

2019

# RESULTS UPDATE

PREPARED BY

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## 2019 RESULTS UPDATE

Since 2017, Gazelle International has been working with the Connecticut community college system to pilot a comprehensive International Education Initiative. To share the fruits of our work, let's take a look at responses and feedback from nearly 200 students and 16 teachers across Connecticut, France, and Mexico in academic years 2017-2019. Teachers may find this information particularly useful as they consider adding virtual exchange to their repertoire. College deans and presidents, instructional design and faculty development teams can find ideas for developing and ensuring a smooth experience with virtual exchange on their campus.

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Virtual exchange is the fulcrum of Gazelle International's mission. We help connect college classrooms in the US and abroad while consulting with key stakeholders to build lasting partnerships, train faculty and explore all options to fund and advance further internationalization. The goal is to create a smooth entry ramp to sustainable and scalable strategy with strong pedagogy foundations. Here we share results from our "Click" program for virtual exchange: Collaborative Learning for International Capabilities and Knowledge.

## STRATEGY Internationalization



## Study Abroad vs VIRTUAL EXCHANGE

We aspire to provide outcomes equivalent to or better than a good collegiate study abroad program at a fraction of the cost. Research in the US and in Europe shows that study abroad has a positive impact on retention, recruitment and employment prospects of college students. Yet only 11% of all US college graduates do a study abroad of 2 weeks or more. Among community colleges, the number falls to just 1%. We can and must do better.



## Measuring OUTCOMES

Gazelle International focuses on moving from a vision to measurable results for international higher education. We assess outcomes for faculty and students but here we focus on student results. Student success is a priority and key to driving any institution's internationalization strategy. Gazelle focuses on three key outcomes for assessing students' results with pre- and post- surveys and qualitative tools:

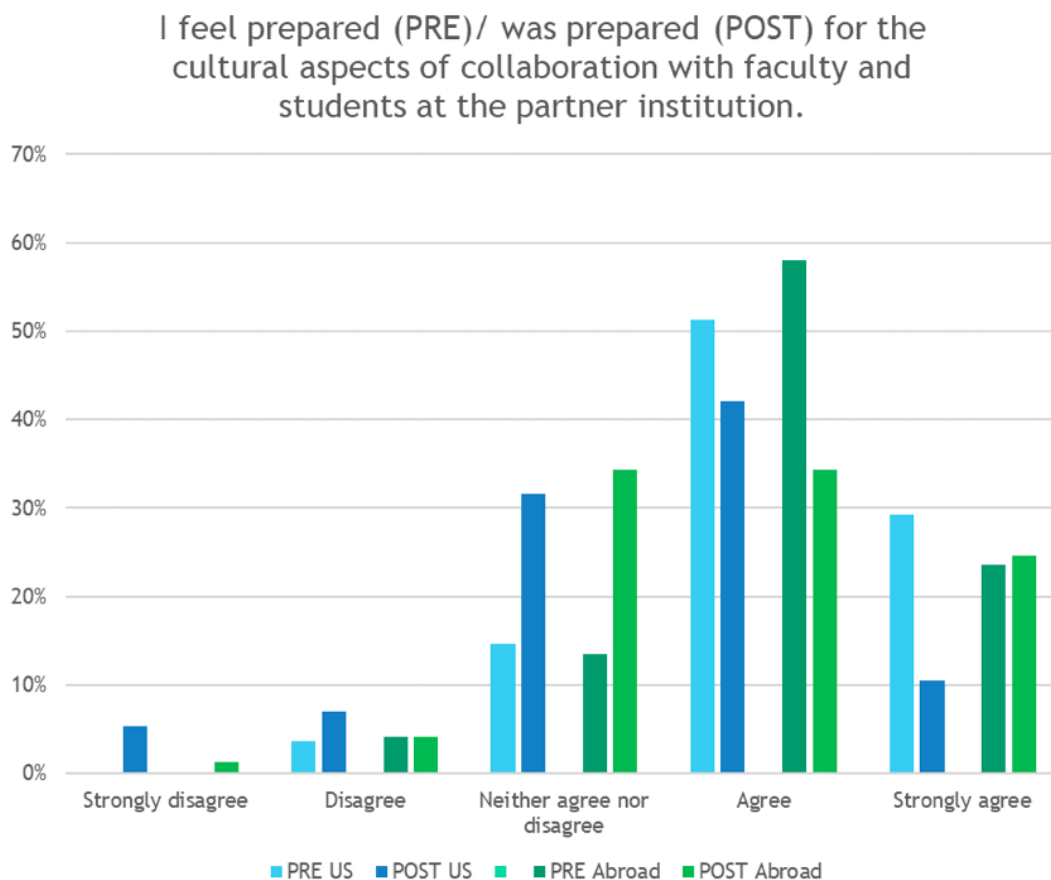
1. Greater cross-cultural maturity and awareness of the wider world
2. Increased confidence in finding future success in the global workforce
3. Increased ability to deploy 21st Century skills (technology and teamwork)

As part of our commitment to measuring results against the vision summarized by these three goals, we share an analytic sample related to each outcome, with a specific lesson learned about implementing Virtual Exchange in our classrooms.

# LESSON 1

## Students with less cross-cultural experience tend to underestimate the challenges of cross-cultural collaboration.

Students with less cross-cultural experience tend to underestimate the challenges of cross-cultural collaboration. Overall, students developed a broader worldview through the Click virtual exchange program. Students in Click classroom projects (see chart right) adjusted their expectations, showing a more realistic understanding of the challenges posed by cross-cultural collaboration. In our surveys, less than 40% of all our US/CT community college students had traveled abroad in their lives, which means that virtual exchange experiences can be vital in helping students understand the difficulties and opportunities of cross-cultural collaboration.



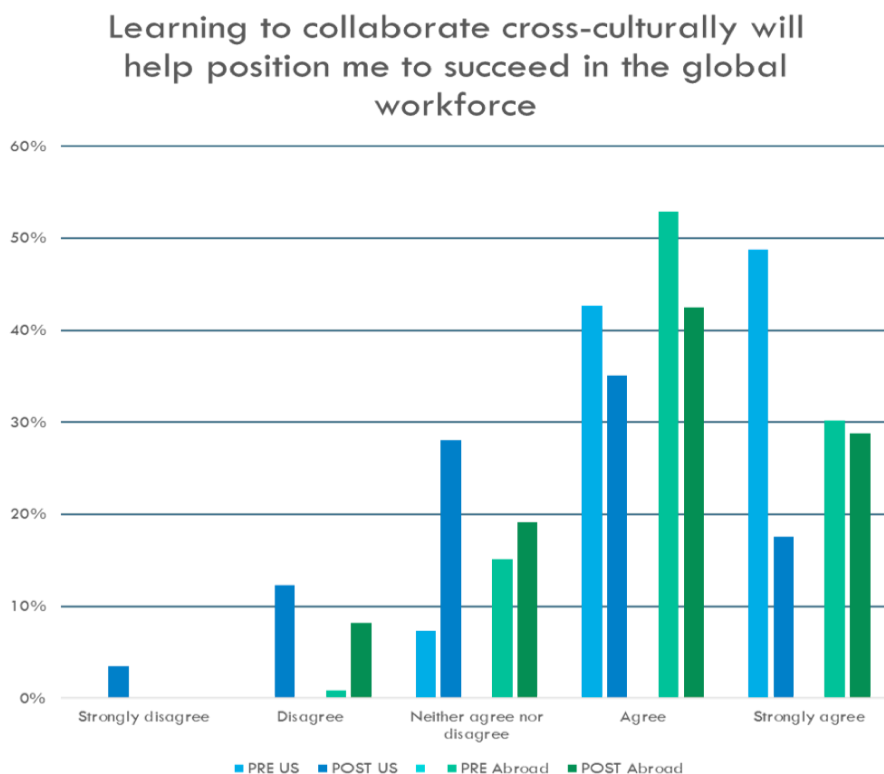
## LESSON 2

### Make benefits to workforce preparedness explicit.

Students entered the Click program with high expectations that this two-country project and cross-cultural teamwork would help prepare them for the global workforce. However, post-Click results revealed disappointment, especially among the US/CT students.

We learned the hard way that workforce preparation doesn't 'just happen' by implementing virtual exchange. Gazelle International was able to make solid improvements in years two and three by providing sample "hiring interview points" from Click projects for their students. We also discussed best practices with teachers to focus their efforts to help students use the virtual exchange experience in developing their study and career plans.

Reassuringly, we witnessed strong positive results on this front among "Click+" students, i.e. those who traveled as well as doing a virtual exchange. Perhaps in addition to navigating daily life overseas, these students also had hands-on opportunities in international workforce settings ranging from demonstrations in a robotics lab to actually reading the news in a campus television broadcasting studio.



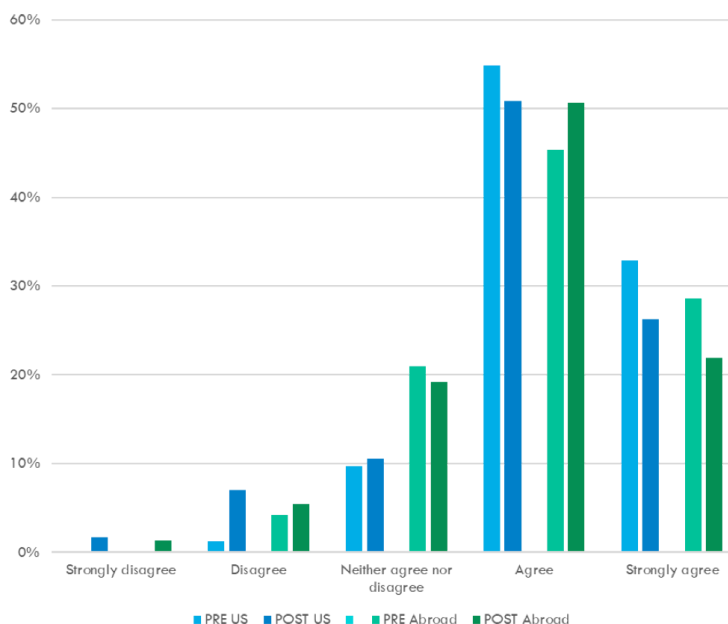
## LESSON 3

### Use technology to build team trust, well beyond the icebreaker.

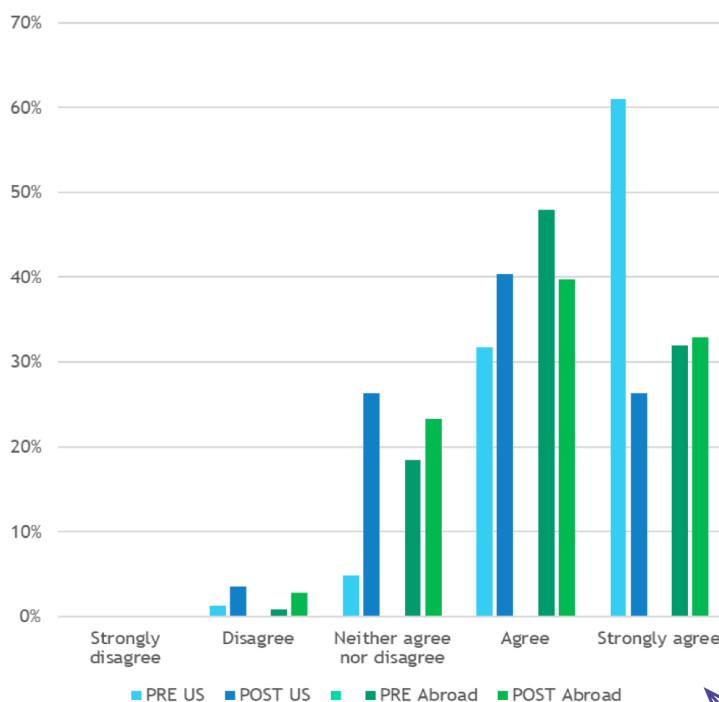
Technology and team work are closely tied in the virtual exchange classroom—if the technology isn't working for students and faculty, successful collaboration becomes far more difficult or near impossible.

While students self-reported a high degree of comfort with technology at the outset, the post-Click responses suggested that they realized using technology to produce a final project deliverable required them to learn new tech-skills or apply them in new ways. But the effects of technology choice go beyond the quality of student skills. In one of the first Click projects, the faculty felt that the students did not form bonds or team spirit in the way the teachers did. Part of the diagnosis by the teaching team was that they had not factored team-technology interdependence into the teaching design sufficiently to nurture trust and a sense of camaraderie. This underscored the need to focus early on bonding and team formation among students, well beyond a simple ice-breaker exercise. We adapted our training and resources, e.g. technology problem-solving starts in the first team building efforts. We have also begun providing more background and support for the teachers' choice of apps and technology to promote true interaction rather than independent coordinated work.

I feel prepared (PRE) / I was prepared (PRE) for the technology demands of the CLICKs Learning Module component of this course.



I look forward to (PRE) / enjoyed (POST) interacting with students from other countries.



2019

# CONCLUSIONS

In working with community colleges, Gazelle International strives to back up our vision for student success with solid information on results, both good and bad. We use these data-driven metrics to keep teacher training and support up-to-date and responsive to the challenges and opportunities of virtual exchange. In sharing these three lessons from our work with our community college teaching partners, we also look forward to building on them as we enter the next stage of developing robust internationalization strategies at the institutional level.

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