

## Webinar #4, Fall Semester 2019:

### Teaching Strategies for Developing Self-Awareness and Cultural Competence in Study Abroad: Classroom Applications

Dr. Madalina Akli, University of Massachusetts Amherst  
Friday December 13, 2019, 2-3 pm Eastern time

Dr. Madalina Akli teaches the curriculum of the International Scholars Program and Certificate in the Commonwealth Honors College at University of Massachusetts Amherst. The curriculum consists of preparatory classes on inter-cultural communication and the integration of international experience for those who spend their junior year abroad. In this webinar, she will present a selection of teaching strategies for developing the key elements of self-awareness and reflection in inter-cultural communication.



Study-abroad students are eager to learn about cultural values of people in their host country. Typically, students turn outward to discover visible differences in other cultures. The presenter shares reflection activities, such as the writing of an auto-ethnography—a personal and cultural map—and role playing to help students turn inwardly and to mindfully reassess their own intentions and values before engaging with distant others. By first shedding light on how students operate on “automatic pilot,” and reevaluating their personal and cultural territories, their engagement abroad will then have a different grounding that is more meaningful, ethical, and sustainable. With this foundation of understanding, students are able to transcend the cultural differences and realize the many cultural similarities of our shared humanity.

This webinar is suitable for those who teach classes related to study-abroad education.

#### **Learning Outcomes: Participants will have opportunities to:**

- Identify new teaching strategies for inter-cultural communication that address obstacles in building authentic cultural relations, such as stereotypes, generalizations, and hypotheses about a foreign culture;
- Describe instruments of introspection and reflection appropriate for classroom setting;
- Share examples of how students can develop personal reflection and mindfulness, including examples of how they can build a conceptual space of self-awareness, ambiguity, creativity, empathy, and compassion.

**About the presenter:**

**Dr. Madalina Akli** was born in Romania and arrived in the U.S. as an international student. She holds a M.A. from Sorbonne University (Paris, France) and a Ph.D. in French studies from Rice University. She is director of both the International Scholars Program and the Office of National Scholarship Advisement at UMass Amherst. Her publications include: "Study Abroad and Cultural Learning through Fulbright and Other International Scholarships: A Holistic Student Development," (*Journal of International Students*, 2013), "The Role of Study-Abroad Students in Cultural Diplomacy: Toward an International Education as Soft Action," (*International Research and Review: Journal of Phi Beta Delta Honor Society for International Scholars*, 2013), "In the Mind of a Global Citizen: Identity and World Belonging," (*International Educator*, 2012), and *Conventional and Original Metaphors in French Autobiography* (Peter Lang, 2009).