \rightarrow 17 % ; 17.5% \rightarrow 18%). Data analysis was completed in fall 2015 by the researcher and instructor of record in the course sections.

It should be noted that the generated graph (Figure 1) showcases only data of Data Set # 1 and visualizes findings that correspond to students' full, partial or absent documentation of the project as captured via the check-sheet (see below). Items 1, 3-4 and 6-7 of the check-sheet items contain three options, and Item 2 and Item 5 specify four options. In all items, option a for each answer denotes that the documentation meets the project expectations fully (i.e. includes two sets of 3 Ps (1.a); one set of a FL 3 Ps and one set of another 3 Ps (2.a); evidences student's ability to follow the integrated 3 Ps approach for two sets of 3 Ps (3.a); contains appropriate content for two sets of 3 Ps (4.a); communicates appropriate content on intercultural differences and similarities (5.a); articulates how s/he would navigate cultural differences, drawing on textbook references (6.a); and includes a positive affective statement about the project (7.a). In Items 1-6, option b corresponds to partial evidence, and in Item 7, option b serves to identify negative statements on the project. In all items, options d and c (in the absence of an option d) indicate the absence of any evidence. An illustrative example of partial evidence registered for Item 3 (student followed the integrated approach for only one of the two sets of 3 Ps) is that a student submitted documentation on one set of 3 Ps that follows the integrated approach, but the documentation for the second set of 3 Ps introduces the three tenets without clarifying how they are connected (e.g. the documentation introduces the cultural product of a car, the practice of celebrating main events in life by dancing, and the perspective of gift giving for special occasions).

Thus, the graph's category "Evidence" visualizes the data that corresponds to complete, accurate, or expected documentation (the "a" items in the check-sheet). On average, 70% of the documentation fits the category of "Evidence" for the items in the graph. The category "Partial evidence" (19% of the submissions) represents the check-sheet item that captures documentation not fully in compliance with the guidelines or anticipated results. Lastly, an average of 11% of the student work does not show any evidence for Items 1-7 (category "None"). The graph also captures that Items 5 and 6, focused on student documentation of intercultural issues, contain the most disparate sets of evidence (see below). Item 7, capturing affective statements in the documentation, is further discussed below.

Within the context of this study, evidence of a student's documented ability to (1) identify co-relational tenets of the 3 Ps framework by following the integrated

3 Ps approach (Items 1-4) and (2) describe strategies for navigating intercultural encounters despite verifiable differences and similarities among cultures (Items 5-6) are considered indicators of a learner's intercultural competence as discussed above and as reflected in recent scholarship.

Findings

General Summary

Results from data collected via the check-sheet point to identifiable patterns for each term and suggest trends for the study period (please see Appendix C: Summary Table: Moving Abroad Project Data). The majority of the student documentation generated evidence of learners' ability to complete the project according to the requirements. If one of the indicators of an individual's intercultural competence is indeed his/her ability to (1) identify co-relational tenets of the 3 Ps framework by following the integrated 3 Ps approach and (2) describe strategies for navigating intercultural encounters, the student documentation may offer a commentary on a learner's competence. Figure 3 summarizes the results as percent averages over the study period.

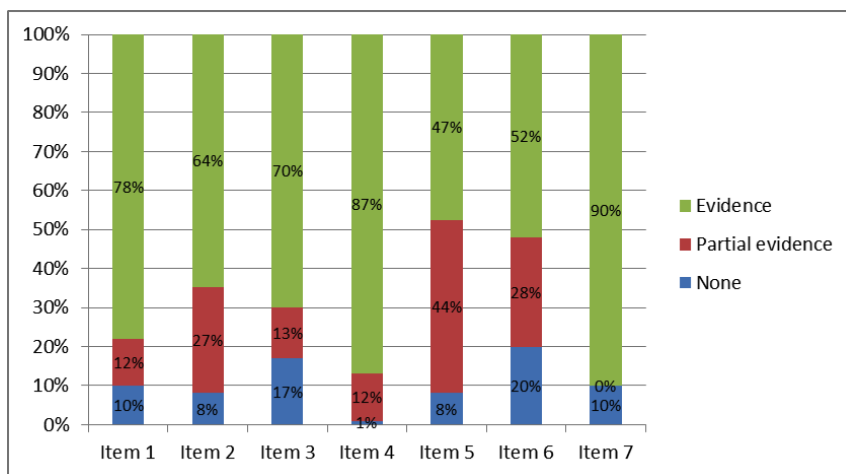


Figure 3: Evidence averages over study period from Items 1-7 in check-sheet

Summary Findings in Response to Research Question 1

In response to Research Question 1 (In what ways does the Moving Abroad project, drawing from the 3 Ps framework, generate direct evidence of undergraduate learners' intercultural competence?), the summative results for Items 1 - 6 of the check-sheet suggest that the majority of project submissions (80% over the study period) evidence learners' completion of the tasks in alignment with the general purpose of the project. However, a subset of the student sample did not complete the assignment fully or according to all requirements, i.e. not evidencing the ability to (1) capture and define the co-relational tenets within sets of the 3 Ps framework and (2) identify intercultural differences and similarities and strategies for navigating intercultural encounters that are drawn from coursework.

More specifically, data for Items 1-4 (capturing students' demonstrated ability to document two sets of 3 Ps) and Items 5-6 (learners' documentation of appropriate content information on intercultural encounters) point to notable findings. Findings include that, on average, a total of 62 (or 75%) of the learners completed the project's required focus on the 3 Ps successfully over the study period (Items 1.a.-4.a.). More specifically, a total of 72 (or 87%) of the students submitted evidence of appropriate cultural content for two sets of 3 Ps over the study period (Item 4.a); 78% of the learners (65 students) submitted two sets of 3 Ps in the documentation (Item 1.a), 70% of the sample (58 participants) documented that they followed the integrated 3 Ps approach (Item 3.a.); and 64% of the projects (53 submissions) included one set of FL 3 Ps and one set of significant other 3 Ps (Item 2.a.). Within the context of this study, direct evidence of students' submissions documenting the 3 Ps approach is considered one of the indicators of the students' developing intercultural competence.

With respect to the project's required focus on intercultural encounters (Items 5-6), an average of 85% of the learners (a total of 71 students) completed this portion of the assignment successfully over the study period. The results for Item 5 indicate that 89% of the students (74 individuals) documented appropriate content for intercultural differences (5.a and 5.b) and hence met at least minimally the expectations for this segment of the project. However, only 47% of the student sample (39 learners) completed the assignment according to the guidelines, documenting appropriate cultural content on differences and similarities between and among cultures (Item 5.a). More than half of the submissions (a total of 44 or 53%) lacked evidence in one or more categories (Items 5.b-d). More specifically, 42% of the student work (a total of 35 projects) evidenced appropriate content on only cultural differences (Item 5.b), and two submissions (2 %) focused exclusively on cultural similarities (Item 5.c); 8% (or a total of seven projects) addressed neither differences nor similarities (Item 5.d).

Summative results for learners' submission of appropriate content on how to navigate intercultural differences (Items 6.a and 6.b) reveal that a total of 66 (or 80 %) of the projects met expectations for this portion of the assignment. Results for Item 6.a (appropriate content with textbook references) show that 52% of the students (42 learners) met the requirement. However, more than a quarter of the submissions lacked documentation of textbook references (28% or 23 projects for Item 6.b), and one fifth of the projects failed to address the challenge of navigating cultural differences altogether (17 submissions or 20 % for Item 6.c). As stated above, direct evidence of students' submissions documenting appropriate cultural information is considered one of the indicators of students' intercultural competence within the context of this study.

The study's limitations, however, mandate caution in discussing the results as generalizable findings. For example, data for fall 2013 vary greatly from those of subsequent semesters, and data for spring and fall 2014 suggest overall stronger student performance than in other semesters (see Appendix D: Summary Graphs per Semesters and Items).

In fall 2013, data for five of the seven items identify lower levels of student achievement, and results for Items 2 and 3 deviate the most. They document that a mere 12% of the students submitted one set of FL 3 Ps and one set of significant other 3 Ps (Item 2.a), and that only 44% of the submissions followed the integrated 3

Ps approach (Item 3.a). By contrast, during the next three semesters of the study, an average of 84 % and 79% of the students met the deliverables in Items 2.a and 3.a respectively. In comparison to the other terms, the fall 2013 data document also lower attainment of project deliverables for Item 1.a (submission of two sets of 3 Ps), Item 4.a (appropriate cultural content in documentation for 2 sets of 3 Ps), and Item 5.a (appropriate cultural content in documentation for cultural differences and similarities between the target culture and their own/another culture). On the other hand, fall 2013 data present stronger achievements for Item 6.a (appropriate cultural content in documentation for how s/he would navigate cultural differences, drawing on textbook references) than during any other term. In comparison, results for spring and fall 2014, Items 1 – 4 indicate higher achievement of deliverables than during the other two terms of the study period.

Several factors may have contributed to the divergent results (see discussion of study limitations below).

Summary Findings in Response to Research Question 2

Research Question 2 (How do undergraduate learners perceive the Moving Abroad project, drawing from the 3 Ps framework, as meaningful?), addressed in Item 7 of the check- sheet, was answered via data gleaned from affective responses found in the students' project submissions (Data Set #1), and in students' end-term evaluations (Data Set # 2) for the study period.

Analysis of Data Set # 1 indicates that a total of 75 students (or 90% of the learners) included positive affective statements on the project and the experience of completing the assignment in the project documentation (Item 7.a). None of the submissions had negative statements (Item 7.b), and 8 projects (10%) were void of any affective commentary (Item 7.c). The content analysis of Data Sets # 1 and # 2 generated affective statements in four thematic strands. Comments indicated that the project was appreciated because it (1) met a latent personal or academic interest; or (2) fostered a new interest in the region of the world or the ethnic group's language and culture; or (3) allowed independence/choice in the exploration of the topic; or (4) accommodated completion of the assignment via a newly learned approach. Although Data Set #1 offered insights into students' attitudes about the project, they were not further mined as findings were deemed to only form a springboard for further investigation. Given that the affective comments were voluntarily shared in the graded project, the data were not considered reliable, and a second data set was analyzed in order to generate more reliable results.

Data Set #2, a sub-set of students' anonymous end-term evaluations for the four terms, was analyzed for additional evidence of learners' affective statements about the project. A total of 33 text responses (80 % of the total 41 evaluations) focused on the course content and addressed the project either directly or implicitly: 19 comments (or 58%) were entirely positive; 7 comments (21%) contained both appreciation and criticism; and 6 answers (18%) were entirely negative.

Only one negative response (3%) addressed the Moving Abroad project directly. A student commented: "For the projects (especially the moving abroad project), the instructions and examples are not the same are (sic) your expectations. There are quite a few of us that were disappointed in our project grades because we did

it exactly the way the rubric said, but when we talked to you about it, you wanted something completely different... please make it clearer on what you want in the future.” The comment addresses perceived inconsistencies between the project’s scaffolding materials and the instructor’s expectations. The sentiment of disappointment with the grade is amplified by the reference to “quite a few” peers who felt similarly. Indeed, a total of five comments (or 15% of the open-ended remarks) note the need for additional clarity in the project assignments.

It should be noted that seven positive comments (21 %) remark on the projects in the class and address either implicitly or explicitly the Moving Abroad project. These responses balance the critiques, exceeding the negative statements in both length and detail. One positive affective statement addresses specifically the congruency between instructor expectations and scaffolding materials, appreciating it as supportive during the project completion phase. Six responses appreciate the academic and professional skills development in global contexts. Four responses note that course assignments prompted them to think independently, engaging them thoughtfully in new and different ways. One learner evaluates the coursework as “fun.”

Four remarks mention explicitly study, travel, and moving abroad as goals for the future. Four commentaries connect the perceived merits of the project to the development of intercultural competence. One comment reads: “I have learned about multicultural communication, also about the product, value and perspective of different cultures of the world. I usually sell my books when the semester is done, but the book “AmongUS”... is part of my book case. I love the curriculum.” Another asserts: “Great overview of different cultures and skills to learn for encountering them.” One student shares: “I learned how to be interculturally competent and I also learned ways to prepare myself before traveling to a different country.” A response that addresses the project implicitly reads: “It gives good information on various cultures and view points, while also having examples and reasons as to why it is so important to be learning the content. There is a good focus on how being culturally knowledgeable and sensitive can help in different areas of life.”

The data subset of anonymous end-term comments, identifiable as either entirely or partially about the Moving Abroad project, enhances evidence gleaned from student documentation via Item 7 in the study instrument only minimally. Perhaps the most compelling insight gleaned from analysis of both data sets consists in the finding that numerous students indeed appreciate the Moving Abroad project as meaningfully connected with personal interests and professional development, discipline-based inquiry, development of intercultural competence, and development of culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Further investigation is necessary in order to generate more robust data. While preliminary results suggest that students’ positive affective remarks about the value of the Moving Abroad project dominate, analysis of additional data sets is indicated (e.g. a survey of or focus group interviews with former course participants to generate data focused on the Moving Abroad project; inclusion of data from courses taught by other faculty, etc.).

Study Limitations, Pedagogical Implications, and Conclusions

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations to the Moving Abroad project. Firstly, we know the study of any ethnic group's language and culture is limited due to the fact that the project is part of an English-language survey course (Fantini, 2014b). Even though project guidelines specify expectations, the project accommodates learners who complete the assignment at diverse levels of excellence: Students' research and presentations can showcase non-contextualized, superficial, and stereotypical sets of 3 Ps, reifying assumptions about the homogeneity of an ethnic group's culture and focusing on cultural difference. In such instances, instructor guidance and intervention are recommended. Clearly, more research is necessary to evaluate the project's strengths and weaknesses.

Several limitations of this study must be acknowledged. As noted above, instructor revisions in course assignments and project guidelines may explain variations in results per semester and over the study period. For example, numerous factors may have contributed to the divergent results for fall 2013. Student preparation and guidance by the instructor may have impacted the project submissions: in fall 2013, the Moving Abroad project assignment did not specify that one of the two sets of 3 Ps focus on the language of the ethnic group nor did the introductory information explain the integrated 3 Ps approach. In the following semesters, the project guidelines and introductory information provided these details on expected deliverables, and the majority of the submissions met the project requirements. In comparison, results for spring and fall 2014, Items 1 – 4 indicate higher achievement of deliverables than during the other two terms of the study period. During both 2014 semesters, students had the option of completing an additional, graded assignment on the 3 Ps approach. On average, 66% of the learners took advantage of this option, gaining additional exposure to, feedback on, and guidance for completing the Moving Abroad project. Since project guidelines and introductory materials did not change during the last three semesters of the study period, it must be concluded that additional variables (e.g. instructor's emphasis on teaching practice, supplemental learning opportunities, etc.) in addition to inherent limitations in this small-scale study (e.g., potential researcher error and bias, small sample size, etc.) impact the data and results.

Further, the study design, the study instrument, and the data analyses were developed and utilized or performed by the researcher and instructor of record and were not evaluated by an external reviewer to ensure inter-rater reliability or screened for researcher bias and error. Although it is not surprising that data may be diversely interpreted, further fine tuning of the instrument and the research design is necessary to guard against researcher subjectivity. Conversely, participant bias may factor in the qualitative data captured in Data Set #1 for Item 7. Students' affective statements may reflect learner sentiments that the instructor might expect, appreciate, or reward positive statements about the project. While data on students' evaluative comments were triangulated with open-ended comments in end-term evaluations, all data were self-reported by a self-selecting subset of students and are not generalizable for all learners in the sample.

Finally, the study was completed with a small sample size in a limited setting. Larger samples and study facilitation in other settings are necessary to investigate the extent to which the 3 Ps approach may be integrated in other courses and disciplines.

Pedagogical Implications

In advocating the 3 Ps approach as a viable and meritorious template beyond the setting of the WLC course and this study, the researcher points to examples from other courses in a department of Foreign Languages. As documented elsewhere, the integrated 3 Ps approach can be effectively included in German Studies target-language courses spanning novice to intermediate levels (Fantini, 2014b; Smith, 2015, Smith & Bley, 2012).

At the researcher's institution, German Studies course content is mostly facilitated in the target language. Students are guided in an adaptation of the 3 Ps approach in courses at all levels. Using the target language according to their linguistic and cultural skill levels, students analyze and ultimately create German language texts (ads, poems, prose narratives, or films) by identifying sets of 3 Ps, and by making intercultural comparisons. In an upper-level German Studies film course, for example, students are guided in a sequenced progression from critically viewing films to analyzing and eventually producing a short feature themselves. Learners identify and reflect upon, for instance, the role of props, characters, dialog, setting, plot, and conflict following the 3 Ps approach. Next, they create scenes, scripts, and ultimately a film around cultural products, practices, and perspectives in transnational adaptations.

Merely anecdotal evidence suggests at this point that the 3 Ps approach in project-based assignments may serve as a successful strategy beyond the setting of the WLC course. The German Studies examples illustrate how the 3 Ps approach may work in other foreign language classrooms. In view of current scholarship on the 3 Ps framework and the goal of developing learners' intercultural competence, researchers may want to explore how integration of the 3 Ps may serve instructors who teach students at diverse proficiency and competence levels. The range of opportunities for practice and research may lead the curious instructor to adopt the 3 Ps approach for their use.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to examine the extent to which two research questions might be answered in a mixed method approach via evidence gleaned from students' submissions. The 3 Ps approach, as an integrated strategy enhanced through intercultural comparisons, formed the focus, and the graded assignment of the Moving Abroad project in the WLC course served as the unit of analysis. Results from data analysis of students' project submissions and end-term course evaluations over four semesters suggest insights and potential directions with respect to discipline-based intercultural inquiry grounded in the 3 Ps framework but do not yield generalizable findings due to the study's limitations.

The divergent results documented per semester invite further research utilizing larger samples and a methodology that controls for the study's limitations. Further, the project guidelines and supporting instruction can be improved upon to ensure consistency. Additionally, anonymous student surveys targeting the assessment of

pre- and post-perceptions of the merits of the Moving Abroad project will generate more reliable data than the instruments used in this study. However, even the preliminary findings summarized above point to the merits of tracking study data over time in order to level variances (among instructors, semesters, delivery formats, etc.) and to evaluate sum averages during any study period as indicative of potential trends and directions instead of specific and generalizable findings.

Preliminary data analysis, hence, suggests the following conclusions: That the assignment may serve the purpose of assessing learners' demonstrated attainment of learning outcomes related to the 3 Ps approach and to simulated intercultural encounters; that the majority of students' submissions in the sample shows evidence of intercultural competence as defined for the purpose of this study (i.e. as the learner's documented ability to (1) identify co-relational tenets of the 3 Ps framework by following the integrated 3 Ps approach and (2) describe strategies for navigating intercultural encounters); and that a self-selecting student sample articulates appreciation of the project as meaningful in terms of their personal, academic, and professional interests.

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Appendix A

Moving Abroad Project Assignment

World Languages and Cultures Moving Abroad Presentation (25%) (250 pts.)

This assignment is in conjunction with the *Book of Peoples of the World* (BoP) textbook, which we will study once we have finished *Among Us* (AUS). Imagine that you are moving to a foreign country in a region we are studying (note: we will not "cover" Europe or the Americas). Make a presentation that

- illustrates that you have identified specific cultural products, practices, and perspectives of that country and
- shows how you will navigate that country's customs and cultures.

Available dates: See sign-up sheet in D2L Content folder

General Guidelines:

1. Review the PowerPoint presentation in the D2L Content Folder with the title "Moving Project" – be sure you understand the terms and requirements.
2. Written Summary (130 pts.): Summarize your findings and research in a succinctly written text (not more than 500 words, excluding bibliography):

- a. An introduction that states your interest and reasons for focusing on this topic/country/ethnic group (10 pts.)
- b. A thoughtfully selected focus on at least two sets of “3 Ps”: one of the sets of 3 Ps must be on one of the local languages (other than English). Conduct a thoughtful discussion of the specific cultural product in relation to practices and perspectives, drawing on BoP, AUS, and/or additional sources (60 pts.)
- c. An analytical and reflective discussion of significant cultural differences and similarities compared to the US, with a thoughtful reflection on how you’ll navigate these differences, drawing on AUS concepts (50 pts.)
- d. An accurately formatted list of references for well-documented sources (10 pts.).

Please post on D2L in the discussion folder (not more than 500 words, excluding bibliography) as blog text or as attachment.

3. Visual Medium (70 pts.): Drawing on the written summary, design a visual medium (poster, or PowerPoint, Prezi, etc.). Please
 - a. limit yourself to under ten slides total (incl. one slide for bibliographical references) (10 pts.),
 - b. include approx. 2 relevant images per slide (+ captions underneath the image, and explanatory text from the summary + references in notes section) (15 pts.),
 - c. limit slide text to approx. 36 words per slide (remember the “golden rule” 6x6 (i.e. six words per line, and max. six lines per slide) (15 pts.)
 - d. list key concepts (most substantive, relevant) in bulleted entries or in salient quotes (w/ references) (20 pts.)
 - e. document all references clearly and accurately so that a fact-finder may access your sources (10 pts.).

Please post on D2L in the discussion folder (w/ your summary text) as attachment.

4. In-class Presentation (50 pts.): Drawing on the written summary and the visual medium, deliver a well-rehearsed presentation of max. 5 minutes (buttressed by the visual medium). Be sure to include the following content points:
 - a. Why did you choose this specific destination, and what would you like to do there (visit, study, work, conduct research) (10 pts.)?
 - b. What specific cultural products, practices, and perspectives can you expect to encounter and which cultural differences (compared to your home culture(s)) can you anticipate (15 pts.)?
 - c. On which cultural concepts, communicated in AUS and in BoP will you draw in order to adapt (15 pts.)?
 - d. Draw a poignant conclusion or ask a thought-provoking question at the end (10 pts.).
5. D2L-Submission: Submit all documentation in the Discussion folder entitled “Moving Abroad” prior to the day of your presentation, clearly indicating the BoP title of the (sub)chapter w/ page #.
6. Assessment rubric:

Criterion	100 % done Completed in an excellent way, satisfying highest expectations for form and content	90% - 70% Approaching expectations: Completed in good to acceptable manner, satisfying most to minimal expectations in form and content, i.e. not done completely or with expected depth, breadth, or scope	60%-0% Not meeting expectations: Completed in non-acceptable manner, not satisfying minimal expectations in form and content, or not done at all
Summary (max 500 words + bibl.) w/ all requirements (130 pts.)			
Visual (max. 10 slides), w/ all requirements (70 pts.)			
Presentation (max. 5 mins.) w/ all requirements (50 pts.)			
Done on time			
Subtractions			
Total points			

Appendix B

The Seven-Item Check-Sheet

1. Student submitted in documentation
 - a. 2 sets of 3 Ps
 - b. 1 set of 3Ps
 - c. none
2. Student submitted in documentation
 - a. 1 set of FL 3 Ps and 1 set of significant other 3 Ps
 - b. 1 set of FL 3 Ps
 - c. 1 set of significant other 3 Ps
 - d. none
3. Student followed the integrated 3 Ps approach in documentation for
 - a. 2 sets of 3 Ps
 - b. 1 set of 3 Ps
 - c. none
4. Student submitted appropriate cultural content in documentation for
 - a. 2 sets of 3 Ps
 - b. 1 set of 3 Ps
 - c. none
5. Student submitted appropriate cultural content in documentation for between the target culture and their own/another culture
 - a. cultural differences and cultural similarities
 - b. cultural differences
 - c. cultural similarities
 - d. none
6. Student submitted appropriate cultural content in documentation for

- a. how s/he would navigate cultural differences, drawing on textbook references
 - b. how s/he would navigate cultural differences
 - c. none
7. Student stated an affective response to the assignment in documentation as
 - a. positive
 - b. negative
 - c. did not state an affective response

Appendix C

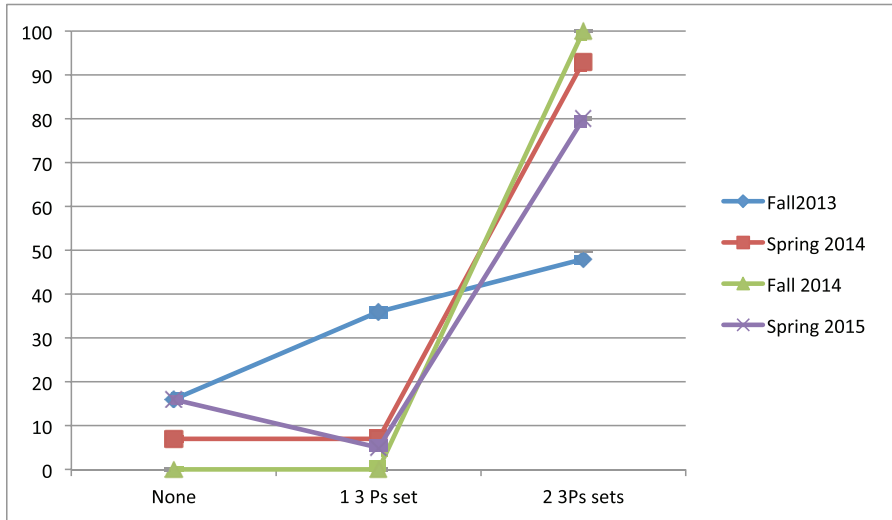
Summary Table: Moving Abroad Project Data Based on Check-Sheet

	Fall 2013 Total N=25	Fall 2013 %	Spring 2014 Total N=14	Spring 2014 %	Fall 2014 Total N=25	Fall 2014 %	Spring 2015 Total N=19	Spring 2015 %	All terms Total N=83	All terms %
1.a	12	48	13	93	25	100	15	80	65	78
1.b	9	36	0	0	0	0	1	5	10	12
1.c	4	16	1	7	0	0	3	16	8	10
2.a	3	12	11	79	25	100	14	74	53	64
2.b	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	5	2	2
2.c	18	72	2	14	0	0	1	5	21	25
2.d	3	12	1	7	0	0	3	16	7	8
3.a	11	44	11	79	24	96	12	63	58	70
3.b	6	24	1	7	1	4	3	16	11	13
3.c	8	32	2	14	0	0	4	21	14	17
4.a	16	64	13	93	24	96	19	100	72	87
4.b	8	32	1	7	1	4	0	0	10	12
4.c	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
5.a	5	20	6	43	16	64	12	63	39	47
5.b	18	72	5	36	8	32	4	21	35	42
5.c	1	4	0	0	1	4	0	0	2	2
5.d	1	4	3	21	0	0	3	16	7	8
6.a	15	60	8	57	12	48	8	42	43	52
6.b	6	24	0	0	10	40	7	37	23	28
6.c	4	16	6	43	3	12	4	21	17	20
7.a	23	92	10	71	23	92	19	100	75	90
7.b	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7.c	2	8	4	29	2	8	0	0	8	10

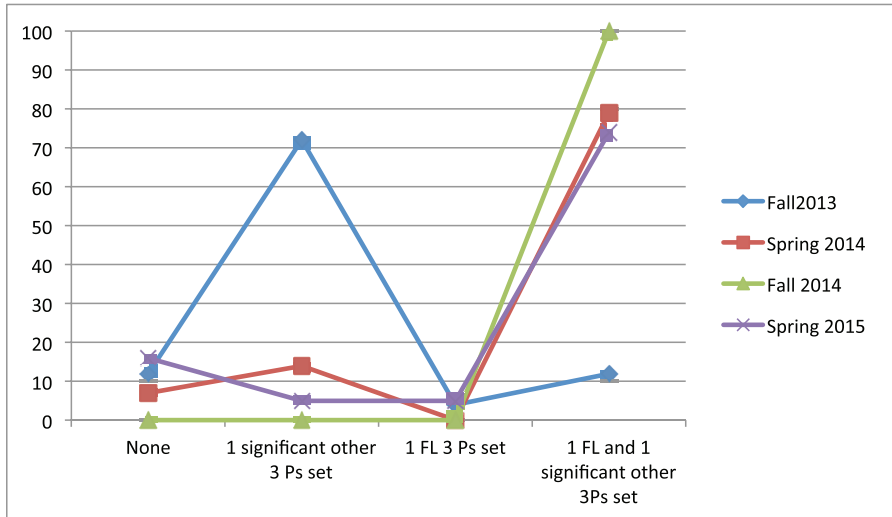
Appendix D

Summary Graphs per Semesters and Items

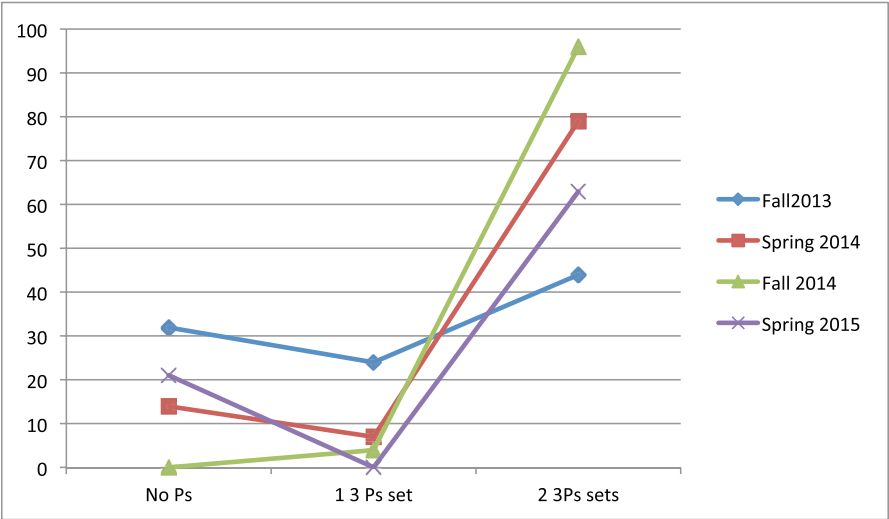
Graph 1: Evidence of Sets of 3 Ps (Item 1 in Check-Sheet)



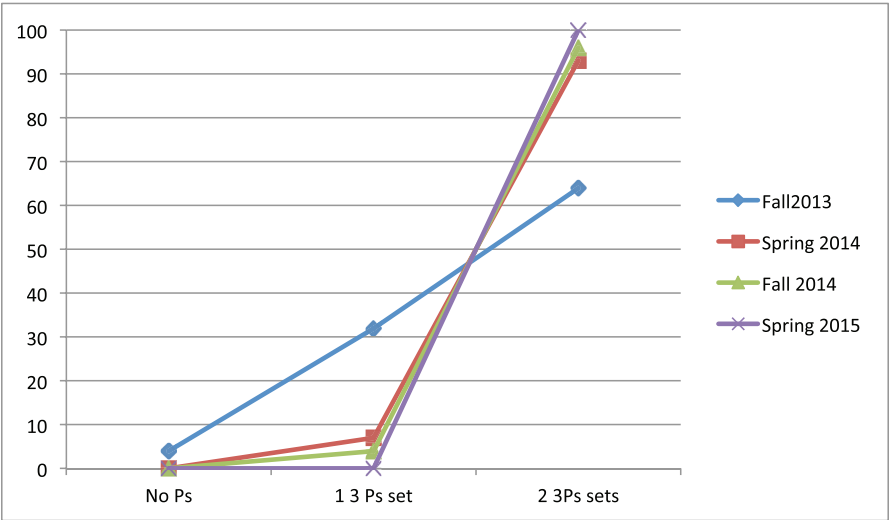
Graph 2: Evidence of Specified Sets of 3 Ps (Item 2 in Check-Sheet)



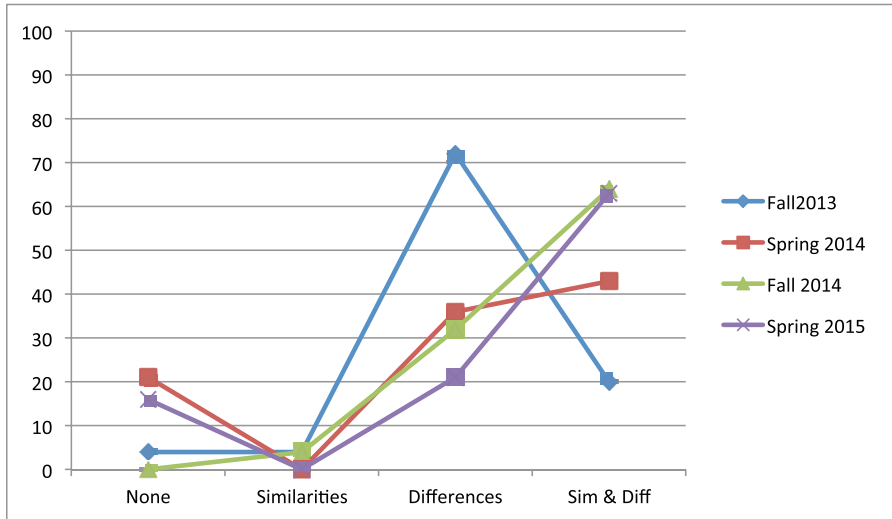
Graph 3: Evidence of the Integrated 3 Ps Approach (Item 3 in Check-Sheet)



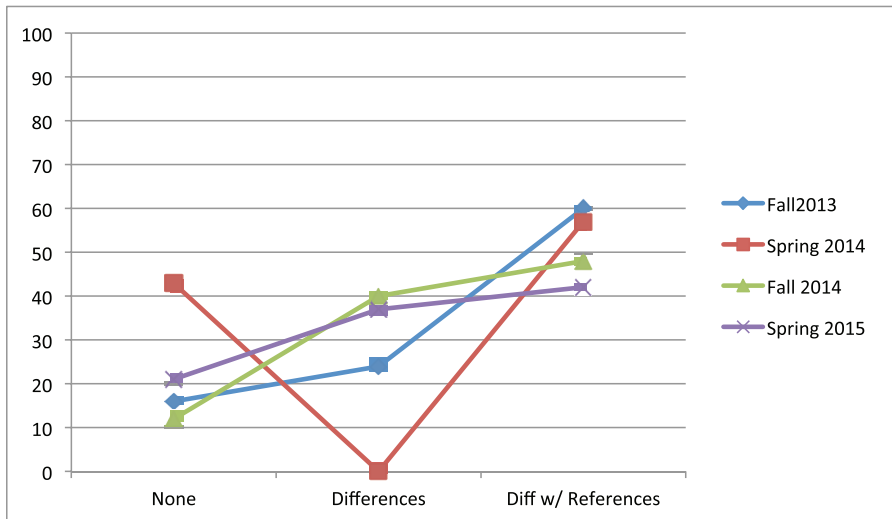
Graph 4: Evidence of Appropriate Cultural Content in 3 Ps (Item 4 in Check-Sheet)



Graph 5: Evidence of Cultural Differences and Similarities (Item 5 in Check-Sheet)



Graph 6: Evidence of How Student Navigates Cultural Differences (Item 6 in Check-Sheet)



Graph 7: Evidence of Affective Statements (Item 7 in Check-Sheet)

