**ENGAGING THE THIRD SPACE:**
**BUILDING TRANSFORMATIONAL STRATEGIES IN INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION**

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**Duke Kunshan University (DKU): A Sino-American Joint Venture University in China**

- First undergraduate cohort in August 2018;
- Roughly 70% of Chinese and 30% of international students;
- All students will be given the opportunity to study at Duke during their junior year (pending relaxation of COVID-related restrictions);
- First cohort seemed to be in cultural silos;
- Orientation of second cohort emphasized cross-cultural collaboration.

**Purpose: Optimizing International Education**

- Third Space Lab (TSL) was founded on an interventionist paradigm based on research and best practices (e.g. Jackson, 2018a, 2018b; Paige & Vande Berg, 2012);
- This project aims at examining through interdisciplinary lenses Third Space stories and cultivating an intercultural lifestyle and Third-Space personae:
  - Before students arrive on campus
  - Throughout their studies at DKU
  - Before they study abroad at Duke/elsewhere
  - During their semester abroad and after their return

**Third Space and Intercultural Communication**

- The concept of Third Space comes from Homi Bhabha’s hybridity theory.
- An in-between space of hybridity, exploration and invention (Bhabha, 1994; Kramsch, 1993)
- Intercultural communication conceptualized as “opening up a new field, a Third Space, where different cultures converge, contest and cooperate; where rules for games and expectations for players do not entirely and constantly constrain the assumptions and norms of one culture, but instead are dynamic and fluid, motivated by specific goals of the game in question and negotiated among involved players.” (Jian, 2018)

**Transformative Learning**

Perspective Transformation refers to “the process of becoming critically aware of how and why our assumptions have come to constrain the way we perceive, understand, and feel about the world” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 167).

- 1. Experiencing a disorienting dilemma;
- 2. Self-examination;
- 3. A critical assessment of assumptions;
- 4. Recognition of connection between disorienting and the process of transformation;
- 5. Exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions;
- 6. Planning a course of action;
- 7. Acquiring knowledge and skills for implementing one’s plan;
- 8. Provisional trying of new roles;
- 9. Building competence and self-confidence in new roles and relationships;
- 10. A reintegration into one’s life in the basis of conditions developed by one’s new perspective.

**Research Questions**

1. In what ways do student-reported narratives reflect student changes as a result of multilingual and cross-cultural encounters?
2. What type of stories are integral to the building of Third-Space personae in international and multilingual contexts?
3. What are factors of transformation in building Third Space personae (Language proficiency levels, SA phase, and critical encounters /unsanctioned spaces/experiences)?
4. How do students perceive the intervention in the story-building phase and its impact on their actual encounters?

**Pre-International Education Intervention: Synchronous and Asynchronous Interactions**

- Reading Study Abroad Narratives
- Reading Third Space Stories
- Reflecting Before/During/After International Education
- Conflict Resolution
- Navigating the Third Space: How to Become Someone in Another Culture
- Mapping your Study Abroad
- Designing your own Research Project Abroad

**Longitudinal case studies: Fall 2020-Spring 2023**

**Selected References**

- Paige, M. A., & Vande Berg, M. (2012). Why students are not learning abroad. In V. Duarte Berg, M. Paige, and H. T. Lu (Eds.), Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they’re not, and what we can do about it (pp. 59-89). Sterling: Stylus Publishing.