

Forum BEVI Project: Recent Developments and Future Directions August 2009

In 2007, the Forum BEVI Project, a special collaboration with the Forum on Education Abroad, International Beliefs and Values Institute, and James Madison University's Office of International Programs was launched. Selected Forum member institutions took advantage of the opportunity to validate a new outcomes assessment instrument, the Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory (BEVI), and then benefit from its first formal application in our field: Brethren Colleges Abroad, Dickinson College, IES Abroad, International Studies Abroad, James Madison University, Michigan State University, Saint Mary's College, Saint Olaf College, University of South Carolina, University of Texas, and Wells College. This update addresses many of the queries we have received over the past two years.

Where is the BEVI project now?

The Forum BEVI Project recently completed its pilot phase, which included administration of the BEVI to nearly 2,000 international learning participants in the U.S. and internationally. Statistical analysis narrowed the original number of factors on the BEVI from 40 to 18; nearly 60 items also were eliminated during the subsequent review process. Norms are now established for each of these scales (i.e., factors), with most reliabilities above .80 or .90 (no scale has a reliability of less than .75). Three new qualitative items were integrated into the BEVI prior to the pilot phase, which allows for a new set of analyses. From a psychometric, research, and applied perspective, these are quite promising developments.

What has been learned from the BEVI project?

Here are three examples of the sorts of intriguing findings that have emerged thus far. **First**, we are learning from the BEVI that pre- and post-experience data are necessary but not sufficient, since "who people are" prior to an international learning experience (e.g., their background, life history, worldview) may substantially influence the overall experience that they have (e.g., the degree of learning that occurs, program satisfaction). **Second**, the BEVI has identified specific differences between students who have and have not engaged in international learning. **Third**, the BEVI was able to predict at the beginning of the academic year what type of learning was likely to occur for which students by the conclusion of the academic year. Although these findings are preliminary, the BEVI would appear to provide a new model and method for understanding the complex processes and outcomes of international learning and applying such findings in the field.

Where is the BEVI project headed?

Heading into the next academic year, the Forum BEVI Project transitions out of the pilot" and into the formal phase, which involves generating prototype reports that can be used by 1) **individual students** to receive feedback before, during, and after an international learning experience; 2) **program directors and course instructors** to understand better who their students are as well as the effectiveness of the learning experiences they provide; and 3) **administrators and evaluators** who are interested in examining "big picture" issues of how, when, and under what circumstances learning does and does not appear to occur at a programmatic and institutional level. At the 2010 Forum conference in Charlotte, roundtable participants will have the opportunity to work with these reports, explore the implications of this project (e.g., for research, student development, program evaluation), and learn more about how the BEVI may be accessed by their specific institution or setting.