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Leading and Learning in Transition

Panel Discussion Proposal

Educational Leadership Short-term Study Abroad: A Transformative Learning Experience?

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Panel Members:

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Abstract:

The educational value of short-term study abroad has been questioned in the literature because of a lack of research to demonstrate academic value. In this session, members of the panel will share their perceptions of the transformative impact of a pilot educational leadership UK study abroad program in July, 2012.

Background Information:

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the developmental impact of a pilot short-term study abroad program defined by the theory of *transformative learning* (Mezirow, 2000). Four doctoral students of K-12 educational leadership, the program coordinator, three members of the support team and UK hosts were invited to participate in a formal reflection on the program outcomes. Individual, semi-structured interviews were conducted by an impartial researcher between August and September, 2012 with US students and faculty. Data were also drawn from a program evaluation focus group meeting with UK hosts in July, 2012 and department records preceding the graduation of program participants in December, 2014. The study suggests that short-term study abroad has the potential to provide a learning environment in which students and faculty experience “a deep, structural shift in basic premises of thought, feelings, and actions” (Transformative Learning Centre, 2004).