

Study Abroad & Career Competencies: Conveying the value to employers

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CIBER

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Conference*

Kansas City, MO



**MICHIGAN STATE
UNIVERSITY**

Objectives:

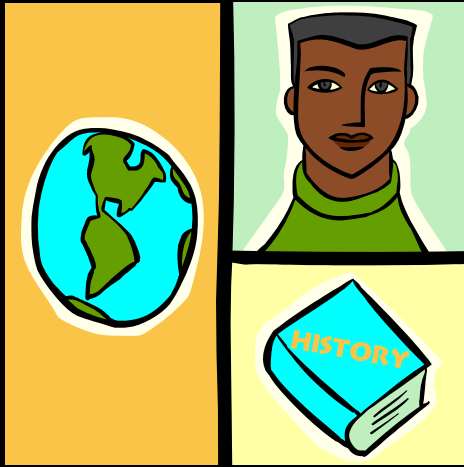


- Gain insight into a mutually beneficial collaboration between study abroad and career services
- Realize some of the dynamics of student reflection in understanding their learning and building a portfolio of transferable skills
- Contextualize the demand for student reflection in light of the learning imperatives for the knowledge based economy



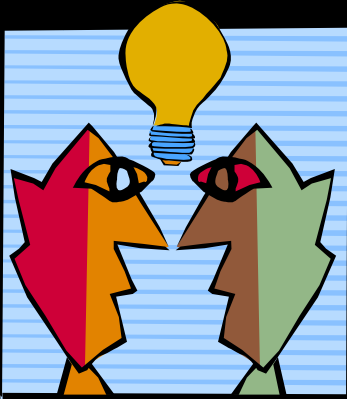
Outline for today's session

- **A little context: *purpose & history of our collaboration***
- **Underlying research: *what employers say***
- **A little theory: *grounding our work***
- **Student unpacking demonstrations: *what really happens***
- **Outlook: *careers academic and professional***
- **Questions and conversation**



A bit of background

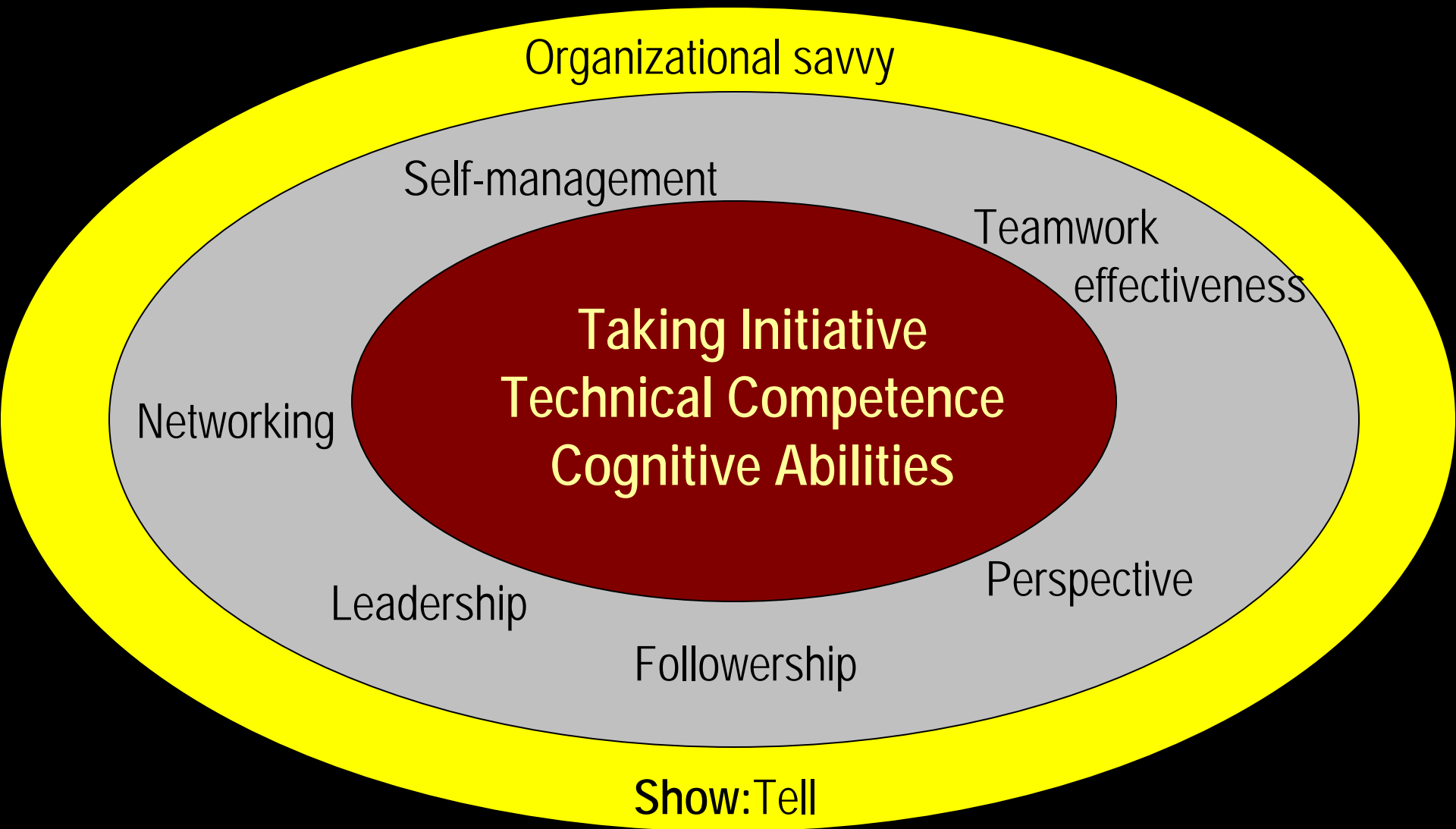
- How it began
- Current workshop focus
- UT & MSU CIBER web resource collaboration
- Future applications
 - International education/orientation
 - Assist advisers in focusing on the total student



**A synergy of mission
between
study abroad & career services**

A high quality program must take seriously the responsibility of helping students to make the connection between their experiences and their future academic and professional careers.

SKILLS: THE BOTTOM LINE



The 12 Essentials

- Developing professional competencies
- Communicating effectively
- Solving problems
- Balancing work and life
- Embracing change
- Working effectively in a team
- Working in a diverse environment
- Managing time and priorities
- Navigating across boundaries
- Acquiring knowledge
- Thinking critically
- Performing with integrity

Skill Usage: The Funnel

1st Job
11-18 months

Apply Learning
Writing Effectively
Teamwork
Grasp Realities of Workplace
Acquire Learning
Demonstrating Initiative

2nd job

Demonstrating Initiative
Think Analytically
Oral Communication
Acquire & Apply Learning
Evaluate Alternatives
Creative Solutions
Teamwork
Leadership
Utilize technology
Grasp Realities of Workplace

Competencies: *They are moving!*

- Build working, professional relationships
- Analyze, evaluate and interpret data
- Engage in continuous learning
- Communicate through justification and persuasion
- Plan and manage a project
- Create new knowledge
- Seek global understanding

Leader of the Pack

- Does Industrial Sector make a difference?
- Does Size make a difference?
- Does Geographic Location make a difference?
- Does Academic Major make a difference?

**STAR
PERFORMER
From Day 1**

EVERYBODY!

NO EXCEPTIONS!

What skills do employers value from employees who have studied or interned abroad?

Skill Group #1

45% + employer response range

- Interacting w/ people who hold different interests, values, perspectives (60%)
- Understanding cultural differences in the workplace (53%)
- Adapting to situations of change (50%)
- Gaining new knowledge from experiences (45%)

Skill Group #2

All clustered in 30% employer response range

- Ability to work independently
- Undertaking tasks that are unfamiliar
- Applying information in new or broader contexts
- Identifying new problems/alternatives solutions
- Working effectively with co-workers

The internship or co-op has become a high stakes event as it is the starting job of today.

A NEW PLACE TO START

The Evidence

Competency	Eng FT 5 yrs ago	Eng Intern Today	NonengFT 5 yrs ago	NonengInt Today
Analyze	31%	30%	30%	22%
Communicat.	35%	26%	34%	34%
Teamwork	30%	33%	36%	31%
Customer Ser.	27%	11%	28%	15%
Global	11%	12%	13%	11%
Innovation	7%	10%	9%	6%
Diversity	9%	6%	11%	4%
Plan	39%	34%	37%	31%
Project	45%	46%	27%	38%

Employer Expectations
“Not What They Used To Be!”

Yesterday's Outcomes
are
Today's Intern
Expectations

The “New Starting Job”

- Internships
- Co-ops
- Career-related employment
- Other engagement: no longer equal
 - Preparatory experiences

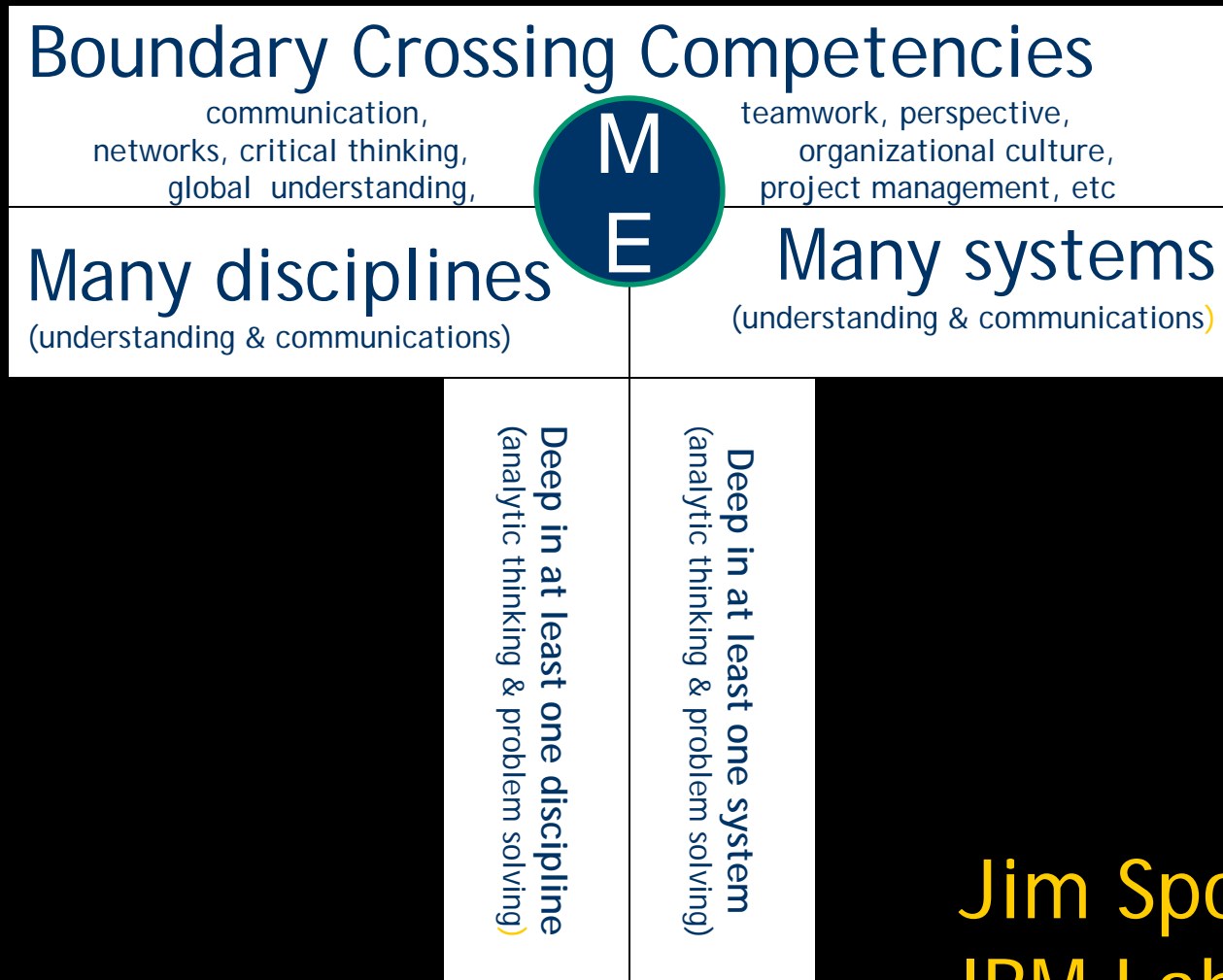
High Stakes Event

- Knowing what your interests are
- Frequency
 - How do you gain practice
- Feedback
 - Reflection on practice
 - Reflection in practice
 - Time
- Difficulty

The New Professional
Smart University
Preparing the new professional

**REQUIRES A WHOLE NEW
LOOK ON CAMPUS**

T-Shaped Professionals



Jim Spohrer,
IBM Labs

Extracting skills & competencies

Provoking critical connections

If learning demands context, what kind of context do these student comments suggest?

What do I need *{insert dept & course #}* for?

I just want to get my electives out of the way.

If I take 20 credits each semester I can be done in 3 years.

But I completed all of the assignments, I should get at least a 3.0.

Learning abroad will look really good on my resume.

Academics

Activities

Internships

Service

Social life

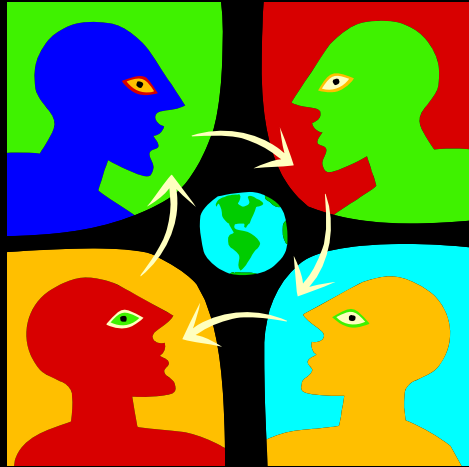
Work

Study Abroad

Finances

Daily living stuff

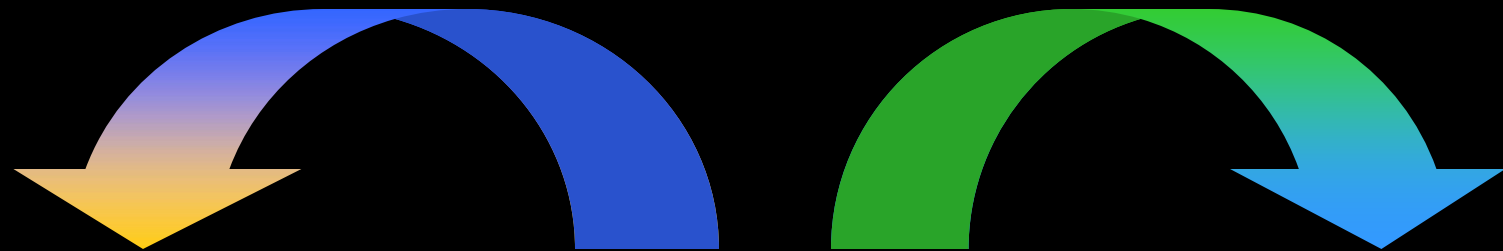
Family



Imperative to ask contextually meaningful questions

- Stimulates critical thinking
- Advances integration of student learning
 - *Helps them connect the dots!*
- Builds toward discovery and advancing knowledge essential for the emerging economic paradigm

Reflective Learning Model



LEARNING CATALYST

REFLECTION

INTEGRATION

Academic courses
Life in residence
Volunteer & Service-learning
Internships, co-ops, practica
Study Abroad
Organizational and leadership experiences
Other life events

Learning
Self awareness
Critical thinking
Skill identification
Planning
Decision-making

Transition awareness
Skill development
Problem solving
Ability to contribute

Gross, L. (2002) Michigan State University

***“The questions we ask
determine where our
thinking goes.”***



***~Michael Scriven
and Richard Paul***



Think back for a moment.

What was your most significant professional learning experience during the last year?

The Power of Perspective





**A case example
in
identifying
transferable skills
through reflection**

The P-A-R-K Method



Problem or need

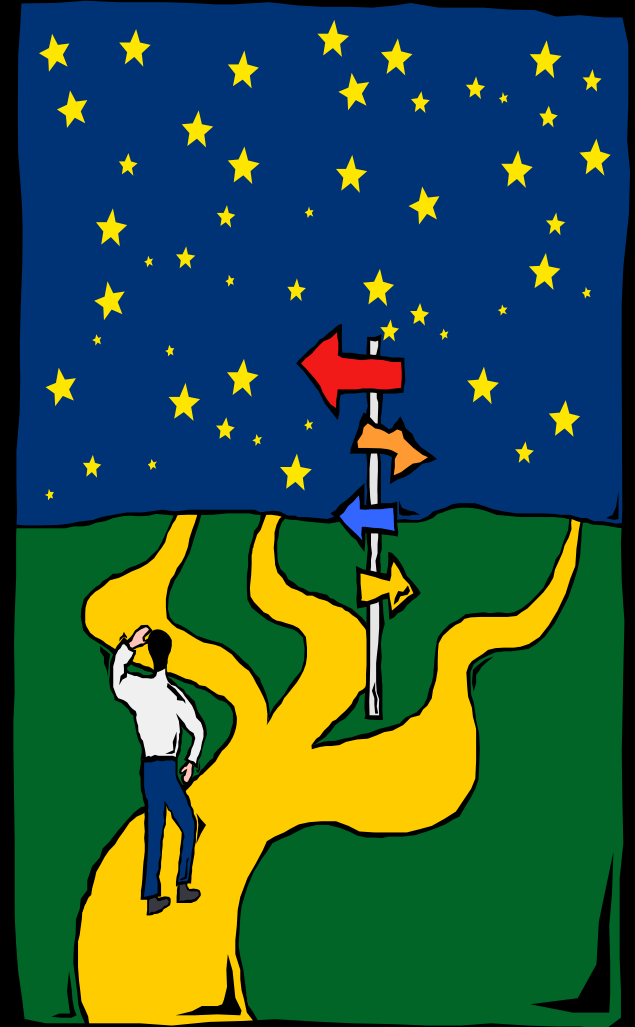
Action(s) you took

Result(s) you achieved

Knowledge or skills gained

But what do I know about career development?

- No matter what our role, each of us can help foster students' career development
- All we need is to ask the right questions.





Exercise:

Choose one of the job bullet points and provide an example from your professional experience that demonstrates competency in that area.



“It is not the answer that enlightens, but
the question.”

~Eugène Ionesco



Tips for Practitioners

- **Establish a context** for student reflection relative to their future life plans (i.e. employment field, graduate school).
- **Ask questions** that provoke students to make connections. Why? How?
- **Use a novice approach.** Ask questions to build your understanding or technical competence in the field
- **Push the envelope.** Students make important realizations and associations when they stretch their limits.



Conversation Outlook & Applications



“The quality of our thinking is given in the quality of our questions.”

~Linda Elder and Richard Paul

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