

Studio Abroad: Understanding the Impact of International Design Studios on Developing Designers

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For 13 years our college has offered off-campus international design studios in Prague. In addition, during this same period the college has also offered studios and design courses in Spain, India, Ghana and Venezuela. In all cases, faculty and students from our college have travelled to the studio site and the course has been taught by a combination of our faculty and host country professionals and faculty.

THESE STUDIO-BASED educational experiences have been offered because of a belief that a design experience in a culture and environment different from that of a designer's home country contributes significantly to one's development as a designer.

This paper presents the results of a research project that has attempted to describe more objectively the impact of international design studio experiences on those who participated in them. Students who, while attending the college, participated in international studios were asked to rank the international experience in comparison with other significant educational experiences and report on how they felt these experiences have impacted on their later professional development. Factors such as time since graduation, programme structure, disciplinary differences, prior international experience and participant characteristics were also evaluated. In addition, study findings were compared and contrasted with findings of other research relating to study abroad alumni, such as the recently published report by Yemi Akande and Carla Slawson 'Exploring the Long-term Impact of Study Abroad: A Case Study of 50 Years of Study Abroad Alumni'.

It is the author's intent that information presented in this paper will provide an objective look at the educational and long-term professional impact of international design studios, expose design faculty to the body of literature related to international study experiences, and will be of benefit to others wishing to incorporate international experiences positively into design education.

REFERENCE

Akande, Y and Slawson, C (2000) Exploring the Long-Term Impact of Study Aboard: A Case Study of 50 Years of Study Abroad Alumni, *International Education*, 9.3.