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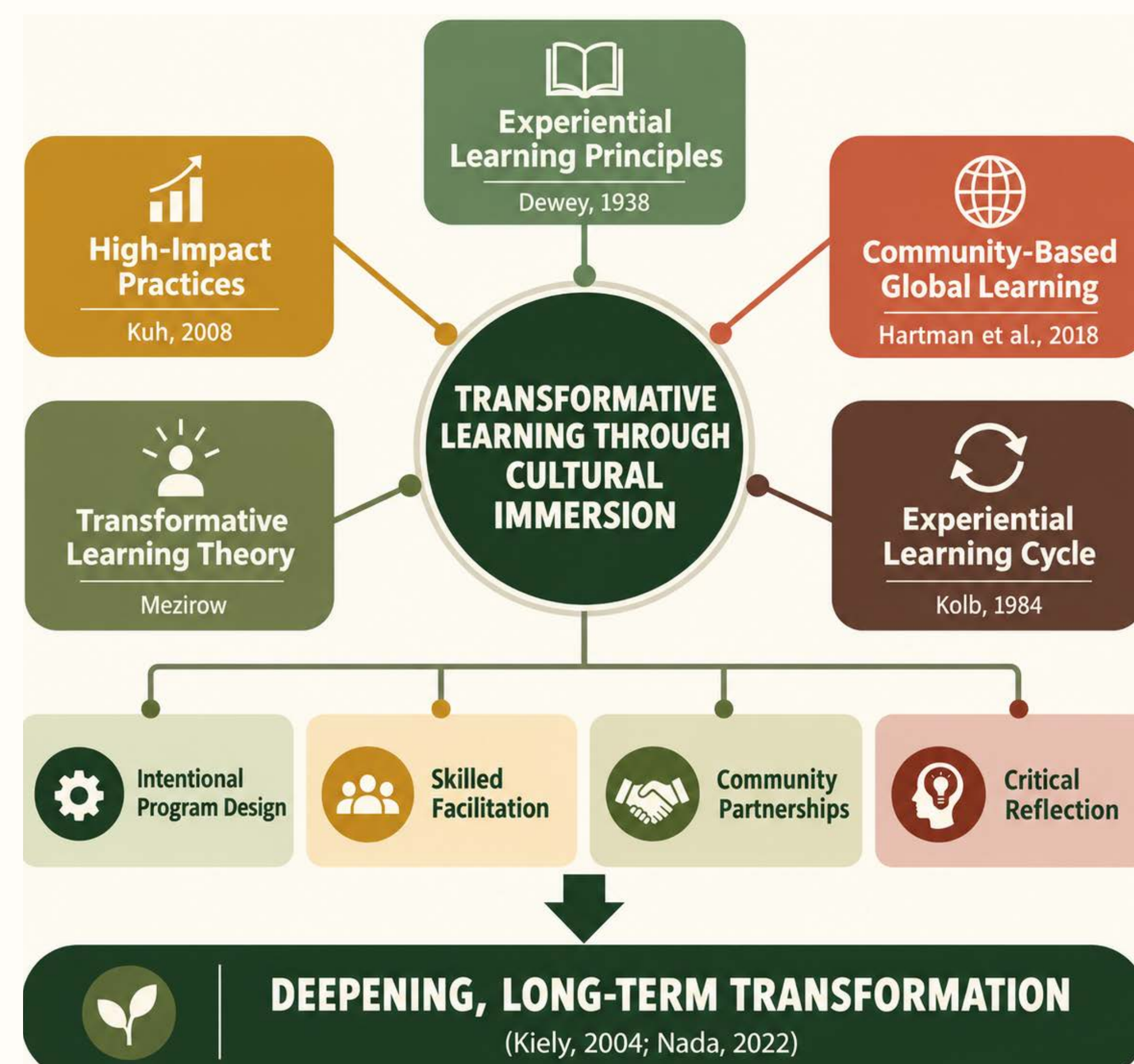


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Introduction

Higher education prepares students to navigate an interconnected world through global engagement experiences that build intercultural competence, reflection, and applied learning. However, research typically measures immediate outcomes, leaving a need for longitudinal studies examining how these experiences shape graduates five, ten, or fifteen years later.

Conceptual Framework



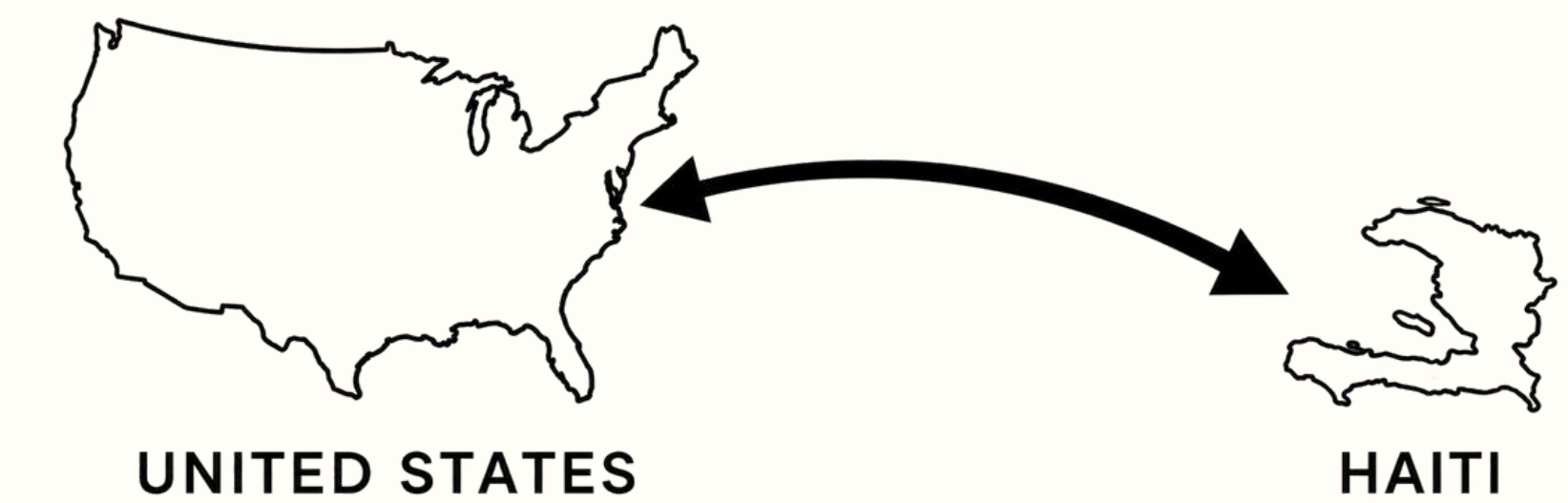
A Case Study of Cultural Immersion: Long-term Impacts and Guidance for Future Programs

Purpose

This explanatory case study examined how cultural immersion experiences in Haiti shaped U.S. students' short- and long-term transformation.

Methods

- Single-case study of cultural immersion experiences in Haiti (2014–2018)
- Data collected through surveys, interviews, and member checking
- Analysis guided by Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory and constant comparison



Findings & Implications

Key Findings

- Four themes shaped long-term transformation: operational, situational, relational, and reflective experiences.
- Operational activities were most prominent, but relationships, cultural encounters, and reflection deepened learning.
- Participants reported lasting changes in their perspectives, careers, and application of lessons learned in Haiti.

Implications:

Programs should move students beyond observation into active, community-engaged learning. Intentional reflection, relationship-building, and collaborative problem-solving should be embedded throughout the experience. These elements can deepen long-term learning and prepare graduates to navigate complex global agricultural and food systems.

An Emerging Conceptual Framework

