

**BECOMING TRANSCULTURAL: MAXIMIZING STUDY ABROAD**

by

**Kacy Peckenpaugh**

---

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of

**GRADUATE INTERDISCIPLINARY DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN  
SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AND TEACHING**

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

In the Graduate College

**THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA**

**2013**

THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA  
GRADUATE COLLEGE

As members of the **Dissertation** Committee, we certify that we have read the **dissertation** prepared by **Kacy Peckenpaugh**, titled **Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad** and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the **dissertation** requirement for the Degree of Doctor of **Philosophy**.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: (4/12/2013)  
**Beatrice Dupuy**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: (4/12/2013)  
**Peter Ecke**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: (4/12/2013)  
**Linda Waugh**

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: (4/12/2013)  
**Mary Wildner-Bassett**

Final approval and acceptance of this **dissertation** is contingent upon the candidate's submission of the final copies of the **dissertation** to the Graduate College.

I hereby certify that I have read this **dissertation** prepared under my direction and recommend that it be accepted as fulfilling the **dissertation** requirement.

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: (4/12/2013)  
Dissertation Director: **Beatrice Dupuy**

### STATEMENT BY AUTHOR

This **dissertation** has been submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of Arizona and is deposited in the University Library to be made available to borrowers under rules of the Library.

Brief quotations from this **dissertation** are allowable without special permission, provided that an accurate acknowledgement of the source is made. Requests for permission for extended quotation from or reproduction of this manuscript in whole or in part may be granted by the head of the major department or the Dean of the Graduate College when in his or her judgment the proposed use of the material is in the interests of scholarship. In all other instances, however, permission must be obtained from the author.

SIGNED: **Kacy M. Peckenpaugh**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While there are more individuals to thank than could possibly fit in this section, I wish to thank my dissertation committee, and particularly my advisor Dr. Beatrice Dupuy for guiding me through this process. To that end, I also wish to thank Dr. David Wright who initially developed the course that was used in this study. This dissertation would never have been possible without the loving support of my parents, Alan and Nancy Peckenpaugh; friends; and relatives- thank you! Additionally, I would also like to thank Dr. Helen Morris-Keitel, my undergraduate German professor, for helping me along this path; thank you so much for your support and guidance at each, and every, step! And, lastly, a huge *danke schön* to all of my friends and host families in Germany who patiently listened to me as I strung sentences together to develop my speaking abilities beyond the “Ich habe Gänsehaut” [I have goosebumps] and “Danke für die Fahrt” [Thank you for the ride] that I so naively arrived to Germany with as a 17-year-old exchange student.

## DEDICATION

I dedicate my dissertation to my grandfather, Normand L. Peckenpaugh. I love you so much, and thank you so much for all of your support along the way. You are such an amazing person, and you continue to inspire me with your selfless, motivated, and determined nature! From attending Cornell's Hotel school as a Lieutenant Commander in the Navy with three kids at home, to getting out and almost running the place; from driving XC with me to fulfill your life's dream of seeing the Grand Canyon in 2007 right before your 81<sup>st</sup> birthday, to now, at the age of 86 trying out Tai Chi and now chair yoga less than 6 months after breaking your hip. You continue to amaze and inspire me. And, if I may, my favorite quote from your hospital room last fall, "I told them I didn't want any more pain meds. Pain meds are for wusses." Grampa, you are, well, just awesome!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	7
ABSTRACT.....	8
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	11
Literature Review.....	15
The Articles.....	32
CHAPTER 2: PRESENT STUDY.....	35
Methods.....	35
Data Collection.....	35
Participants.....	35
Measures and Frameworks.....	38
Data Analysis.....	48
Results.....	48
Limitations.....	57
Future Studies.....	59
Conclusions.....	61
REFERENCES.....	63
APPENDIX A- UNPACKING THE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE: AN INTERCULTURAL PROCESS.....	74
APPENDIX B- PRE-STUDY ABROAD INTERCULTURAL PREPARATION: EXAMINING SHIFTING FRAMES OF REFERENCE.....	125
APPENDIX C- MOVING BEYOND: “I LEARNED HOW TO PACK LIGHT AND EFFECTIVELY:” HELPING STUDENTS TRANSLATE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES FOR THE REAL WORLD.....	185

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 1.0 – DATA COLLECTION OVERVIEW.....	36
TABLE 2.0 – PARTICIPANT OVERVIEW.....	37
TABLE 3.0 – OVERVIEW OF FRAMEWORKS USED FOR DATA ANALYSIS.....	40
TABLE 4.1 – CODED COMPARISON BETWEEN COURSE AND NON-COURSE STUDENT RESPONSES.....	56
TABLE 4.2 – CODED COMPARISONS BETWEEN COURSE AND NON-COURSE STUDENT RESPONSES.....	56

## ABSTRACT

With rising demand for a workforce that can work cross-culturally (Mangan, 2011; Orahood, Woolf, & Kruze, 2008), it is not surprising that study abroad numbers continue to increase to a range of countries, destinations, and program types (Open Doors, 2012). However, while study abroad is often touted as the ideal means to incite linguistic and cultural competence, the reality of student learning is not a given (Alred & Byram, 2002; de Nooy & Hanna, 2003; Einbeck, 2002; Freed, 1995; Kearney, 2010; Kinginger, 2008; Kinginger, 2009; Rivers, 1998; Wilkinson, 2000). If higher education wishes to endorse study abroad as a means to acquire the crucial knowledge, skills, and attitudes of a globalized workforce (Miller, 2009), it is imperative that colleges and universities promote and integrate study abroad into the curriculum to foster the development of 21<sup>st</sup> century global citizens.

In order to examine what businesses actually valued in hiring, Trooboff, Vande Berg, and Rayman (2007) surveyed employers and found not only that they valued study abroad as a form of international education, but also that they specifically valued many intercultural skills. However, on average, the respondents did not believe that studying abroad led to the enhancement of these skills, echoing the dominant discourse of study abroad being a frivolous endeavor for wealthy white women (Gore, 2005). Trooboff et al. (2007) noted that students need to be better trained to translate their experiences for their potential employers. In a similar vein, Root and Ngampornchai (2012) recommended that students be trained in intercultural communication to better help them articulate their learning. Nevertheless, Deardorff (2008) noted that intercultural training should not be limited to pre-departure orientation, but that a series of workshops or even a course could help address intercultural learning needs. While a number of courses of this nature have been offered either before departure or upon return (eg.



Brewer & Solberg, 2009; Downey, 2005), it appears that only one study to date examined the process of intercultural learning as it relates to study abroad (Anderson & Cunningham, 2009). The current study attempts to fill the gap in research by examining the effectiveness of a three-credit general education course in intercultural communication on the process of becoming interculturally competent. Additionally, it also examined the ability of post-study abroad students who enrolled in this course to articulate what they had learned while abroad in comparison with post-study abroad students who had not enrolled in the course.

While most of the students ( $n = 33$ ) participating in this study had enrolled in the course in intercultural communication were preparing to study abroad, there were also a number of participating students ( $n = 6$ ) who had previously studied abroad. In this mixed-methods research, whose findings are reported in three separate, yet related, articles, answers to the following research questions were sought: 1. How does intercultural competence develop in post-study abroad students over the span of a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural communication skills through critical reflection? The first article of this dissertation examines the process of unpacking the study abroad experience two students went through upon return to the home campus through the lens of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000), and ethnocentric versus ethnorelative worldviews (Bennett, 1993). The second article uses these same frameworks to investigate the learning process for four pre-study abroad students enrolled in this same course to answer the question: 2. Are there noticeable differences in the development of intercultural competence in pre-study abroad students who are enrolled in a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural competence? Lastly, the third article examines how post-study abroad students articulated their learning abroad differently by answering the question: 3. Are post-study abroad

students who enrolled in a course designed to foster the development of intercultural competence better able to articulate what they learned than post-study abroad students who did not enroll in such a course? In this article, a frequency analysis uncovered that the word “culture(s)” was the highest, non-function word used both by post-study abroad students who had enrolled in the course and by post-study abroad students who had not enrolled in the course. Sociocultural theory (Lantolf, 2000; Kramsch, 2000; Wells, 1994) was used to examine how the two groups used the word “culture(s)” either as scientific or everyday concepts, as tools and symbols to convey meaning.

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“Globalization is both the biggest opportunity and the greatest challenge for business schools worldwide as they struggle to keep up with the demand for graduates who can work across countries and cultures” (Mangan, 2011).

### **Background of the Study**

As demand for graduates who can work and compete across national boundaries increases, there is growing pressure on institutions of higher education to foster the development of the requisite knowledge, skills, and attitudes before students ever enter the marketplace (Mangan, 2011; Orahood, Woolf, & Kruze, 2008). Orahood et al. (2008) noted that because American students are no longer only competing against themselves for job placement, but also against a larger number of graduates worldwide, “it is vital for business students, in particular, to have overseas experience during college, before they enter the competitive workforce” (p. 134).

In a 2008 report, Gardner, Ross, and Steglitz published the results of a 2004 survey “asking employers to identify those traits where recent hires with international experience stood out” (p. 4). Three traits were chosen by more than half of all employers: interacting with people who hold different interests, values, or perspectives; understanding cultural differences in the workplace; and adapting to situations of change (p. 5). While these were skills specifically related to those who already had international experience, Trooboff, Vande Berg, and Rayman (2007) sought to find what skills employers valued in hiring. Their survey was structured to contain both traditional skills as well as intercultural and global competence skills, as outlined by two recent dissertations (Deardorff, 2004; Hunter, 2004). It was then completed by representatives from human resource professionals to CEO/presidents of 352 U.S. firms, organizations, and agencies across a wide range of industries. The researchers found that of the top five personal skills desired in prospective employees, the skills ranked two through four were

included in the questionnaire as intercultural and global competence: 1. effective working in teams; 2. works well under pressure; 3. analyzes, evaluates, and interprets well; 4. works effectively outside comfort zone; 5. expresses self effectively in writing (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 28). Attempting to quantify the value of studying abroad, the authors concluded that “employers do in fact value study abroad, when compared to a variety of other educational experiences” (p. 20) and that “the greater the firm’s internationally generated revenue, the more likely that its employees value all types of study abroad” (p. 21). Interestingly, and notably counterintuitive for study abroad professionals, the study also found an inverse relationship between the value placed on these skills and the degree to which the employers believed these skills could be enhanced by studying abroad (p. 28). This sentiment may parallel the “dominant discourse” about studying abroad highlighted by Gore (2005) that, “study abroad programs are perceived as attracting wealthy women to academically weak European programs established in a frivolous Grand Tour tradition” (p. 24 as cited in Kinginger, 2009, p. 16). However, Troboff et al. (2007) highlighted that it is not the case that study abroad does not lead to development of these skills, but that it is potentially the opposite, in fact. In order to overcome this “dominant discourse,” it might be possible to reframe the abroad experience. They concluded that:

It is also clear, though, that study abroad professionals and career services professionals alike need to consider what steps they can take – through research; program design, on and off campus; and the training of students – that will strengthen the case, with employers, about the effectiveness of learning abroad, and that will allow students to describe their learning through discussing the sorts of learning outcomes that employers value. (p. 31)

Study abroad has the potential to foster the skills required of a global workforce, yet students need to be able to translate what they have learned into a context relevant to whatever their future careers may be.

Despite these findings, study abroad is often marketed as the means to acquire the skills demanded of a global workforce. A report issued by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) found that, “most business schools place more emphasis on studying abroad than on developing and integrating global content within the curriculum” (as cited in Mangan, 2011). Yet, preparing students for the global marketplace requires more than just sending students abroad. In fact, neither language nor culture learning can be seen as a steadfast outcome of study abroad (Alred & Byram, 2002; de Nooy & Hanna, 2003; Einbeck, 2002; Freed, 1995; Kearney, 2010; Kinginger, 2008; Kinginger, 2009; Rivers, 1998; Wilkinson, 2000). By virtue of the fact that each student in each study abroad environment presents an experience that is “unique and dynamic, shaped through myriad personal backgrounds, opportunities and choices” (Wilkinson, 2000), studying abroad cannot be seen as an osmosis experience that guarantees that a student will acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes demanded of them. If higher education wishes to promote study abroad as a means to acquire the skills required of an internationalized workforce, it must also be held accountable for the quality of learning by supporting students with effective study abroad program design on an off campus. One model for promoting student learning is to integrate study abroad into the campus curriculum.

Integrating study abroad into the curriculum includes not only supporting students with well-designed study abroad programs to specifically meet their needs to foster language and culture learning, but also preparing them to study abroad before they ever leave, as well as aiding

them with the subsequent unpacking of their experiences upon return. Regardless of whether their experiences were negative, positive, or somewhere in between, students may need help processing the cultural contacts encountered abroad in order to avoid ethnocentric stereotypes and generalizations. While a student may be witness to, or a participant in, an array of cultural incidents or conflicts, if the element of reflection is missing, it is possible that they will never be able to garner meaning from the event (Einbeck, 2002; Kelly, 1963 as cited in Bennett & Bennett, 2001; Williams, 2005). Montrose (2002) wrote, “And so it is also true of study abroad experiences; it is not the activity of leaving one’s homeland that creates learning, but the subsequent analysis of that activity where the real learning begins” (p. 6-7). With the plethora of study abroad options available to students, it might not be possible for universities to control for program variables that can lead to effective learning while students are abroad. However, if reflection upon one’s experiences is the crucial step towards cultural learning, it is possible that universities can provide more of its undergraduate students with the tools to be able to critically reflect upon their experiences before they leave for studying abroad and grant students a forum for reflecting on their experiences, while also aiding students in translating their experiences to specific skills relevant to their careers after graduation.

Additionally, while it is important to support student learning, it is imperative to define what this learning should be and how to evaluate its effectiveness. Under the adage of “what is not assessed will not be taught,” is the question of what the ultimate goal of study abroad could or should be. Thus, it is necessary to evaluate the varying competencies included under cultural competence and the assessment thereof. Foreign language professionals have increasingly concerned themselves with defining what the ultimate goal of foreign language learning is, as

noted by the publication of and reaction to the 2007 MLA report. The discussion is succinctly linked to potential goals of study abroad learning.

Transcultural has become a ‘buzzword’ in second language acquisition (SLA), and specifically more so after the 2007 MLA Report highlighted the need for translanguaging and transcultural competence in foreign language teaching. While the report does not define translanguaging or transcultural competence well, an examination of transcultural competence reveals its usefulness as a specific goal for international learning both within the foreign language curriculum and beyond. To this end, transcultural competence will be presented as a process, which includes various aspects of the intercultural as elements of the totality.

## **Literature Review**

### **Transcultural Competence**

**The Intercultural.** Much attention has been paid to the transcultural recently, yet the discussion and assessment of the intercultural has dominated research. The discussion, however, is nonlinear and includes intercultural and transcultural perspectives, sensitivities, competencies, pedagogies, etc. Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe (2007) succinctly summarized the problematic within the discussion,

...the difficult-to-pin-point nature of intercultural competence has led to a range of definitions, theories, and models that have served as the basis for different approaches to its assessment. Some models stress the communicative nature of intercultural competence, while others emphasize an individual’s adaptation and development when confronted with a new culture, and still others focus on empathic and tolerant reactions to other cultures. Ultimately, these models seek to explain the types of skills and abilities

individuals need to function in culturally diverse settings and the processes they undergo in developing the needed skills and abilities for being interculturally competent. (p. 12)

Fantini (2006) wrote that, "...most of the terms allude to only limited aspects of a more complex phenomenon..." (p. 11). Thus, it may be difficult to exactly define or qualify what a transculturally competent student is. However, if students return from studying abroad and have the opportunity to reflect on their cultural encounters, it is essential to assess what their learning entails. The "difficult-to-pin-point" and complex nature of intercultural competence requires a discussion of the most relevant components of transcultural competence.

Both intercultural communication and intercultural communicative competence are referenced in Byram's (1997) book "Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence," but the main difference that he postulated was that adding the component of 'competence' allowed the addition of assessment to a largely descriptive model (p. 89). Thereby, he expanded the concept of intercultural communication between individuals of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds (p. 1) to an ability to communicate in this situation (intercultural communicative competence) (p. 3), which he saw as teachable, learnable, and assessable. When considering transcultural competence in relation to study abroad, it is imperative to have models that allow for assessment.

Another model that theorizes the intercultural relates to intercultural sensitivity. This model has developed over the decades, but was outlined by Bennett in 1986 and elaborated in 1993. Bennett (1986) referred to other scholars (Gudykunst & Hammer, 1983; Paige & Martin, 1983) for describing the intercultural, "The basic learning areas of intercultural communication are also generally agreed-upon, falling within the areas of cultural self-awareness, other-culture awareness, and various approaches to intercultural communication and perception" (p. 180).



Becoming interculturally sensitive requires different levels of knowledge and perception, and movement from ethnocentric to ethnorelative stages of sensitivity by looking at intercultural behavior. While there are a number of stages, it is not until the final stage of 'Integration' where the individual is in a constant process of "a part of" and "apart from" any given cultural context (p. 186). It is in this stage where the learner has the ability to move between cultures as deemed culturally appropriate (p. 186). A definition, which, I will argue, is essentially the basis of transcultural competence.

**The Transcultural.** Fundamental in the understanding of what transcultural entails, is a article written by Seidl (1998) entitled, "Language and Culture: Towards a Transcultural Competence in Language Learning." In this article she suggested the term "transcultural competence" which "combines both knowledge about culture and the ability to apply this knowledge" (p. 107). Seidl wrote further in defining transcultural competence that:

[T]he aim of transcultural competence is not only to give learners an outsider's perspective on their own personal situation but also to give them confidence as a "foreign" insider in another culture. It is not desirable to encourage learners to emulate the culture of the foreign language they learn, but they should be encouraged constantly to move from one point of view to the other. It is also of advantage to know as much about the norms and values of the other culture as possible, in order to know how to conform to the respective social conventions. (p. 108)

Within this discussion, the movement from one point of view to the other must be highlighted. It is also here where one can see the overlap with the final stages of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993), but this overlap also includes more than the intercultural. The transcultural highlights movement back and forth beyond cultural boundaries, whereas the intercultural

highlights the individual's positionality in between cultures. Schulze-Engler (2006) noted that the intercultural cannot satisfy modern needs in describing cultural and literary studies (p. 41). Indeed, the transcultural allows for a multitude of integrated and overlapping cultural areas. Cultures can no longer be seen as a "collection of territorial containers," but, rather, as representative of a "globally linked community resource" which individuals and social groups can help themselves to (p. 46). The transcultural can aid in the description of an increasingly globalized world, and a competence therein can be set as a goal for citizens engaged in this world.

Schulz (2008) wrote, "If a differentiation is essential, we may want to use the term intercultural to refer to the process of influencing cultural practices, products and perspectives and use transcultural when referring to the resulting change that has taken or is taking place through intercultural contact"(p. 91). When compared with Schulz' differentiation, the MLA 2007 Report did not address the component of cultural influence one way or another, but only that students have knowledge and skills (linguistic and cultural) and are encouraged to "consider alternative ways of seeing, feeling, and understanding things" (p. 4). In this way, the MLA Report appears to draw from the intercultural sensitivity outlined by Bennett (1993), moving from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative point of view. A reference to Seidl's (1998) transculturally competent learner outcomes can resolve many ambiguities and more clearly define student outcomes:

Ideally learners will finally develop the competence to operate independently of their acquired cultural patterns while continuously negotiating an appropriate mode of behaviour as required by the communicative context they find themselves in. (p. 108)

In this representation of transcultural competence, students must work independently with knowledge, skills, and attitudes (intercultural competence, as seen by Byram, 1997) to assess the cultural situation, or space (Kramsch, 1993), that they find themselves in and relativize themselves (moving from ethnocentric to ethnorelative; Bennett, 1993) with movement between and beyond different points of views, which could be culturally motivated (Antor, 2006).

Transcultural competence ultimately includes many aspects of intercultural competence and sensitivity, but necessarily moves beyond them as a response to the multiple facets of identity and culture in a modern globalized world.

### **Transcultural Competence and Study Abroad**

As educators, we may be inclined to fall back on the adage, “a rose by any other name is still a rose.” While differentiating between intercultural and transcultural may seem a moot point for many, any research approach must be grounded in theory. Study abroad research must, necessarily, deal with a cultural component. While I have argued that transcultural competence can do more than intercultural competence or intercultural sensitivity, the proverbial baby need not be thrown out with the bathwater. As of yet, there appears to be no clear paradigm for assessing transcultural competence and, thereby, intercultural models must continually play a role.

All models and theories of intercultural and transcultural competence, sensitivity, pedagogy, spaces, etc. can shed light on what happens when an individual encounters a space wherein their personal identities and cultures are in contact with alterity. This “space” (Kramsch, 1993) and the interactions therein are complex, and, as such, the more approaches one has to interpret the results, the better one can understand the process and outcomes. Byram’s (1997) model of intercultural competence is extremely helpful in designing and assessing

pedagogical intervention methods and outcomes in a study abroad context, as his five *savoirs* are concretely defined. Beyond this, Wildner-Bassett's (2008) model of transcultural pedagogy can expand methodological approaches and also help explain resulting influences on the individual. From this perspective Bennett's (1993) model of intercultural sensitivity and the Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer et al., 2003) are extremely helpful in understanding the progression from an ethnocentric to ethnorelative perspective; or, through the intercultural and the transcultural. It is futile to choose one perspective or model over another to describe a totality. However, when one chooses a perspective or model to describe any particulars, it is of utmost importance to clearly understand what one wishes to assess. For the purposes of this dissertation, intercultural competence and sensitivity were seen as elements in the process of becoming transculturally competent. Further, this dissertation focused on the process of developing intercultural competence, not measuring specific intercultural outcomes. The models and frameworks used will be discussed in Chapter 2.

### **Study Abroad Intervention**

If intercultural learning is seen as a process (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006b; Hammer et al., 2003), beginning the process pre-departure and continuing it upon reentry can only be advantageous in fostering positive cultural learning outcomes. Anderson and Cunningham (2009) wrote that "As institutions prepare to send even more students abroad, it is imperative that as much attention be paid to preparing them to learn from their study abroad experience as is paid to crafting the experience itself" (p. 63). With the rising number of programs available, it becomes more difficult to control program options. As such, colleges and universities can foster and encourage student learning on the home campus by integrating study abroad into the curriculum through pre-study preparation and post-study reintegration. The following review is a

selection of the most relevant research focusing on pre-departure and reentry literature.

Subsequently, each of the three articles presented in the appendices offers a more in-depth and focused review of literature relevant to each of the research questions outlined above. Guiding this dissertation were a number of studies that focused on the pre-study abroad preparation and post-study abroad reintegration of the study abroad experience.

**Pre-departure research.** The following studies guided this dissertation by describing pre-departure preparation in promoting student learning. The methods and findings also guided the teaching of the course that this dissertation focused on. Foreign language classrooms have been one main focus of pre-departure research as they have served as an integral link between the home institution and study abroad experiences as the arena to foster culture learning.

Kinginger (2008) wrote that, “In well-designed programs, study abroad connects students with the meanings of the forms whose abstract versions may appear in teaching materials” (p. 219). In study abroad situations, students can experience textbook ‘culture boxes’ in real life.

In our globally connected societies, however, students may be able to begin this access before venturing abroad. One such example is a telecollaboration project between Penn State University and the Universität Gießen. Müller-Hartmann (2006) described the outcomes of this project, “By dealing with stereotypes and prejudices in both cultures and by realizing the historical cultural grounding of some of them, students developed a critical cultural awareness with regard to both cultures” (p. 79). Students were encouraged to seek deeper meanings in cultural text interpretation (p. 74); they were developing an intercultural mindset and skillset that could benefit them abroad. Even if students are not planning on studying abroad, using internet resources can provide opportunities to “participate in prolonged intercultural communication”

(Belz & Thorne, 2005, p. *xi*). Similarly, computer-aided language learning projects can and have helped to specifically prepare students for studying abroad.

Thorne and Payne (2005) highlighted the potential benefits of blogs to provide exposure of the study abroad environment to at home students, while aiding students abroad in their endeavor to narrate their cultural and linguistic experiences (p. 383). In an experiential model of learning, Dupuy (2006) investigated the use of global simulation in an intermediate French class to prepare students for studying abroad. The course provided authentic input and focused on student-centered learning where language and culture learning can intersect in the process of becoming linguistically and culturally competent by fostering students to “reflect on how their own identity, frame of reference, norms, values, body language, or behavior differ from or are similar to” the host culture (p. 151). Dupuy (2006) wrote that:

[Global simulation] has the potential to achieve the goal of developing students’ abilities to successfully interact in intercultural situations because it provides the curricular depth that has been called for [Wilkinson, 2005] to meet the formidable challenge of preparing students for linguistic, cultural, and identity transitions when they go on study abroad. (p. 151)

Such an explicit connection is one possibility of better integrating study abroad programs into the curriculum. Beyond this, Pertusa-Seva and Stewart (2000) presented the possibility of directly connecting students in the foreign language classroom with students abroad in order to simulate a study abroad experience. Students at home were paired with students abroad, and were given tasks such as researching cities that the study abroad students could visit and conducting ethnographic-type interviews of these students, which added “new dimensions” to the at-home composition course (p. 440). Interestingly, students at home and abroad enjoyed the contact, as

the in-country group enjoyed reflecting on their experience (p. 400). Moving away from the development of the intercultural skill- and mindset in the language classroom are studies that were conducted specifically with the goal of examining what role pre-departure intervention plays in student learning.

Vande Berg (2009) summarized the findings of a multi-year study of approximately 1,300 U.S. undergraduates on 61 different study abroad programs to surmise whether students learn effectively abroad when they navigate their experiences alone or whether they perform better when educators intervene in their learning. The researchers used the Simulated Oral Proficiency Interview (SOPI) and the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) to assess student language and intercultural learning. This study found that “study abroad participants who attended pre-departure orientations that included an intercultural component made significantly greater gains than study abroad participants whose orientations featured no intercultural teaching or training” (Vande Berg, 2009, p. 20). Further, using data from this large-scale, multi-year study noted above, Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige (2009) concluded with two recommendations for educators to foster intercultural learning: to increase student learning both at home and abroad and to intervene in student learning by providing intercultural learning in pre-departure (p. 28). Pre-departure preparation can take many forms, however.

Many universities and colleges provide pre-departure training sessions that address a range of topics from visas and immunizations to intercultural contact. In reference to these departure sessions, Deardorff (2008) noted that, “Even when intercultural issues are addressed in pre-departure orientations, too little time is often spent on only a few random aspects of intercultural communication or cultural adjustment” (p. 43). Further, her recommendation was

to develop a series of workshops or even a course to address intercultural learning needs before students venture abroad (p. 43).

A number of pre-departure courses have been offered at Kalamazoo College, Beloit College, and the University of Minnesota (cf. Anderson, 2005; Brewer & Cunningham, 2009a). Rather than studies on the effectiveness of these courses, however, the literature has largely described the organization and layout of these courses. While presenting the descriptions and outcomes of such endeavors goes far in justifying the existence of such courses and aiding those wishing to design similar courses, Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, and Hoff (2005a) presented a 414-page report published by the federally funded Language Resource Center, the Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition (CARLA), at the University of Minnesota. This study report focused on using a strategies-based approach in the form of a guide published by CARLA to foster linguistic and cultural competence in study abroad. The underlying rationale of the guide is that “language and culture learning may be enhanced if students become consciously aware of the range of strategies that they can employ in learning and using a second language and for interacting with members of the target sociocultural community” (Cohen et al., 2005b, p. 103). While the quantitative data could not make strong claims of language or culture learning, the qualitative results “suggest that the Guide did have a very positive affect of students’ study abroad experience, both language- and culture-wise” (Cohen et al., 2005a, p.205).

La Brack and Bathurst (2012) presented quantitative findings of a pre-departure and return course series offered at the University of the Pacific to add generalizability beyond anecdotal evidence of the effectiveness of these courses presented in La Brack (1993). The 1993 exposé was predicated on the notion that, “it is important for those involved in promoting study



abroad to realize just how much more effective and relevant the overseas experience can be made by providing participants a well-designed orientation prior to immersion” (p. 241-242). The 2012 study uncovered significant increases on the IDI for those students who had studied abroad and enrolled in the courses versus those who had studied abroad, but had not enrolled in the courses. However, while these studies can offer quantitative outcomes, there has been very little research examining the process of what is involved in developing intercultural competence in qualitative data. One study (Anderson & Cunningham, 2009), which will be discussed below, appears to be the only study to date that examined qualitative gains on a transformative learning continuum.

**Reentry research.** While research on reentry has not been limited to the post-study abroad experience, but also often looks at business employees returning home (Adler, 1981; Brabant, Palmer, & Gramling, 1990), the focus of this literature review is what aspects of intervention in student learning, specifically coursework, could lead to greater intercultural learning upon reentry. Beyond a description of courses that attempted to reintegrate students into the home curriculum after studying abroad, however, the research on this topic is strikingly limited. In outlining what reentry courses have the capability of doing, Meyer-Lee (2005) wrote that:

In addition [to serving as scaffolding deeper intercultural reflection and integration of the abroad experience], these follow-up courses also hold great potential as a research site in two ways: as an additional venue for documenting (quantitatively and qualitatively) the impacts of study abroad on students’ education and development; and as one window into comparing the relative effectiveness of an institution’s study abroad programs. (p. 114)

All three of these areas hold value for reentry research, however, this dissertation was based on research gleaned from scaffolding deeper intercultural reflection and the impact of reentry courses on students' education and development of intercultural competence. In this effort, one must also understand what the challenges of reentry are.

Just as Montrose (2002), quoted above, noted that reflecting on and analyzing the study abroad experience is the activity which can foster learning, La Brack (1993) spoke of what the reality of students returning from study abroad looks like:

Left to their own resources and devices, the majority of students are perfectly able to reintegrate themselves upon return to school in some functional manner. Most of them probably perform the necessary academic tasks and conduct their personal lives adequately without a reentry seminar. A few of the most highly motivated and thoughtful are certainly able to combine their experiences with current course work in genuine, creative ways. But most, I suspect, don't do so efficiently in isolation and in the absence of any applicable frame of reference. (p. 250)

Similarly, Meyer-Lee (2005) noted that while students "often articulate the immense personal growth they experienced," students may often focus too heavily on "the metaphor of self-transformation . . . rather than changed understandings of the world" (p. 116). This finding parallels Root and Ngampornchai's (2012) finding based on 18 reflection papers from post-study abroad students:

It is apparent that education abroad has an impact on the participants, especially in terms of immersing them into an unfamiliar environment. With this immersion, participants learned new knowledge, such as connecting content learned in the classroom regarding the politics or economy of a country to the real site. . . . However, we are also concerned

that many of the participants' accounts reflect only superficial levels of intercultural understanding. (p. 12)

Root and Ngampornchai (2012) recommended training in intercultural communication to enhance pre-departure and reentry programs, including: elements of personal cultural awareness; elements of positioning with regard to social identities such as race/ethnicity, social class, gender, and language; specific instruction in culture-general frameworks; instruction in aspects of perception, including concepts of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination; elements of instruction on both verbal and nonverbal communication; and encouraging students to engage in critical reflection (p. 12-15). Including these frameworks of intercultural communication can serve as context for students to prepare for experiencing cultural dissonance and/or reexamining concrete experiences from their sojourns abroad upon return.

Vande Berg, Paige, and Hemming Lou (2012) echoed the findings of many scholars that, "It is only through ongoing reflection that students make meaning of their intercultural encounters. They begin to challenge their own cultural assumptions, consider other cultural perspectives, and shift their frame of reference to the particular cultural context" (p. 54). While it is important to give students frameworks and a forum for reflection, it is essential to understand how courses have been designed elsewhere.

With nearly 85% study abroad among their undergraduate student body, Kalamazoo College has been at the forefront of the initiative to not only send students abroad, but also to integrate their experiences into the home curriculum. In 2002, the college began the Kalamazoo Project in Intercultural Communication, which had students enroll in a course before leaving, conduct research while abroad, and reflect upon their experience upon return (Solberg & Brockington, 2005). While an excellent program, the post-study aspect of how students

unpacked their experiences is limited. Similarly, Meyer-Lee (2005) of Saint Mary's College in South Bend, Indiana described her course for returnees, highlighting that students "engage in extensive self-reflection, analysis, and writing to articulate the impact of the sojourn, and then bring their own data to both test and apply existing psychological theories and research" (p. 114). Downey (2005) at the University of Notre Dame attempted to overcome the "accomplishment" mentality (Meyer-Lee, 2005; Savicki, 2008b; Williams, 2009) by attempting to move beyond a notion of "closure" for students to a call to action to "do" something with their experiences abroad.

As Downey (2005) conceptualized it, an "achievement orientation" led students to view their experiences abroad in an egocentric manner that didn't transfer "into an understanding of the place or people who often served as the 'obstacles' in the achievement narrative" (p. 119). Consequently, this course offered students the opportunity to readjust by discussing their experiences, examining re-entry shock, and using dynamic systems theory to "contextualize what they saw by focusing on a single social, economic, political, educational, or health problem that they encountered and to learn more about the prevalence and causes of this problem" (p. 118). Students then hypothesized and explored how to incite change in their future endeavors. Downey (2005) concluded his article by noting that:

Instead of 'closure,' I would like to suggest that re-entry education using research can be a further opening that students might not otherwise perceive. . . . I don't think students are really looking for closure at the end of their experience. I think that they are looking for *meaning*. (p. 120)

From this point of view, the intercultural journey does not end once a student returns home from studying abroad. Rather, this experience could serve to initiate further reflection and, in this case, even action.

In this vein, highlighting their *Maximizing Study Abroad Student's Guide* Cohen et al. (2005b) wrote that, “the post study-abroad section on culture provides students with strategies for talking about the study abroad experience with friends and family, for managing re-entry, and for maintaining ties with the host country after returning home” (p. 106). Minnesota’s approach is that students can enhance their language and culture learning if they have a number of strategies at their disposal to “employ in learning and using a second language and for interacting with members of the target sociocultural community” (p. 103; cf. Hoff & Paige, 2008; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004). However, although this guide includes a reentry portion, Hoff and Paige, 2008 noted that “it would be beneficial to examine the effect of prescribing an integrated approach to culture and language learning strategies that would follow through from pre-departure to reentry” (p. 104). Furthering the discussion on intercultural learning, Anderson and Cunningham (2009) provided a key-study for this dissertation, as it can be considered an account of the process of developing intercultural competence.

By examining how pre- and post-study abroad students develop differently, pedagogues can better glean what differs in student learning pre- versus post-study abroad. In Anderson and Cunningham (2009), a historian of religions and an applied anthropologist respectively, sought to provide students with the skills to conduct an ethnography in an intercultural religious setting while enrolled in the course at home in Kalamazoo, MI. These skills included listening, observing, describing, interpreting, and reflecting. After students completed the ethnographies, their final reactions were coded according to an unpublished continuum of transformative

learning (Cunningham & Grossman, 2008<sup>1</sup>) and divided into groups. Groups two and three displayed the greatest transformation, and group one the least. In an analysis to uncover what the differences between these groups were, they had two crucial observations: all of the post-study abroad students were in group one, and students in groups two and three were processing their discomforts in the intercultural setting more actively. The authors hypothesized that the students returning home needed an environment to process their experiences abroad before engaging in another intercultural experience because they “did not expect ongoing dissonance; rather, they expected that, compared with their study abroad experience, the fieldwork for this class would be fairly easy” (p. 77). They concluded that although they had been “very deliberate in asking students to make connections between the conceptual theories in class and their field sites, [they had] not been as deliberate in asking them to bring their emerging self-understanding into the analysis” (p. 80). This study examined both student learning outcomes and the process of becoming more interculturally competent. While beginning the journey to intercultural competence before students set foot abroad can aid in culture learning, it is equally important for students to reflect upon their experiences once they have returned, thus providing further evidence that post-study abroad students need to reexamine their experience in order to make meaning out of it.

Once students reflect on their lived experience and potentially translate this into a culture learning outcome, it is also imperative that they can articulate what this culture learning is if they are to succeed on the job market. Administrators from Michigan State University highlighted the need for students to articulate their learning outcomes by noting:

---

<sup>1</sup> This continuum is based on an unpublished manuscript and contains six levels of development: gains in knowledge, changes in attitudes, understanding of different perspectives, development of a structural understanding, and changes in frame of reference.

Students have given very little thought to how their study abroad has shaped and prepared them for the world of work. In other words, graduating seniors have flunked one of their most important exams – the hiring interview because they were not prepared with appropriate examples of skills required from their international experiences. (Gardner et al., 2008, p. 1)

Studying abroad alone is a line on a résumé. As noted above, Trooboff et al. (2007) found that employers do indeed value the study abroad experience, but often fail to ask students about it during interviews. They recommended that students be coached to bring up these experiences unprompted. Thus, it is imperative that if universities wish to truly prepare their students for a globalized workforce, they must prepare students before they go abroad, and aid them upon return by allowing them a forum to critically reflect on their experience and support the development of the communicative skills to articulate how they will apply what they learned to appropriate audiences.

The above studies outline reentry research as related to study abroad and culture learning. Szkudlarek (2010) underscored that:

While the scientific community does not provide much information on the traditional mode of reentry training and coaching, practitioners in the field have been publishing numerous articles on the role and impact of reentry training in a careful repatriation strategy. Unfortunately, these publications rely on anecdotal evidence, mostly drawn from the personal experiences of the authors. (p. 13)

The goals of this dissertation were not only to examine how students learn to become interculturally competent before they venture abroad, but also how they unpack and articulate their experiences upon return.

## The Articles

### The Course

The focus of the articles outlined below was a general education course offered at the University of Arizona entitled, “Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad.” This three-credit course was offered for the first time in Fall 2010 and was co-taught by the researcher and the director of study abroad and student exchange. In Fall 2011, it was taught solely by the researcher following the same format as the previous offering. The course was originally designed as a pre-departure course for students planning on studying abroad. However, given the nature of large universities, many upperclass(wo)men enroll in these courses when they have priority registration. As such, this intercultural communication course was taught both to students who planned on studying abroad as well as those who had already studied abroad. Guiding the teaching of the course is a premise outlined by Deardorff (2008) that attitudes are the starting point for intercultural learning,

Specifically, the attitudes of openness (withholding judgment), respect (valuing all cultures), and curiosity and discovery (tolerating ambiguity) are viewed as fundamental to the acquisition of skills that will lead to both the conceptual shifts and the behavioral changes needed to increase intercultural competence. (p. 37)

The study conducted contributes to an understanding of how students acquire and articulate their culture learning by evaluating the impact of a general education course designed to maximize the study abroad experience. The three articles presented here focus specifically on intervening in student learning at the home institution: 1. Unpacking the Study Abroad Experience: An Intercultural Process; 2. Pre-Study Abroad Intercultural Preparation: Examining Shifting Frames of Reference; and 3. Moving Beyond “I Learned How to Pack Light and Effectively:” Helping



Students Translate Study Abroad Experiences for the Real World. More precisely, they focus on how a course based in intercultural communication could begin to prepare pre-study abroad students for a journey towards transcultural competence and how it could aid post-study abroad students in processing their experience upon reentry.

### **Unpacking the Study Abroad Experience: An Intercultural Process (Appendix 1)**

In order to answer the first question posed in this study, “How does intercultural competence develop in post-study abroad students over the span of a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural communication skills through critical reflection?” participants were selected based on whether they had studied abroad on a credit-bearing program prior to enrolling in the course and were disqualified if they had grown up in bi-cultural homes, or internationally. Two participants met these criteria and became the subjects of case studies. A qualitative analysis implementing experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) and transformative learning theories (Mezirow, 2000) was used to show how students used their experiences abroad as a starting point to reconsider their taken-for-granted frames of reference in light of new learning about intercultural communication to display an ethnocentric or ethnorelative worldview (Bennett, 1993).

### **Pre-Study Abroad Intercultural Preparation: Examining Shifting Frames of Reference (Appendix 2)**

In an attempt to address the second question, “Are there noticeable differences in the development of intercultural competence in pre-study abroad students who are enrolled in a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural competence?” participants were selected based on the criteria that they had had a relatively small amount of international experience and had not grown up internationally or in bi-cultural homes. Four students were

selected; two of these students had made large gains on the CCAI measure of emotional resilience, while two had not. Through the lenses of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000), and ethnorelative/centric worldviews (Bennett, 1993) this study examines whether the two pairs of students differed in how they developed intercultural competence over the semester.

### **Moving Beyond “I Learned How to Pack Light and Effectively:” Helping Students Translate Study Abroad Experiences for the Real World (Appendix 3)**

The last article sought to answer the question, “Are post-study abroad students who enrolled in a course designed to foster the development of intercultural competence better able to articulate what they learned than post-study abroad students who did not enroll in such a course?” This article examined two groups of post-study abroad students: one group ( $n = 6$ ) who had enrolled in the above-mentioned course focused on the development of intercultural communication and those who had not ( $n = 34$ ). A frequency analysis was run in order to make a more analogous comparison between the two groups. The results of this analysis could then be analyzed through the lens of sociocultural theory (Kramsch, 2000; Lantolf, 2000; Wells, 1994), which showed that the most frequently used, non-function word by both groups could be analyzed through the perspective of “scientific concept” versus “everyday concept.”

## CHAPTER 2: PRESENT STUDY

### Methods

This chapter outlines the methods for gathering data, the participants, the frameworks used to analyze data, the data analysis, and a summary of the results. A conclusion for the articles is offered at the end to situate the results within the larger discussion of study abroad research. This section provides a summary of the items outlined; the details of the specific studies are included in the appended articles.

#### Data collection

Data for this study was collected from two sources. The data for the first two articles included the coursework submitted by students enrolled in the course “Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad” in Fall 2010 and Fall 2011. This coursework included weekly to bi-weekly online discussions, four critical reflection papers, one midterm, and one final exam; all items were posted to the University of Arizona’s online platform Desire2Learn (D2L). Additionally, students filled out the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI; Kelley & Meyers, 1995a) both at the beginning and at the end of the course, as well as a demographic survey outlining their age, experience abroad, major, etc. The third article used data from this course as well as data from a voluntary online survey, which was sent to post-study abroad students by a representative of the Office of Study Abroad and Student Exchange via a university listserv. An overview of these sources is outlined in Table 1.0.

#### Participants

Thirty-three out of fifty-four students who enrolled in the “Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad” consented to participate in this study: ten enrolled in Fall 2010 and twenty-three enrolled in Fall 2011. There were a total of six post-study abroad students from

both semesters that the course was offered. The first article in this study focuses on two post-study abroad students enrolled in the course. The other four post-study abroad students were eliminated from the first article because they had either participated in a non-credit bearing study abroad program, had grown up in bicultural homes, or had attended international schools abroad as children. The second article focuses on students who had not yet studied abroad, had traveled relatively little internationally, did not attend international schools as children, and were not raised in bi-/multi-cultural homes. By chance, all six of the participants in the first two articles were enrolled when the teacher/researcher was the sole instructor of record for the course.

Source	Article 1 :	Article 2:	Article 3:	
	post-SA students	pre-SA students	Post-SA enrolled in course	Post-SA not enrolled in course
Graded Bi-weekly Online Discussions	√	√		
Four Graded Critical Reflection Papers	√	√		
Midterm Exam	√	√		
Final Exam	√	√	√	
Demographic Survey	√	√	√	
Online Questionnaire				√
CCAI	√	√		

The third article compares a new population, post-study abroad students who completed an online questionnaire and who had not enrolled in the course, with the six post-study abroad students noted above who had enrolled in the course in one of the two semesters it was offered. A total of 85 non-course students began the survey via surveymonkey.com. The survey was sent to a post-study abroad listserv maintained by the University of Arizona's Office of Study Abroad

and Student Exchange via surveymonkey.com. Of the 85 students who began the questionnaire, only 35 completed it in its entirety. All of the students who did not complete the entire questionnaire quit after filling out the demographic information. Of the 35 students who completed the entire survey, one student was disqualified because he had enrolled in the intercultural communication course in Fall 2010. Thus, 34 complete surveys filled out by post-study abroad students were available for comparison with the final exams of six post-study abroad students who consented to the study and had completed the course in either Fall 2010 or Fall 2011.

Article 1	Article 2	Article 3
<b>Liz</b> 20 yrs, Caucasian Female Junior, Art History Major  <b>Studied Abroad:</b> 5-weeks – London, England 5-weeks – Orvieto, Italy	<b>Noelle</b> 22 yrs, Caucasian Female Sophomore, Astrophysics Major <b>Future Study Abroad Plans:</b> Multi-Country Medieval Summer Program	<b>Liz, Patrick</b> (see Art.1) Enrolled in Intercultural Communication Course
	<b>Tina</b> 19 yrs, Caucasian Female Sophomore, Mining Engr. Major <b>Future Study Abroad Plans:</b> Undecided: Italy, Greece, or Ireland	
<b>Patrick</b> 21 yrs, Caucasian Male Junior, Accounting Major  <b>Studied Abroad:</b> 8-weeks – Bangalore, India	<b>Jennifer</b> 19 yrs, Caucasian Female Frosh, Engineering Major <b>Future Study Abroad Plans:</b> Undecided: New Zealand, Australia, or England	<b>34 Non-course Participants</b> Respondents to Online Questionnaire: 1 ( <b>Michelle</b> ), 2 ( <b>Shannon</b> ), 3, 4, 5, 6 <sup>2</sup> , 7 ( <b>Michaela</b> ), 8 ( <b>Kim</b> ), 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24 ( <b>Tessa</b> ), 25, 26 ( <b>Erika</b> ), 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35,
	<b>Aaron</b> 18 yrs, Caucasian Male Frosh, Dance Major <b>Future Study Abroad Plans:</b> Ireland	

<sup>2</sup> Respondent #6 was disqualified from the study, as this participant had previously enrolled in the course

## Measures and Frameworks

In an attempt to evaluate the different methods available to assess intercultural competence, Sinicrope, Norris, and Watanabe (2007) evaluated direct and indirect assessment tools<sup>3</sup> and concluded that, “the combined indirect and direct analyses in Fantini (2006) and Straffon (2003) revealed more layers and nuances in the growth of intercultural competence than those discernible by indirect assessments alone” (p. 31). Sinicrope et al. (2007) noted that it is possible to use portfolios as direct assessment tools because it is unlikely that a researcher will ever have a true direct assessment if direct observations of participants cannot be made. In the Deardorff (2006b) study noted above, intercultural experts thought that using a mixed methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative measures, was the best manner in which to assess intercultural competence. Educational administrators largely agreed, but also accepted “pre-post tests, other-report measures, and critical incidents and essays” (p. 241). An attempt was made to use a concurrent triangulation approach in which “the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then compares the two databases to determine if there is convergence, differences, or some combination” (Creswell, 2009, p. 213).

**Quantitative instrument.** The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI) was used in the first two articles of this study as an indirect, quantitative assessment measure. The CCAI was administered at the beginning and again at the end of the course, and measured four different dimensions of cross-cultural adaptability: emotional resilience, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. The measure of emotional resilience designates an individual who “bounces back; [and] has emotional resilience, a positive attitude, a sense of adventure” while flexibility/openness designates an individual who “lacks rigidity, is nonjudgmental, likes

---

<sup>3</sup> Direct Assessment Tools – performance assessment (Byram, 1997; Ruben, 1976) portfolio assessment (Byram, 1997; Jacobson, Sleicher, & Maureen, 1999; Pruegger & Rogers, 1994) and interviews (Fantini, 2006; Straffon, 2003); Indirect Assessment Tools – BASIC, ICSI, IDI, CCAI, ISI, AIC

people, enjoys diversity” (Kelley & Meyers, 1995a). The last two measures (perceptual acuity and personal autonomy) describe an individual who is “attentive to verbal/non-verbal cues, aware of communication dynamics, empathetic,” and has a “clear personal value system, strong sense of identity, self-directed, self-respecting,” respectively (Kelley & Meyers, 1995a).

There were three reasons for which the CCAI was selected. A norming of the CCAI with a large sample size of 653 individuals with a reliability of .90 found the instrument to be both valid and reliable (Kelley & Myers, 1992). Additionally, an “Action-Planning Guide” is available for test-takers that can help them “to increase . . . skills in these important dimensions” by giving them ideas for raising their “chances for success when interacting with those of other cultural backgrounds” (Kelley & Myers, 1995b, p. 1). It must be noted, however, that this guide was not used until after the second administration of the test in an attempt to avoid Practice Effect. Finally, the CCAI was available for immediate use as it had been used previously at the University of Arizona, thereby greatly minimizing the costs associated with this study. The CCAI was used in a limited manner in this dissertation. It was largely used as a descriptive means by which to view student learning in addition to the detailed, qualitative analysis that will be outlined below.

**Qualitative Frameworks.** In order to address the development of intercultural competence in articles one and two, three frameworks were used: experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000), and ethnocentric and ethnorelative worldviews (Bennett, 1993). Additionally, sociocultural theory (Lantolf 2000, Kramsch 2000, Wells 1994) was used in article three to examine the use of tools and signs by students as they articulated what they had learned abroad. A summary of the qualitative and quantitative frameworks used is provided in Table 3.0.

<b>Qualitative Analysis</b>	Article 1	Article 2	Article 3
Experiential Learning Theory	√	√	
Transformative Learning Theory	√	√	
Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity	√	√	
Sociocultural Theory			√
<b>Quantitative Analysis</b>			
Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory	√	√	
Frequency Analysis			√

The process of selecting appropriate qualitative frameworks began with popular models to assess outcomes of intercultural competence. As noted above, a discussion of cultural competence includes not only intercultural competence, but intercultural sensitivity as well. Medina-Lopez-Portillo (2004) noted that intercultural sensitivity is a process and is indicative of a person's "psychological ability to deal with cultural differences," whereas intercultural competence refers to the 'external behaviors' an individual manifests in the context of a foreign culture (p. 180). The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993) aids in describing how an individual views the world. Models to assess intercultural competence deal more with evaluating outcomes in regards to intercultural learning, however, than they do in regards to assessing the process of developing intercultural competence.

The lack of clarity across the field of what intercultural competence actually is lead Deardorff (2004, 2006a, 2006b) to seek a consensus by surveying intercultural scholars and higher education administrators. The top rated definition among educational administrators was Byram's (1997) five *savoirs*, "knowledge of others; knowledge of self; skills to interpret and relate; skills to discover and/or interact; valuing other's values, beliefs, and behaviors; and relativizing one's self. Linguistic competence plays a key role" (Deardorff, 2006a, p. 237). The top definition with 80-100% agreement among key intercultural experts was "Ability to



communicate effectively and appropriately in intercultural situations based on one's intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Deardorff, 2006a, p. 239). However, while rating definitions is a step in the right direction for defining the components of this 'difficult-to-pin-point' competence, it does not aid in the attempt to actually assess an individual's competence. At the planning stages of this dissertation, it was initially believed that twenty-two elements of intercultural competence that received 80-100% agreement among the top intercultural experts surveyed, that were further outlined by in this same study (Deardorff, 2006b, p. 249), would be valuable. These elements of intercultural competence are extremely helpful in identifying a definition of intercultural competence based on specific and more readily assessable skills. However, these elements are targeted towards outcomes, and not the developmental process of learning to become interculturally competent. While tabulation of the number of instances when a student demonstrated specific elements of intercultural competence across the semester could potentially have showed a development over time, coursework paralleled intercultural communication topics presented in the book and could have skewed data by certain prompts allowing for certain competencies at certain times, rather than allowing for an overall assessment at any given point. Additionally, Deardorff (2006b) noted that in her compilation of these elements of intercultural competence, "the intercultural scholars in particular seemed to feel strongly that one component alone is not enough to ensure competence" (p. 248). Thus, as there was no particular insight into how many of these elements would be needed for an individual to be considered interculturally competent, assessing the degree of any student's competence based on these elements would have largely been conjecture. The purpose of the first two articles was to examine the development of intercultural competence and, as such, this framework could neither show the

development thereof, nor supplement findings with intercultural outcomes. New frameworks had to be found that could better describe the process of developing intercultural competence rather than focusing on specific outcomes.

Using the framework of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993), however, still allowed for the description and documentation of the progression of one aspect of intercultural competence. The developmental model of intercultural sensitivity noted above allowed for a description of students' worldviews by holistically describing whether they displayed an ethnocentric or ethnorelative worldview. Additionally, paralleling the discussion above of transcultural competence being represented in the final stages of the development of intercultural sensitivity, and while transcultural competence was the ultimate goal in student learning, not every individual who studies abroad, becomes transculturally competent.

It was this belief that led Brewer and Solberg (2009) at Kalamazoo College, which has nearly 85% of its student population study abroad, to write that "Kalamazoo College culture seems permeated with the assumption that all of its students have a 'transforming experience,' and many students feel guilty or inadequate if theirs was not" (p. 50). Studying abroad is not a guarantee that students will be able to translate their experiences into concrete learning outcomes. Situating a volume dedicated to integrating study abroad into the curriculum, Brewer and Cunningham (2009b) wrote:

Many advocates of study abroad now describe its strongest outcomes . . . as increased intercultural competency and affective learning and argue that for these to be realized, students must know how to learn experientially. Our hope with this volume is to provide examples of how intercultural and transformative learning can contribute to disciplinary

and interdisciplinary learning, and how these in turn can contribute to intercultural and transformative learning, as the most robust form of study abroad. (p. 8)

Study abroad can be the catalyst to incite experientially based transformative and intercultural learning. However, if not all students become interculturally competent in the same way and if becoming interculturally competent is seen as a process (Deardorff, 2006a), then models are needed to describe how the developmental process manifests itself. With the Brewer and Cunningham (2009a) volume as an initial guide, experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000), combined with the DMIS (Bennett, 1993), proved to be models that could explicate the process of becoming interculturally competent more succinctly.

Experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984) has been used in a number of studies focused on study abroad (Dupuy, 2006; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Montrose, 2002; Pusch & Merrill, 2008) because it allows for a discussion of study abroad as an “experience,” as a departing point that can trigger new learning paradigms. Passarelli & Kolb (2012) noted that “Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) provided a model for educational interventions in study abroad because of its holistic approach to human adaptation through the transformation of experience into knowledge” (p. 138). In this model, an individual will begin with a concrete experience, either positive or negative. Often, when this experience deviates from what one typically expects, observation and reflection will ensue. Through observing and reflecting, an individual will form new knowledge or concepts that can be tested in a new situation, thus starting the cycle again. Montrose (2002) wrote that in experiential learning in the study abroad context:

The most important stage for academic assessment is the conceptualization stage, where students generalize and interpret events. This stage is where students ask, ‘What does

this mean?' This is essential to the integration and understanding of relationships or general principles and theories that explain the experience. (p. 5-6)

However, in the case of a participant studying abroad, this model fails to account for not only how observation and reflection will ensue, but also how this observation and reflection of a second culture can be influenced by viewing it through the lens of one's home culture. If a student is 'generalizing and interpreting' events through a faulty lens, they may miss the type of reflection that is needed to avoid negatively stereotyping the event. Adding the element of an ethnocentric/ethnorelative worldview can help describe how an individual approaches observation and reflection, and the ensuing formation of new knowledge. From the approach of intervening in student learning, transformative learning theory can add to the description of what actually happens at the level of observation/reflection and, consequently, the resulting new knowledge from an ethnocentric or ethnorelative point of view.

Although not necessarily in combination with experiential learning theory and the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, transformative learning theory has been used in study abroad literature (cf. Brewer & Cunningham, 2009a; Savicki, 2008a). This model presupposes that an individual has a particular frame of reference for interpreting their surroundings and that a disorienting dilemma can incite an individual to change or 'shift' their frame of reference by presenting them with a new, otherwise unknown frame of reference. Mezirow (2000) described his model of learning as:

the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. Transformative learning

involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight. (p. 7-8)

While experiential learning describes the overall process of turning an experience into new knowledge, transformative learning better explicates how observation and reflection can allow for one's frame of reference to be opened for change. By considering another's view or interpretation as equally valid to one's own, one can transform an experience into knowledge that is inclusive of other points of view, indicative of an ethnorelative worldview. The combination of these three frameworks best described the process that students in studies one and two either did or failed to go through.

While the first two articles were similar in nature and could, therefore, use the same frameworks, the third article required a different approach. In the third article, a method had to be found to compare two pools of data that were based on the same prompt, but of different lengths. Initially, a keyword analysis was one method that was considered. However, because neither the final exams nor the results to the online questionnaire were large enough for an accurate comparison in a keyword analysis (Scott & Tribble, 2006), a frequency analysis was run to determine which non-function words were used the most often. After the word "culture(s)" was found to be used most frequently by both groups, sociocultural theory (Kramsch, 2000; Lantolf, 2000) proved to be the best-suited approach to describe how the two groups used the word differently. Lantolf (2000) described Vygotsky's view of human nature, by writing that humans do not simply "act directly on the physical world" but, rather, they employ symbolic tools and signs to "mediate and regulate [their] relationships with others and with [themselves] and thus change the nature of these relationships" (p. 1). Applying this concept to language

learners, Kramsch (2000) described a situation where a language learner might use a newly learned linguistic feature, serving as a tool, to do a particular assignment. Completing the assignment, they would use this tool as a sign to convey meaning to an audience. However, at the same time, using this tool as a sign to convey meaning could ultimately influence the way in which this individual viewed reality. Furthering this use of sociocultural theory, it was determined that describing students' use of "culture(s)" as a "scientific concept" versus an "everyday" or "spontaneous concept" helped to explain the differences between the two post-study abroad groups. Wells (1994) summarized the difference between everyday and spontaneous concepts:

In early childhood, children learn to construe the world of their experience in terms of the spontaneous concepts that are realized in the dynamic, narrative modes of spoken language that occur in everyday activities in the life of the family and local community. By contrast, the development of scientific concepts occurs chiefly in the course of educational activities that emphasize reflective and metarepresentational thinking and takes place in later childhood through the gradual appropriation and mastery of genres of written discourse, which have themselves evolved over time to mediate the social construction of scientific knowledge. (no page provided)

While this excerpt describes child development, the description was well-suited to explain the differences between the two groups of study abroad students.

Using experiential learning theory combined with transformative learning theory and the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity proved well-suited for describing the process of becoming interculturally competent in articles one and two. Sociocultural theory in the third

article allowed for a description of the use of scientific versus everyday concepts to differentiate how two post-study abroad groups used the word “culture(s)” differently.

### **Data Analysis**

A number of strategies were used to move from the large volume of text available for analysis from students’ coursework portfolios to thematically relevant examples that could be analyzed with the above mentioned frameworks. Data for the first article was coded using the frameworks outlined above by extracting instances where students were examining experiences abroad or their existing frames of reference. For example, any instance was included where the students reflected on ‘why’ or ‘how’ culture manifested itself a certain way, or, contrastingly, any time they made a judgment about their own or others’ cultural perspectives, or a judgment about the way culture manifested itself. After these instances were selected, a thematic analysis was done to observe how the students reflections did, or did not, relate to experiential learning theory, transformative learning theory, and the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity’s dimensions of ethnocentric and ethnorelative worldviews. Similarly, data in article two were coded to examine students’ points of view with regards to interactions with other cultures, whether foreign or domestic. The codes used characterized a number of categories including: examining habits of mind/frames of reference, interest in the “other,” ethnocentric or ethnorelative viewpoint, experience as trigger for reflection, encounters with other cultures, extension of a course concept to real-world, and oversimplification of cultural differences. While there were a number of instances in each category, the items included in the category “examining habits of mind/frame of reference” provided the richest examples for analysis, as it was in this category that Mezirow’s transformative learning theory could provide an explanation for the differences between the four participating students. Nevertheless, all three frameworks

were used to discuss instances where students critically examined either their own or others' frames of reference or habits of mind.

As noted above, a frequency analysis was run in order to determine what words were used the most in two groups of post-study abroad students: one group who enrolled in the course, and another who had not. Once the frequency analysis found that the word "culture(s)" was used the most often by both groups, a series of codes was used to categorize the use of the word. Initially, the data was coded using the building blocks of culture offered in the textbook: culture is learned, culture involves perceptions and values, culture involves feelings, culture is shared, culture is expressed as behavior, and culture is dynamic and heterogeneous (Martin & Nakayama, 2011, p. 29). However, because the data of the non-course students did not align with these codes, data were additionally coded following emergent themes. Given that the two groups used "culture(s)" in such different ways, an example was selected from each course participant to represent each individual coded category. A thematic counterpart was then selected from the non-course participants to match the meaning/intent of each course participant response. In this way, the closest level of comparison possible could be made in order to better illuminate how the participants' use of the word "culture(s)" differed.

## **Results**

### **Unpacking the Study Abroad Experience: An Intercultural Process (Appendix 1)**

The first article of this dissertation sought to answer the question, "How does intercultural competence develop in post-study abroad students over the span of a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural communication skills through critical reflection?" The focus of this article was on the experiences of two post-study abroad students, who had studied abroad on credit-bearing programs, did not grow up in bicultural homes, did not



attend international schools as children, and had enrolled in a three-credit general education course entitled, “Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad” in Fall 2011. Data was collected in the form of both quantitative data, including pre- and post-CCAI scores, and qualitative data including a coursework portfolio.

Liz was a first semester junior art history major, who had recently returned from studying abroad on a five-week program in Orvieto, Italy sponsored by her home institution. This was not Liz’ first time studying abroad, however, as she had spent the summer before her sophomore year studying abroad in London, England for five weeks, and had also participated in a short-term exchange sponsored through her high school to France. Liz entered the course as an extremely articulate student who was capable of reflecting on her experiences and already changing the course of her actions while abroad. However, Liz’ reflections upon her experiences were somewhat superficial and vague at the beginning of the course, noting that she had “the biggest culture shock of my life” (Online Discussion, 8/30/2011) without describing what this really meant with concrete examples. Upon return, Liz wrote that she felt like:

I came home from my trip as a little bit of an Italian myself. Now when I see a stray cat on the side of the road, my first instinct is to try and pet it regardless of if it looks mean or dirty. (Online Discussion, 8/30/2011)

While Liz did have the strategies to learn more abroad by enrolling in language classes, for example, her reflection on her experience was largely superficial. Liz did not explain what it meant to have “the biggest culture shock of my life” or to “feel like a fish out of water.” Her experience abroad did not serve as a catalyst for deeper reflection.

In contrast, her reflections and cultural inquiry change dramatically over the course of the semester. The examples below are drawn from the fourth critical reflection paper (12/1/2011), in

which Liz is intrigued by a concept presented in the textbook that “that not only does culture deeply affect one’s work ethic, but also the lens with which one judges other societies.” Liz noted that after she had a new framework for interpreting her initial judgment, “I realized that my misconstrued signs of laziness was in actuality a form of self-respect for workers.” While she noted that American culture was different, she wrote that “Italians simply worked to lived, while Americans live to work. Neither being wrong.” Liz was able to shift her American frame of reference that a two-hour siesta in the afternoon was a sign of laziness to the interpretation that it was actually a sign of self-respect for workers and, moreover, that neither the American nor that Italian way was correct.

Patrick was a first semester junior accounting major, who had just returned from studying abroad on an eight-week program in Bangalore, India sponsored by his home institution. While this was Patrick’s first time studying abroad on a credit-bearing program, he had traveled extensively before this experience in areas ranging from Europe to Mongolia to Singapore. Patrick’s reflections at the beginning of the course were strikingly ethnocentric. In one example, Patrick used a concept introduced in the textbook, Geert Hofstede’s theory of value dimensions, to actually reinforce his ethnocentric view, “The police hassled me several times for bribes, getting tourist information from the government required a bribe, and even the school teachers there are required complete blind obedience from their students” (First Critical Response Paper, 9/19/2011). In these instances Patrick ethnocentrically used the negative dissonance he felt as examples to discuss a concept learned in class. However, at the end of the semester, when Patrick reflected on this same instance, he actually used the same theory of value dimensions to reinterpret his original conclusion:

Learning about power distance helped me understand why the teachers in Bangalore behaved the way they did. They did not ignore any questions or comments we had during class because they did not care about my opinions as I originally thought, but rather because they had a bigger distance of power between students and teachers. (Final Exam, 12/2/2011)

Patrick had a negative experience abroad, initially came to his own reflections and conclusions about why this was, and interpreted further instances of this in other settings. However, after completing the entire course, he was able to reexamine his original observations and reflection, and, in a transformative manner, conclude with new ethnorelative interpretations that could be applied to other settings.

Over the course of the semester, Liz and Patrick were both able to use their concrete experiences abroad as the subject of reflection and observation within a new framework of interpretation ultimately leading them from ethnocentric to ethnorelative points of view. Their CCAI scores, however, indicated that they had become less able to adapt cross-culturally. Liz' total score dropped from 210 to 203, while Patrick's dropped much more from 255 to 234. Both students had the largest drops on the sub-scores of emotional resilience and personal autonomy. While Davis and Finney (2006) noted that the CCAI showed considerable overlap between the factors and should not be used until further studies could be done, Nguyen, Biderman, and McNary (2010) found the two sub-scores of emotional resilience and personal autonomy to be predictive of the dependent variable used in the study. There are a number of interpretations of this result including that either the qualitative or quantitative data was not accurately portraying the changes that transpired in the students over the course of the semester. Another, more likely, conclusion is that students may have had a heightened sense of achievement as a result of

studying abroad (Downey, 2005; Meyer-Lee, 2005; Savicki, 2008b; Williams, 2009), but after returning home and processing their experiences they completed the self-reported CCAI at the end of the semester with a more realistic perception of adapting cross-culturally.

### **Pre-Study Abroad Intercultural Preparation: Examining Shifting Frames of Reference (Appendix 2)**

Attempting to address the second question, “Are there noticeable differences in the development of intercultural competence in pre-study abroad students who are enrolled in a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural competence?” four participants were selected who had not studied abroad, had a relatively small amount of international experience previous to the course, and had not grown up internationally or in bi-cultural homes. Distinguishing between the four students, two students (Noelle and Tina) had large gains on the CCAI sub-score of emotional resilience, while the other two (Jennifer and Aaron) had little to no gains.

Through the lenses of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000), and ethnorelative/centric worldviews (Bennett, 1993) a selection of students’ work in the coursework portfolio was examined. Items coded in the category “examining habits of mind/frame of reference” were found to display the richest data for analysis. Ultimately, the two students who made large gains on the CCAI were found to have examined ‘why’ and ‘how’ cultures manifest themselves as they do at the stage of reflection and observation, while those students who did not make large gains were only able to accept that cultural difference existed.

To provide brief examples, Noelle, examined the topic of identity writing that wearing certain clothing types could be an outward expression of one’s values or beliefs by writing that someone who wears TOMS shoes, where one pair is sent to a child in need for every pair that is

bought, “may pride themselves on doing something for others who are less fortunate” (Critical Reflection Paper, 10/12/2011). Further, she noted that learning more “about cultural differences and how different viewpoints are taken” that might be different from her own could actually provide her with different ways of viewing the world (Final Exam, 12/4/2011). Tina’s reflections transpired in a similar way.

In a very poignant example, Tina responded to an online post that a classmate had written that described her classmates’ Vietnamese friends going to a Vietnamese restaurant and refusing to speak Vietnamese. Tina’s classmate depicted this in a fairly negative light, but Tina was intrigued to discover ‘how’ or ‘why’ the Vietnamese may have refused to speak their native language to anyone but their parents, “Do you think that they don't find the[ir] language as important as [E]nglish because the[y] came to ‘the land of opportunity.’ Maybe they think all the opportunity is here” (Online Discussion, 9/29/2011). Tina appeared to not only question the wide-held notion of America as the “land of opportunity,” but she was also trying to conceive of reasons as to why these people acted as they did. In contrast, Jennifer and Aaron did not attempt to seek reasons for ‘how’ or ‘why’ one’s cultural or personal background affected their actions.

Both Jennifer and Aaron used concepts described in the book to justify their actions regarding conflict, rather than trying to understand how another person may have had an equally valid way of dealing with conflict. Jennifer described that her brother asked her for money once, and instead of accepting her answer of no, “he decided it was time for a fight to start” (Online Discussion, 10/27/2011). She noted that she made the active decision to avoid further escalation by adopting an accommodating style and calling her sister in to mediate the situation. What Jennifer did not do was attempt to describe why her brother may not have had or not have used a different conflict style, or why their difference in conflict style may have led to the escalation

point that her brother wanted to start a fight. Similarly, Aaron described a series of conflicts with a female friend that continuously erupted because they used two different styles of conflict communication. However, while he was able to note this difference, he was unable to value his friend's conflict style, writing, "In the book it says people that use [accommodating] style try to make sure that the conflict doesn't get out of control. That is exactly what I did not want. I never wanted things to get out of control" (Online Discussion, 10/28/2011). Neither Aaron nor Jennifer was able to search for 'how' or 'why' others acted as they did, and in these examples, they were also not capable of valuing another's conflict style, potentially a reflection of worldview or frame of reference, as equal to their own. From a transformative learning perspective, neither Aaron nor Jennifer was able to transform their experiences to shift their frames of reference.

While this study linked this style of transforming experience to represent an ethnorelative worldview with changes on the CCAI's sub-scores of emotional resilience, this finding cannot be generalized beyond the given population. Additionally, because this study looked at pre-departure students, it is unclear how students would perform in a study abroad environment. There are a number of pedagogical implications to be considered that will be discussed below.

### **Moving Beyond "I Learned How to Pack Light and Effectively:" Helping Students**

#### **Translate Study Abroad Experiences for the Real World (Appendix 3)**

The last article sought to answer the question, "Are post-study abroad students who enrolled in a course designed to foster the development of intercultural competence better able to articulate what they learned than post-study abroad students who did not enroll in such a course?" by examining two groups of post-study abroad students. One group ( $n = 6$ ) had enrolled in the intercultural communication course outlined above, while the second group ( $n =$

34) had not. The subject of analysis was the final exams submitted by course students, and an online questionnaire completed by non-course students that asked similar questions to the final exam prompt. Course students wrote an average of 1,408 words per student, while non-course students wrote approximately 160 words.

In order to make these two corpora more comparable, a frequency analysis was run in order to determine what the most frequently used words by each group were. The frequency analysis uncovered that “culture(s)” was the most frequently used non-function word by both groups: 89 times by course students and 67 times by non-course students. The course students used the word “culture(s)” slightly more often than the non-course students. Sociocultural theory, one aspect of which looks at how humans use symbolic tools and signs “to mediate and regulate [their] relationships with others and with [themselves] and thus change the nature of these relationships” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1), was used to examine how participants used the word “culture(s)” to articulate what they had learned abroad.

Students’ use of the word “culture(s)” was initially coded according to the building blocks of culture outlined in the textbook, but because non-course students had not used “culture(s)” in this way, emergent themes were also used to code data. Once data was coded, an example from each course participant was matched with a thematic topic from a non-course student to examine if the participants differed in how they used the word. It was found that students in the course used more scientific concepts, whereas students who had not enrolled in the course were limited to articulating what they had learned abroad by more everyday concepts. The following table outlines an example of one of the more extreme divergences between the groups.

Table 4.1 <i>Coded Comparisons between Course and Non-course Student Responses</i>	
<i>Culture Shock –</i> Course Student Response	<i>Ethnocentric view of culture —</i> Non-Course Student Response
I can see now with my initial trip to Japan, I didn't quite have the necessary skills to cope with stay[ing] in an environment there that was so foreign to what I had known. . . . Though I was able to overcome [homesickness], . . . if I had known what I know now I would've been able to avoid feeling that way or at least been better able to cope with it as I would've known that I was at the bottom or second phase of the U-curve theory, the state of feeling culture shock. (Luis, Final Exam)	I realize how much trouble I have living in such a macho society and accepting that sort of culture as simply another way of life coming from my background which is very much in education and open-minded ideas just makes me want to scream. (Becky)

What Luis was able to do was describe his discomfort abroad as a result of culture shock. It must be noted that Luis highlighted overcoming his culture shock, while Becky does not appear to have done so while abroad. Becky could only describe her discomfort being a result of living in a macho society that she seemed to be noting is uneducated and closed-minded. Less severely, the following example highlights another difference between students articulating their discomfort abroad.

Table 4.2 <i>Coded Comparisons between Course and Non-course Student Responses</i>	
<i>Culture involves feelings –</i> Course Student Response	<i>Learned to be flexible and open-minded towards other cultures —</i> Non-Course Student Response
I can still vividly recall many frustrating moments of unproductive culture clash, as well as, recall satisfaction experiences of successful intercultural communication. (Patrick, Final Exam)	I think it made me both much more open minded and accepting of other ways of living at the same time as making me frustrated with all of Latin American culture and being able to come to reason with that is something I need to work on. (Erika)

Both students are talking about the frustrating nature of coming into contact with a culture that is different from one's own. However, what Patrick did was to describe these instances as



“unproductive culture clashes,” while Erika noted that she became more open minded, yet concurrently contradicted herself by saying that it made her frustrated. Patrick was able to articulate that he was frustrated with a clash of cultures, while Erika was not able to understand why she was frustrated, only that she needed to work on it.

This study concluded that as a result of having a metacognitive cultural framework in which to describe their experiences and the related “scientific concepts,” course students were better able to articulate what they had learned abroad. The results of this study are limited to the population examined, and noted that future studies could benefit from having more comparable corpora where neither groups was graded for their responses.

### **Limitations**

While an attempt was made to be as thorough as possible in selecting quantitative and qualitative measures for this study, there are limitations that must be addressed. First and foremost, in examining the data from post-study abroad students, studying abroad is highly variable (Wilkinson, 2000). There are any number of personal and programmatic variables that could have affected students’ initial experiences abroad. For example, Liz participated in a program in a Western European country. While she did not speak of previous visits to Italy before her study abroad, she had already studied abroad in London, England as a college student and in France as a high school student for a short period of time. It is likely that her experiences in, and subsequent reflections about, Italy were already shaped by an understanding of some pan-European cultural phenomenon (e.g., increased access to public transportation, style of dress, or even social/political dispositions) in comparison to her Northern American background. As such, not controlling for this variable, but examining the reflections of a student like this in comparison to a student who potentially studied abroad for the first time in a culture extremely

different from their home culture could have skewed the data. Additionally, while it was found that both Liz and Patrick displayed more ethnorelative worldviews at the end of the course, it is possible that they were pre-disposed to this change by virtue of enrolling in a course advertised to maximize their experience. Additionally, either one, or both, of them may have displayed an ethnorelative worldview if different questions had been asked of them at the beginning of the course. Further, this study looked at how giving students frameworks and a forum for them to process their experience allowed a shift from an ethnocentric to ethnorelative point of view in an experiential and transformative account of learning. It is unclear, however, how these students would have used this course if they had had access to some of these frameworks to process their experiences either before departing for study abroad, or while abroad.

In the case of the CCAI, sub-score changes aligned with experiential learning theory, transformative learning theory, and ethnocentric versus ethnorelative worldviews in the second article, while they did not in the first. As such, there are a number of limitations to consider. Despite the findings of Nguyen et al. (2010) that the sub-scores of emotional resilience and personal autonomy were predictive of their dependent variable, it is possible, as Davis and Finey (2006) noted, that the CCAI may not validly assess cross-cultural adaptability. Thus, it is possible that using the CCAI as one aspect of the intercultural competence does not, or cannot, align with the 'difficult-to-pin-point' nature of intercultural competence. Additionally, Sinicrope et al. (2007) noted that self-reported measures might not be reliable for students who have not yet had much intercultural experience. In the two articles that used the CCAI as one element of intercultural competence, the pre-departure score for emotional resilience aligned with intercultural learning, whereas neither the overall nor most of the sub-scores aligned with intercultural learning as conceived of in this study. It must also be noted, however, that while

students were shown to either have become more interculturally competent, or not, without direct observation in a future intercultural encounter, it is impossible to document with any accuracy how students would actually behave; particularly those who had not yet studied abroad (Martin, 1989). Of additional importance, the small number of subjects used in the first two articles is in no way predictive or indicative of any generalizability beyond this study.

In the third article, the different corpora used may have disfavored how post-study abroad students articulated their learning outcomes. While the course students wrote an average of 1,408 words per student, non-course students wrote approximately 160 words per student. Thus, while the non-course students used the word “culture(s)” slightly more, on average, than course students, they were not required to give a response as lengthy as the course students. Additionally, the added element that course students were submitting their answers in a graded format may have influenced how they answered the questions, ultimately writing what they expected that the teacher/researcher would want or expect from them, rather than what they actually thought or believed.

### **Future Studies**

Given the limitations noted above, there are a number of suggestions for future research in the area of intervention strategies to enhance student learning in study abroad. One pedagogical implication that could be assessed in future studies was uncovered in article two. If the deeper cultural inquiry of asking ‘how’ and ‘why’ cultural differences occur led to higher gains on the CCAI’s sub-score of emotional resilience, future studies should try and assess whether explicit guidance using this line of inquiry leads to higher gains, either on the CCAI, or potentially on the IDI. A study of this kind would also need a control group, however, which might be difficult given that some students would probably also attempt to seek deeper cultural

meaning on their own in the control groups. As such, assessing quantitative and qualitative data for both groups would be imperative to make sure to include only students in the control group who did not use this type of inquiry in their coursework.

Another unanswered question from this study that could be assessed is how students successively develop intercultural competence pre-, during, and post-study abroad. La Brack and Bathurst (2012), for example, have given positive quantitative outcomes, but more should be done to ascertain what differentiates more successful students from less successful students, such as in the case of Anderson and Cunningham (2009). In this endeavor, it would also be necessary to target a specific outcome, such as intercultural competence, and align it with learning frameworks. This study found experiential learning theory, transformative learning theory, and ethnocentric versus ethnorelative worldviews to be helpful in explaining the process, but adding in the element of the IDI might enable us to better quantify at what point students incorporate others' worldviews, or potentially even the nature of what it is at what point in time that incites this type of shift. To this end, it would also be helpful to specifically target students' worldviews over the course of a semester pre- or post-study abroad, or during a study abroad itself. Shadowing students during their stay abroad, or through more than one phase of integration into such a program, could also shed light onto the process of becoming interculturally competent. In this way, it might also be possible to examine whether students can put into action what they believe that they had learned from the course, as many stated in their final exams.

In regards to students articulating what they learned while abroad, it would also be important to replicate the findings of the third article that students who enrolled in the course were better able to use concepts learned in the course to communicate what they learned abroad. However, such an endeavor should attempt to have two more comparable sets of data. For

example, one could have both post-study abroad students who are enrolled in a similar course and post-study abroad students not enrolled in such a course attend an unpacking session facilitated by career services or even a study abroad office. With the incentive that students could learn how to articulate what they learned while abroad for the purposes of a job interview or graduate school application, students could come to the session with pre-written answers to potential interview questions or a cover letter. This would allow for more comparable corpora. One might also want to include a follow-up to assess not only how students changed their cover letter or answers as the result of such a session, but also to compare of the effect of a course versus a single or multiple sessions. Additionally, a follow-up could also allow for tracking student progress through job interviews. If job interviews are held on campus, and with both employer and interviewee permission, it might even be possible to compare written articulation with oral or actual performance. Of additional interest might be to assess how students articulate their learning outcomes in relation to their majors, as it is hypothesized that those in the social sciences and humanities might be able to better articulate culture learning outcomes, whereas those in business or healthcare, for example, might be able to better articulate applied learning outcomes.

### **Conclusions**

Within the scope of the limitations outlined above and what can be done in the future, there are a number of conclusions that this study can make. First and foremost, with regards to student learning post-study abroad, it is imperative that students not only have a forum to process their experiences, but also that they have frameworks with which to reexamine their experiences. Additionally, it appears important that students revisit their initial reflections and judgments at the end of the semester to complete the learning cycle. While experiential learning theory was

able to describe the use of an experience as the starting point for critical reflection, it could not describe how students shifted their reflections from an ethnocentric to an ethnorelative worldview. Transformative learning supplemented the description by adding the element of shifting a frame of reference. In the case of Patrick, his experience incited reflections, but it was not until he was able to critically examine how his own culture shaped his original interpretations that he displayed transformative learning as a result of the experience of studying abroad to represent an ethnorelative point of view. Further, in comparing post-study abroad students who had enrolled in the course versus those who had not, it appeared that those students who had enrolled in the course were better able to articulate what they had learned because they had access to scientific concepts, in Vygotskian terms, in regards to culture, while non-course students were limited to the use of everyday concepts that rendered their culture learning outcomes superficial. As a result of the conclusion that course students could better articulate what they had learned, it was hypothesized in a larger context, that these students might also fare better in a job interview because they had thought more about how to apply their learning to new settings in addition to having the vocabulary to articulate their learning in a specific way (e.g., Liz examining the cultural differences she observed in Greek life, and Patrick examining culture shock for an outsider participating in an unfamiliar religious ceremony).

In the case studies offered in article two as insights into the process of more and less successful intercultural learning, it was hypothesized that deeper cultural inquiry led to larger increases on the CCAI's sub-score of emotional resilience. The two students who made large gains sought not only to accept that cultural differences existed, but they also sought reasons for 'how' and 'why' cultural differences existed, or why individuals may have chosen to act or represent themselves in a certain way as a result of their individual or group cultural background.

## REFERENCES

- Adler, N. J. (1981). Re-entry: Managing cross-cultural transitions. *Group & Organization Management*, 6(3), 341-356.
- Alred, G., & Byram, M. (2002). Becoming an intercultural mediator: A longitudinal study of residence abroad. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 23(5), 339-352.
- Anderson, L. C. (2005). *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Anderson, C. S. & Cunningham, K. (2009). Developing ethnographic skills and reflective practices connected to study abroad. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. 63-84). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Antor, H. (2006). Multikulturalismus, Interkulturalität und Transkulturalität: Perspektiven für interdisziplinäre Forschung und Lehre. In H. Antor (Ed.), *Inter- und transkulturelle studien: Theoretische Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Praxis* (pp. 25-40). Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, Winter GmbH.
- Belz, J.A, & Thorne, S.L. (2005). Introduction: Internet-mediated Intercultural Foreign Language Education and the Intercultural Speaker. In J. A. Belz & S. L. Thorne (Eds.), *Internet-mediated intercultural foreign language education* (pp. viii–xxv). Boston: Heinle & Heinle.
- Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10(2), 179-196.

- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21-71). Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc.
- Bennett, J. M., & Bennett, M. J. (2001). Developing intercultural sensitivity: An integrative approach to global and domestic diversity. *The Diversity Symposium*.
- Brabant, S., Palmer, C. E., & Gramling, R. (1990) Returning Home: An Empirical Investigation of Cross-Cultural Reentry. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 14, 387-404.
- Brewer, E. & Cunningham, K. (2009a). *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Brewer, E. & Cunningham, K. (2009b). Capturing study abroad's transformative potential. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. 1-19). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Brewer, E., & Solberg, J. (2009). Preparatory courses for students going to divergent sites. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. 41-62). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Cohen, A. D., Paige, R. M., Shively, R. L., Emert, H. A., & Hoff, J. (2005a). Integrating culture and language learning strategies into the classroom at home and abroad. In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 103-108). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Cohen, A. D., Paige, R. M., Shively, R. L., Emert, H. A., & Hoff, J. (2005b). *Maximizing study abroad through language and culture strategies: Research on students, study abroad*



- program professionals, and language instructors.* Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE Publications Inc.
- Davis, S. L., & Finney, S. J. (2006). A factor analytic study of the cross-cultural adaptability inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement, 66,* 318-330.
- de Nooy, J., & Hanna, B. E. (2003). Cultural information gathering by Australian students in France. *Language and Intercultural Communication, 3*(1), 64-80.
- Deardorff, D. K. (2004). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization at institutions of higher education in the United States. Unpublished dissertation. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2006a). Assessing Intercultural Competence in Study Abroad Students. In M.Byram & A.Feng (Eds.) *Living and Studying Abroad: Research and Practice* (pp. 232-255). Great Britian: MPG Books Ltd.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2006b) Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 10,* 241-266.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2008). Intercultural Competence: A definition, model, and implications for education abroad. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 32-52). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Downey, G. (2005). From personal reflection to social investigation: Undergraduate research as an antidote to autobiographical cliché. In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing*

- undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 117-121).  
Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Dupuy, B. (2006). Global simulation: Experiential pedagogy and preparing students for study abroad at home. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Insight from study abroad for language programs*, (pp. 134-156). Boston, MA: AAUSC.
- Einbeck, K. (2002). Using literature to promote cultural fluency in study abroad programs. *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 35(1), 59-67.
- Fantini, A. E. (2006). Exploring and assessing intercultural competence. Retrieved May 1, 2007, from [http://www.sit.edu/publications/docs/feil\\_research\\_report.pdf](http://www.sit.edu/publications/docs/feil_research_report.pdf)
- Freed, B. F. (1995). What makes us think that students who study abroad become fluent? In B.F. Freed (Ed.) *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 123-148).  
Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Gardner, P., Gross, L., & Steglitz, I. (2008). Unpacking Your Study Abroad Experience: Critical Reflection for Workplace Competencies. CERI Research Brief 1-2008. Collegiate Employment Research Institute. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.
- Gore, J. E. (2005). *Dominant beliefs and alternative voices: Discourse, belief, and gender in American study abroad*. New York: Routledge.
- Gudykunst, W. B., & Hammer, M. R. (1983). Basic training design: Approaches to intercultural training. In D. Landis & R. W. Brislin (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural learning, Vol. 1: Issues in theory and design* (pp. 118-154). New York: Pergamon.
- Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27(4), 421-443.

- Hoff, J. G. & Paige, R. M. (2008). A strategies-based approach to culture and language learning in education abroad programming. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 17, 89-106.
- Hunter, W. (2004). Knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences necessary to become globally competent. Unpublished dissertation. Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University.
- Jacobson, W., Schleicher, D., & Maureen, B. (1999). Portfolio assessment of intercultural competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(3), 467-492.
- Kearney, E. (2010). Cultural immersion in the foreign language classroom: Some narrative possibilities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 332-336.
- Kelley, C., & Meyers, J. (1992). *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory manual*. La Jolla: CA.
- Kelley, C., & Myers, J. (1995a). *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory*. Minneapolis, MN: National Computer Systems.
- Kelley, C., & Myers, J. (1995b) *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory manual*. Minneapolis, MN: National Computer Systems.
- Kelly, G. A. (1963). *A theory of personality: The psychology of personal constructs*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Kinginger, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92, 1-124.
- Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

- Kramersch, C. (1993). *Context and Culture in Language Teaching*. Bristol: Oxford University Press.
- Kramersch, C. (2000). Social discursive constructions of self in L2 learning. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 133-154). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- La Brack, B. (1993). The missing linkage: The process of integrating orientation and reentry. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 241-279). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- La Brack, L. & Bathurst, B. (2012). Anthropology, Intercultural Communication, and Study Abroad. In M. Vande Berg, R. M. Paige, & K. Hemming Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 188-214). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 1-26). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Mangan, K. (2011). Business Schools Worldwide Fall Short on Globalization, Report Says. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Charlottesville, VA.
- Martin, J. N. (1989). Predeparture orientation: Preparing college sojourners for intercultural interaction. *Communication Education*, 38(3), 249-257.
- Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2011). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Medina-López-Portillo, A. (2004). Intercultural learning assessment: The link between program duration and the development of intercultural sensitivity. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 179-199.

- Meyer-Lee, E. (2005). Bringing it home: Follow-up courses for study abroad returnees. In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 114-116). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-33). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. & Associates (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Miller, S. (2009). International Affairs Update. University of Arizona.
- MLA Report (2007). *Foreign languages and higher education : New structures for a changed world*. MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages.
- Montrose, L. (2002). International study and experiential learning: The academic context. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8, 1-15.
- Müller-Hartmann, A. (2005). Learning How to Teach Intercultural Communicative Competence via Telecollaboration: A Model for Language Teacher Education. In J. A. Belz & S. L. Thorne (Eds.), *Internet-mediated Intercultural Foreign Language Education* (pp. 63-84). Boston, MA: Heinle & Heinle.
- Nguyen, N. T., Biderman, M. D., & McNary, L. D. (2010). A validation study of the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 12(2), 112-129.
- OpenDoors. (2012). *Fast facts*. Institute of International Education. Retrieved January 20, 2013 from: <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fast-Facts>

Orahood, T., Woolf, J., & Kruze, L. (2008). Study abroad and career paths of business students.

*Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 17, 133-141.

Paige, R. M., Cohen, A. D., & Shively, R. L. (2004). Assessing the Impact of a Strategies-Based

Curriculum on Language and Culture Learning Abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 253-276.

Paige, R. M., & Martin, J. N. (1983). Ethical issues and ethics in cross-cultural training. In D.

Landins & R. W. Brislin (Eds.), *Handbook of intercultural training, Vol. 1: Issues in theory and design* (pp. 36-60). New York: Pergamon.

Passarelli, A. M., & Kolb, D. A. (2012). Using experiential learning theory to promote student

learning and development in programs of education abroad. In M. Vande Berg, R.M.

Paige, & K. Hemming Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 137-161). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Pertusa-Seva, I. & Stewart, M. (2000). Virtual Study Abroad 101: Expanding the horizons of the

Spanish curriculum. *Foreign Language Annals*, 33 (4), 438-442.

Pruegger, V. J., & Rogers, T. B. (1994). Cross-cultural sensitivity training: Methods and

assessments. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 18(3), 369-387.

Pusch, M. D. & Merrill, M. (2008). Reflection, reciprocity, responsibility, and committed

relativism: Intercultural development through international service-learning. In V.

Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 297-321). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

Rivers, W. P. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of home stay placements on language

gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31(4), 492-500.

- Root, E., & Ngampornchai, A. (2012). "I Came Back as a New Human Being": Student Descriptions of Intercultural Competence Acquired Through Education Abroad Experiences. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 1-20.
- Ruben, B. D. (1976). Assessing communication competency for intercultural adaptation. *Group and Organization Studies*, 1, 334-354.
- Savicki, V. (2008a). *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Savicki, V. (2008b). Experiential and affective education for international educators. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 74-91). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Schulz, R. (2008). Language, Culture and Transcultural German Studies: Where Do They Meet? In S. Martinson & R. Schulz (Eds.), *Jahrbuch für Internationale Germanistik Reihe A-Band 94: Transcultural German Studies/ Deutsch als Fremdsprache: Building Bridges/ Brücken bauen* (pp. 87-98). Berlin: Peter Lang.
- Schulze-Engler, F. (2006). Von 'Inter' zu 'Trans' : Gesellschaftliche, kulturelle und literarische Übergänge. In H. Antor (Ed.), *Inter- und Transkulturelle Studien: Theoretische Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Praxis* (pp. 41-54). Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, Winter GmbH.
- Scott, M & Tribble, C.(2006). *Textual patterns: keywords and corpus analysis in language education*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Seidl, M. (1998). Language and Culture: Towards a Transcultural Competence in Language Learning. *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 34(2), 101-113.

- Sinicrope, C., Norris, J., & Watanabe, Y. (2007). Understanding and Assessing Intercultural Competence: A Summary of Theory, Research, and Practice (Technical Report for the Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project). *Second Language Studies*, 26 (1), 1-58.
- Solberg, J. & Brockington, J. L. (2005). The Kalamazoo Project in Intercultural Communication (KPIC). In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 96-102). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Straffon, D. A. (2003). Assessing the intercultural sensitivity of high school students attending an international school. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 487–501.
- Szkudlarek, N. (2010). Reentry – A review of the literature. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 34(1), 1-21.
- Thorne, S. L. & Payne, J. S. (2005). Evolutionary Trajectories, Internet-mediated Expression, and Language Education. *CALICO Journal*, 22(3), 371-397.
- Trooboff, S., Vande Berg, M., & Rayman, J. (2007). Employer attitudes toward study abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 15, 17-33.
- Vande Berg, M. (2009). Intervening in student learning abroad: a research-based inquiry. *Intercultural Education*, 20, 15-27.
- Vande Berg, M., Connor-Linton, J., & Paige, M. R. (2009). The Georgetown consortium project: Interventions for student learning abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 18, 1-75.
- Vande Berg, M., Paige, R. M., & Hemming Lou, K. (2012). *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.



Wells, G. (1994). Learning and teaching "scientific concepts": Vygotsky's ideas revisited.

Vygotsky and the Human Sciences, Moscow.

Wildner-Bassett, M. (2008). A Social Model of Transcultural Learning: Applied Cultural

Linguistics and a Pedagogy of Discussion. In S. Martinson & R. Schulz (Eds.) *Jahrbuch*

*für Internationale Germanistik Reihe A-Band 94: Transcultural German Studies/ Deutsch*

*als Fremdsprache: Building Bridges/ Brücken bauen* (pp. 99-118). Berlin: Peter Lang.

Wilkinson, S. (2000). Emerging Questions about Study Abroad. *ADFL Bulletin*, 32(1), 36-41.

Wilkinson, S. (2005). Articulating study abroad: The depth dimension. In C. M. Barrette & K.

Paesani (Eds.), *Language program articulation: Developing a theoretical foundation* (pp.

44-58). Boston: Thomson-Heinle.

Williams, T. R. (2005). Exploring the impact of study abroad on students' intercultural

communication skills: Adaptability and sensitivity. *Journal of Studies in International*

*Education*, 9(4), 356-371.

Williams, T. R. (2009). The reflective model of intercultural competency: a multidimensional,

qualitative approach to study abroad assessment. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal*

*of Study Abroad*, 8, 289-305.

## **APPENDIX A- UNPACKING THE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE: AN INTERCULTURAL PROCESS**

### **Abstract**

Conventional wisdom holds that if a college or university would like to prepare its students for a globalized world, sending students abroad to increase their exposure to foreign languages, cultures, and politics would be an effective response. In fact, many faculty members and administrators may have numerous personal or second-hand accounts as positive anecdotal evidence to support this idea. However, as researchers have begun to investigate specific study abroad outcomes, the ‘myths’ of a panacea effect in study abroad leading to language or culture learning have come into question. Einbeck (2002) wrote, “We might also ask why we expect study abroad students to become culturally fluent during their sojourns abroad, whether this is a realistic expectation, and how we as teachers can improve their odds” (p. 59). This study attempted to add to the small body of study abroad research focusing on intervention strategies to promote culture learning in post-study abroad students. It specifically addresses how a course designed to maximize the study abroad experience allowed two post-study abroad students to unpack and process their experiences by examining their coursework portfolio through the lens of the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (Bennett, 1993), experiential learning theory (Kolb, 1984), and transformative learning theory (Mezirow, 2000).

*Keywords: reentry, intercultural, study abroad, transformative learning, experiential learning*

## Introduction

A number of studies have shown that being abroad is not enough to promote language or culture learning (Alred & Byram, 2002; de Nooy & Hanna, 2003; Einbeck, 2002; Freed, 1995; Kearney, 2010; Kinginger, 2008; Kinginger, 2009; Rivers, 1998; Wilkinson, 2000). To address these shortcomings, researchers have examined what programmatic changes can be made to prepare students for studying abroad and to support them during their stay abroad (Dupuy, 2006; Einbeck, 2002; Engle & Engle, 2003; Jackson, 2006; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2010; Shively, 2010; Vande Berg, 2009). Additionally, a number of volumes document and describe curricular integration models such as those at the University of Minnesota, and Beloit College and Kalamazoo Colleges (Anderson, 2005; Brewer & Cunningham, 2009a). There are, however, surprisingly few research studies examining the process of developing intercultural competence once students have returned to campus.

In the abroad phase, students may be faced with a number of cultural differences, changes, and even conflicts, yet if the element of reflection is absent, an individual may fail to ever make meaning out of such events (Einbeck, 2002; Kelly, 1963 as cited in Bennett & Bennett, 2001; Williams, 2005). Montrose (2002) wrote, “And so it is also true of study abroad experiences; it is not the activity of leaving one’s homeland that creates learning, but the subsequent analysis of that activity where the real learning begins” (p. 6-7). Further, Merryfield (2003) noted that “reflection on one’s lived experience is a prerequisite for culture learning” (p. 151). Vande Berg (2009) highlighted the necessity of having a cultural mentor while abroad, someone who understands both the host as well as the student’s home culture, in order to help students process their experiences. The cultural mentor can be crucial, yet given the sheer number of abroad programs hosted by any number of academic, private, or non-profit entities, it

might not be feasible for all students to participate in such programs. Nevertheless, academic institutions can still support students in unpacking their experiences by providing them with relevant coursework upon return. The study abroad experience does not have to remain an isolated event in a student's life. The unpacking of one's experience upon return can be the crucial step in moving study abroad from a co-curricular endeavor to a meaningful portion of a student's education, and life.

### **Literature Review: Reentry Research**

A study conducted by Szkudlarek (2010) of the Erasmus University of Rotterdam examined more than 150 articles, book chapters, conference papers, and other publications in order to survey the status quo of reentry literature. Szkudlarek highlighted the different theoretical frameworks of the reentry process (e.g. reverse culture shock, individuals' expectations upon reentry, cultural identity changes, and behavior changes upon return), individual characteristics (e.g. age, personality, religion, marital status, socioeconomic status, prior intercultural experience of reentry), situation variables (e.g. length of sojourn abroad, cultural distance, time since return, contact with host-country individuals, contact with home-country individuals), populations (e.g. corporate repatriates, spouse/partner reentry, students, missionaries), and practices of reentry training. Of note, in reference to reentry training, Szkudlarek underscored that:

While the scientific community does not provide much information on the traditional mode of reentry training and coaching, practitioners in the field have been publishing numerous articles on the role and impact of reentry training in a carefully planned repatriation strategy. Unfortunately, these publications rely on anecdotal evidence, mostly drawn from the personal experiences of the authors. (2010, p. 13)

Although this anecdotal evidence can help inform further intervention strategies, scholars must confirm that research-based approaches also support anecdotal findings.

While limited in number, a few volumes in the U.S. context have been published that highlight both anecdotal and research findings on the post-phase of academic study abroad. Of note, the University of Minnesota hosted a curriculum integration conference in April, 2004, which resulted in a monograph that described many approaches used across the nation (Anderson, 2005). Moving towards a research-based inquiry was a course highlighted in this monograph at the University of Notre Dame (Downey, 2005). Downey highlighted that a post-study abroad course should not be seen as providing students with “closure,” but, rather, as an opportunity to “do” something with what students experienced abroad. In this course, students were provided an opportunity to re-acclimate by discussing their experiences and learning about reentry shock. From there, students used dynamic systems theory and were pushed to “contextualize what they saw by focusing on a single social, economic, political, educational, or health problem that they encountered and to learn more about the prevalence and causes of this problem” (p. 118). Further, students explored how they could promote change in their future lives. In this presentational model, however, we also gain insight into how students learn, as Downey presented “pitfalls” of student reflection. “An ‘achievement’ orientation was a tendency for students to focus on how they had allegedly changed and ‘matured’ by overcoming obstacles in their experiences” (p. 119). Downey warned that for students, viewing their experiences as achievements is largely egocentric and doesn’t transfer “into an understanding of the place or people who often served as the ‘obstacles’ in the achievement narrative” (p. 119). He concluded his contribution by noting that:

Instead of ‘closure,’ I would like to suggest that re-entry education using research can be a further opening that students might not otherwise perceive. . . . I don’t think students are really looking for closure at the end of their experience. I think that they are looking for *meaning*. (p. 120)

In addition to being highlighted in the above-mentioned monograph, Beloit and Kalamazoo Colleges produced a volume entitled “Integrating Study Abroad into the Curriculum,” in which faculty and administration at the two colleges collaborated to present their respective efforts with study abroad integration (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009a). Their book began with six main premises including, “Study abroad provides the opportunity to bridge the (artificial) separation of academic learning from experiential and intercultural learning” and “The more we do to integrate study abroad with the home campus curriculum, the more study abroad will benefit both our students and our campuses” (Brewer & Cunningham, 2009b, p. *xi- xii*). Subsequent chapters attempted to address these issues. Yet, regarding the post-study integration, there is only one chapter that elicited the post-study abroad experience of reflection and meaning making: Anderson and Cunningham’s (2009) research-based inquiry into the development of ethnographic skills and reflection as related to study abroad.

This Kalamazoo course was originally designed to foster skill-learning in listening, observation, description, interpretation, and reflection before studying abroad. Anderson, a historian of religions, and Cunningham, an applied anthropologist, trained and required students to conduct an ethnographic study in a religious, intercultural setting in their home campus community. After completion of the course, the authors coded the students’ final set of

reflections based on a continuum of transformative learning (Cunningham & Grossman, 2008<sup>4</sup>) and found, surprisingly, that the post-study abroad students were all in group one, which demonstrated the “lowest amount of learning” (p. 77). Counter to intuition that post-study abroad students would be able to apply the skills that they had honed while abroad, the authors postulated that, “The students in group 1, particularly the juniors just returned from study abroad, did not expect ongoing dissonance; rather, they expected that, compared with their study abroad experience, the fieldwork for this class would be fairly easy” (p. 77). This study is extraordinarily helpful in understanding what many students need upon return to campus:

This observation is not a complaint about the juniors; rather, it is an acknowledgment that what they need to process and continue their intercultural learning when they return is not another cross-cultural experience; rather, they need a different kind of course – one that is more focused on processing and extracting the learning from the experience they just had. (p. 80-81)

By using a research-based inquiry to understand how students succeed or fail in drawing meaning and applicable skills from their study abroad experiences, educators can shape intervention strategies and techniques to truly benefit students. This moves beyond anecdotal evidence to systematically address both the success stories and the failures. Methodically examining what students *do* when unpacking their experiences allows educators to go one step further to better assist students in making meaning out of their experiences once they return to campus. As such, this study sought to answer the question, “How does intercultural competence develop in post-study abroad students over the span of a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural communication skills through critical reflection?”

---

<sup>4</sup> This continuum is based on an unpublished manuscript and contains six levels of development: gains in knowledge, changes in attitudes, understanding of different perspectives, development of a structural understanding, and changes in frame of reference.

### **Framework for Examining Intercultural Development**

While it may seem intuitive to use a measure of intercultural communicative competence such as Byram (1997) or the top-rated components of intercultural competence outlined in Deardorff (2006b) to examine what students learned as a result of studying abroad, this study attempted to look at the process of developing cultural competence as a result of unpacking one's experiences abroad, not specific outcomes as a result of studying abroad at one time upon return. Measuring intercultural outcomes at any given time before, during, or after studying abroad can provide insight into the effectiveness of any particular program or intervention strategy. However, merely assessing outcomes cannot show how it is that an intervention strategy affects a student's intercultural learning process. To this end, Taylor (1994) noted that:

Without understanding the process of becoming interculturally competent, it is difficult to determine what changes actually take place in the stranger and how those changes take place. Furthermore, without this understanding, it is difficult to better educate adults for successful intercultural experiences. (p. 157)

Deardorff (2006a) agreed that developing intercultural competence is an ongoing process and should not be viewed as, "a direct result of solely one experience..." (p. 259). Certainly, studying abroad can be a strong stimulus for intercultural learning, but, as noted above, if students do not have the opportunity to reflect upon and unpack their experiences in a meaningful manner, they may never learn from an intercultural experience (Einbeck, 2002; Kelly, 1963 as cited in Bennett & Bennett, 2001; Williams, 2005). For this reason, this study combines three models often used in study abroad literature in an attempt to capture how students develop intercultural competence: the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS), experiential learning theory (ELT), and transformative learning theory (TLT).



### **Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS)**

The Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) is a measure often used in study abroad literature to document the outcomes of intercultural learning at various stages of learning (cf. Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). This quantitative inventory is based on the DMIS introduced by Bennett in 1986 and elaborated in 1993 (Bennett, 1986; 1993). This model was originally conceived as means to document the intercultural sensitivity 'level' of individual or groups who were participating in training modules (Bennett, 1986, p. 180). Initially, the model had six stages of development (denial, defense, minimization, acceptance, adaptation, and integration) that were divided into two over-arching categories: ethnocentric and ethnorelative, which are the focus of this study. In the ethnocentric stages (denial, defense, minimization), individuals circumvent cultural differences by foregrounding their own cultural as fundamental in experiencing reality (Bennett & Bennett, 2001, p. 14). In contrast, individuals in the ethnorelative stages (acceptance, adaptation, integration), explore cultural difference by experiencing their own culture in the context of other cultures (p. 14). In order to differentiate this fundamental shift, Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) wrote:

In general, the more ethnocentric orientations can be seen as ways of avoiding cultural difference, either by denying its existence, by raising defenses against it, or by minimizing its importance. The more ethnorelative worldviews are ways of seeking cultural difference, either by accepting its importance, by adapting perspective to take it into account, or by integrating the whole concept into a definition of identity. (p. 426)

To differentiate between the two orientations, someone who is ethnocentric may recognize superficial differences in cultures, but ultimately emphasize a universal similarity in humans across cultures, whereas someone who is ethnorelative is more likely to see their own culture as

one of many worldviews that is equally valid and complex. The DMIS is predicated on the development of intercultural sensitivity in response to intercultural training. While essential in documenting change, ELT can help describe the process of how change came about, particularly in the context of study abroad.

### **Experiential Learning Theory**

Many study abroad publications and research studies have used or referenced Kolb's (1984) model of ELT (Dupuy, 2006; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Montrose, 2002; Pusch & Merrill, 2008). In a recent discussion of the relevance of ELT, Passarelli and Kolb (2012) noted that "Experiential Learning Theory . . . provides a model for educational interventions in study abroad because of its holistic approach to human adaptation through the transformation of experience into knowledge" (p. 138). Learning in ELT is "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). In this model of learning, an individual will begin the learning process by having a concrete experience, which is followed by observation and reflection, and then forming new knowledge or concepts. In the final stage, a learner will test out this new knowledge or concept in a new situation, thus re-starting the cycle again. This model is particularly useful in describing the cultural learning process after students have returned from studying abroad where they have, assumedly, had a number of intercultural encounters.

In a specific study abroad context, a student may travel to Germany and share an apartment or dorm suite with German students. This student might perceive her roommates to be rude or uncomfortably private because they generally keep the doors to their rooms closed and, from an American standpoint, do not wish to be disturbed. The student may then experience something similar at the university when her professors or the secretarial staff have their doors

closed, further confirming her belief that Germans are closed off or unavailable. If a student is never guided to reflect critically, she may continue and, worse, share this judgmental stereotype upon return. If, however, the student has adequate, potentially guided, reflection about cultural differences in regards to personal space, or if she becomes aware that climate control is typically done room by room rather than centrally, as is often the case in the U.S., the student may begin to question her own value system wondering why having your door open in the U.S. signals to others that one might be more open. Further, if she is able to discuss and explore a superficial representation of an underlying belief system, she may question other superficial representations and/or test this hypothesis in action by talking to her German roommates about the phenomenon or breaking her American-patterned rule system, to knock on her roommate's door, and asking her roommate if she has plans for the weekend. Ultimately, by questioning the underlying reasons for superficial manifestations of culture, the student may accept difference and use this knowledge to guide her further action rather than stopping at the level of assessment that 'Germans are rude and uninviting because they always have their doors closed.'

Passarelli and Kolb (2012) noted that "Further iterations of the cycle continue the exploration and transfer to experiences in other contexts. In this process learning is integrated with other knowledge and generalized to other contexts leading to higher levels of adult development" (p. 146). While the student may attempt to use this information in other settings and fail, such as interrupting a German professor outside of her office hours, the student may be able to apply this to other situations successfully, such as knocking on a closed bathroom door to confirm whether there is actually someone in there, or not, as U.S. Americans tend to leave the bathroom door open as a more visible signal that the bathroom is available. Passarelli and Kolb (2012) noted further that "Students have the opportunity to build these complexities abroad, and

most of them will benefit from an educator's skilled guidance" (p. 147). Again, while the student may have these encounters and experiences abroad, if left to their own devices, students may not be able to make meaning of these, thus not going through a full cycle of experiential learning. Referencing an exchange program in Salzburg, Austria, Einbeck (2002) wrote,

I have observed that some individuals never really become culturally fluent. While their cultural abilities served for negotiating their basic needs for life in Austria and they could interact on a superficial level, they did not succeed in forming meaningful interpersonal relationships with members of the host culture, or they repeatedly got into cultural trouble, because they were behaving in ways that they did not yet recognize as culturally inappropriate. (p. 59)

Students may be able to function in their host countries, but they may not be able to make meaningful progress in developing intercultural competence if they do not learn how cultures function differently. In regards to ELT in the study abroad context, Montrose (2002) wrote:

The most important stage for academic assessment is the conceptualization stage, where students generalize and interpret events. This stage is where students ask, 'What does this mean?' This is essential to the integration and understanding of relationships or general principles and theories that explain the experience. (p. 5-6)

For this reason, and in order to move beyond the interpretation that 'Germans are not open,' As noted above, Vande Berg (2009) supports having a cultural mentor to help students actively process their experience. While it might be ideal for colleges and universities to have a cultural mentor on-site to help guide students to this process, it may not be possible given the overabundance of diverse study abroad programs. As such, it can be helpful to provide students with the structures to examine underlying differences on their home campus either before, or

after, their program abroad, particularly if intercultural competence development is seen as a process (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2006b; Hammer et al., 2003). Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning theory (ELT) with Mezirow's (2000) model of transformative learning theory (TLT) aid in understanding how to convert an intercultural experience into intercultural learning.

### **Transformative Learning Theory**

Two volumes that were influential in affirming Mezirow's framework for examining the process of intercultural learning in study abroad were Brewer and Cunningham's (2009a), "Integrating Study Abroad into the Curriculum," and Savicki's (2008a), "Developing Intercultural Competence and Transformation." Mezirow (2000) summarized his theory in the following manner:

Transformative learning refers to the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. Transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight. (p. 7-8)

Transformative learning adds to experiential learning at the level of reflective observation by examining what is entailed in the critical reflection of one's frame of reference. More specifically, Mezirow (2000) described that:

"A *frame of reference* is composed of two dimensions, a habit of mind and resulting points of view. A *habit of mind* is a set of assumptions – broad, generalized, orienting

predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience... A habit of mind becomes expressed as a *point of view*.” (p. 17)

Transformative learning manifests itself in one of the following ways, “by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind” (p. 19). While studying abroad, a student typically encounters a number of different frames of reference, but transformative learning only takes place if one can shift a frame of reference. This is the crux of Mezirow’s TLT, “For transformation to occur . . . the most essential type of reflection is *premise reflection*. Premise reflection requires learners to evaluate and explore their long-standing, culturally constructed attitudes, values, and beliefs in the face of new and unfamiliar experiences” (Mezirow, 1991 as cited in Hunter, 2008, p. 98-99). Mezirow (2000) highlighted that, “The most personally significant and emotionally exacting transformations involve a critique of previously unexamined premises regarding one’s self... including self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame; a critical assessment of assumptions; . . . exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions...” (p. 21). While it can never be assumed that a student abroad will encounter all, or any, of these, TLT can be particularly helpful in examining the process of unpacking the study abroad experience because students are encouraged to examine their own frames of reference, which “often represent cultural paradigms (collectively held frames of reference) – learning that is unintentionally assimilated from the culture – or personal perspectives derived from the idiosyncrasies of primary caregivers” (p. 16-17).

In experiential learning, it is necessary for students to have the initial experience, but in order to have this experience become meaningful, students must have “reflective observation.” Connecting experiential and transformative learning to intercultural learning, Mezirow (2000)

noted that one can understand this type of transformative education, “as an organized effort to assist learners who are old enough to be held responsible for their acts to acquire or enhance their understandings, skills, and dispositions” (p. 26). These “understandings, skills, and dispositions” are strikingly similar to Byram’s (1997) components of intercultural competence, “knowledge, skills, and attitudes,” which was rated as the top definition of intercultural competence by post-secondary administrators and intercultural experts (Deardorff, 2006a, 2006b).

Additionally, Mezirow (2000) viewed transformative learning as a “process” (p. 27). This is contrary to Vande Berg’s (2009) belief that “Intercultural Learning is developmental, not transformational: a rheostat that’s slowly turned up, over time, gradually illuminating a room, offers a more realistic emblem of intercultural development than a light switch that, when turned on, suddenly lights up that space” (p. 18). Vande Berg’s view that intercultural learning is developmental is, however, essential in Mezirow’s concept of transformative learning. It is for this reason that Taylor (1994), who used and critiqued Mezirow’s (1991) TLT, concluded a study of interculturally competent individuals by writing,

[The findings] support assumptions made by others that cultural disequilibrium [of integrating into the host culture] acts as a catalyst in becoming interculturally competent and that an outcome of competency is a change to a more inclusive and integrated worldview. . . . In summary, this study confirms that intercultural competency results in perspective transformation. (p. 172-173)

Intercultural learning can begin to develop as a result of a transformative experience. In light of Taylor’s (1994) conclusion that intercultural competence is a transformative learning process, it is relevant to understand the process as transforming (Mezirow, 2000) an intercultural experience (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012) to encourage an ethnorelative worldview (Bennett, 1993).

## Methods

### Course

The basic outline of the three-credit course entitled, “Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad” covered the textbook *Experiencing Intercultural Communication* (Martin & Nakayama, 2011), which familiarizes students with the theoretical frameworks of intercultural communication including: intercultural communication and history, identity, verbal issues, nonverbal communication, popular culture, conflict, relationships, etc. The authors also integrate practical examples to help students connect the theoretical frameworks presented with tangible examples. Additionally, the course included weekly classroom and weekly to bi-weekly online discussions; cultural simulations; critical reflection essays; ethnographically guided extracurricular activities; and a midterm and final exam. The objective for these assignments was to have students connect the theoretical paradigms presented on intercultural communication with real-world examples and critically examine their own frames of reference towards cultural practices, which align with the course goals outlined in the syllabus<sup>5</sup>.

Online discussions were an opportunity for students to critically examine the intercultural concepts that were presented. For example, students examined their own construction of identity and reacted/responded to their classmates’ posts. Group presentations were also a portion of the course and were largely in the form of leading a cultural simulation (e.g. Rocket: Hirshon, 2009), but also included examples of cultural encounters (e.g. failure of Wal-Mart in Germany).

Cultural simulations were an opportunity for students to experience what it feels like to be in a different culture, or to unexpectedly have different cultural rules (e.g. Barnnga<sup>6</sup>). There were four

---

<sup>5</sup> See Appendix A for Syllabus

<sup>6</sup> Barnnga is a proprietary card game designed for Doctor’s Without Border participants to experience the disorientation often felt when traveling abroad. In this course, we played a similarly-styled, nonproprietary game accessible online named “5-Tricks.” In this game, students are separated into 5-6 groups and are told to learn the



critical reflection papers that paralleled the four sections of the book: foundations of intercultural communication, intercultural communication process, intercultural communication in everyday life, and intercultural communication in applied settings. These critical reflection papers were an opportunity for students to compare/contrast theories presented in readings, address any ambiguities, inconsistencies and/or lack of clarity thereof; extend ideas from the readings to their own experiences; or identify connections between readings and in-class or online activities. The midterm exam was a demonstration of content knowledge and the final exam, in most instances, served as an aggregate assessment on the part of the student to reflect on their learning over the course of the semester. The course was team-taught by the researcher and the Director of the Study Abroad Office in Fall 2010, and then solely by the researcher in the second semester, Fall 2011. Enrollment for this course typically has 25-30 students. Although this course was conceived as a pre-departure course, given the nature of a general education program at a large university, upper class(wo)men often enroll in first-year courses later in their academic career when they have priority registration, thus opening up the course to students who have previously studied abroad.

### **Participant Selection and Data Collection**

In total from the two semesters of offering this course, there were 54 students enrolled in the course; 26 in Fall 2010, and 28 in Fall 2011. There were ten post-study abroad students across both semesters and six who consented to the study. Four of these six were disqualified from this portion of the research because they grew up in bicultural homes or had attended

---

rules of the game. When students understand the rules, they play in a tournament where they are not allowed to speak. After the first round the person with the most amount of tricks moves to the right, the person with the least amount of tricks moves to the left, and then continue the tournament. At this point, however, those who have moved to different tables (cultures) find themselves in a situation where the (cultural) rules that they learned at the first table are different at the second. Typically, frustration ensues as students attempt to negotiate rules, but are limited in their language use. This continues for a few rounds with some students returning to their original tables and readjusting well, while others remain disoriented.

international schools abroad as children. As such, an attempt was made to better understand how two American students who grew up in self-identified “monocultural” homes used a course designed to foster intercultural competence to process and unpack their study abroad experiences. Both students were enrolled in the course in Fall 2011, when it was solely taught by the researcher. Data for the study was gathered from electronically submitted assignments to the university’s Desire to Learn (D2L) system and included: online discussions, four critical reflection essays, a midterm, and a final exam. Additionally, students filled out a survey that documented their age, major, cultural background, and experience abroad. Table 1.0 outlines an overview of participants.

Table 1.0

## Overview of Participants

	Liz	Patrick
Age	20	21
Class	Junior	Junior
Major	Art History	Accounting
Experience Abroad	5-week summer study abroad: Orvieto, Italy	8-week summer study abroad: Bangalore, India
	5-week summer study abroad: London, England	
	2-week high school exchange: France	

## Measures and Data Analysis

Measuring cultural competence in its range of forms is not an easy endeavor. Different models have been proposed to measure the “difficult-to-pin-point nature of intercultural competence,” (Sinicrope, Norris, & Watanabe, 2007, p. 12).<sup>7</sup> To this end, Sinicrope et al. (2007) examined direct and indirect assessment tools<sup>8</sup> and concluded that, “the combined indirect and direct analyses in Fantini (2006) and Straffon (2003) revealed more layers and nuances in the growth of intercultural competence than those discernible by indirect assessments alone” (p. 31). While Sinicrope et. al (2007) noted that portfolio assessments can be used as a direct assessment tool, it may be impossible for researchers to have a true direct assessment tool without direct observation in a second culture. Thusly, the portfolio may be seen as one of the more direct qualitative assessment tools available. Deardorff (2006b) found that intercultural experts believed that the best way to assess intercultural competence was through a mixed methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative measures. These measures, in order of strongest agreement among intercultural experts, include case studies and interviews (90% agreement); analysis of narrative diaries, self-report instruments, observation of others/host culture, and judgment by self and others (85% agreement). In this same study, intercultural administrators generally agreed with experts, but accepted more quantitative measures, including “pre-post tests, other-report measures, and critical incidents and essays” (p. 241). A concurrent triangulation approach is the most applicable method to analyze the data. Creswell (2009) explained that, “in a concurrent triangulation approach, the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then compares the two databases to determine if there is

---

<sup>7</sup> Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram, 1997); Intercultural Sensitivity (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003)

<sup>8</sup> Direct Assessment Tools – performance assessment (Byram, 1997; Ruben, 1976) portfolio assessment (Byram, 1997; Jacobson, Sleicher, & Maureen, 1999; Pruegger & Rogers, 1994) and interviews (Fantini, 2006; Straffon, 2003); Indirect Assessment Tools – BASIC, ICSI, IDI, CCAI, ISI, AIC

convergence, differences, or some combination“ (p. 213). Thereby, researchers can attempt to offset the weakness in one measure with another.

**Quantitative instrument.** This study used the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI; Kelley & Meyers, 1995a) as an indirect, quantitative assessment measure. CCAI self-reported scores were collected at the beginning and end of the course. The CCAI is designed to measure four different dimensions of cross-cultural adaptability: emotional resistance, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. Emotional resilience describes an individual who “bounces back; [and] has emotional resilience, a positive attitude, a sense of adventure” (Kelley & Meyers, 1995a). Flexibility/openness describes an individual who “lacks rigidity, is nonjudgmental, likes people, enjoys diversity,” while perceptual acuity describes an individual who is “attentive to verbal/non-verbal cues, aware of communication dynamics, empathetic,” and personal autonomy describes “clear personal value system, strong sense of identity, self-directed, self-respecting” (Kelley & Meyers, 1995a).

The CCAI was chosen for three reasons. Firstly, the CCAI has been shown to be both a reliable and valid instrument, as it was normed with a large sample size of 653 individuals with .90 reliability (Kelley & Myers, 1992). Additionally, the CCAI was coupled with an “Action-Planning Guide” for test-takers to better understand how “to increase . . . skills in these important dimensions” by giving them ideas for raising their “chances for success when interacting with those of other cultural backgrounds” (Kelley & Myers, 1995b, p. 1). The action planning guide was not used in this study until after the Post-test in an attempt to avoid the Practice Effect. It nevertheless gave students concrete ideas to improve their cross-cultural adaptability after the course was complete. Additionally, the course/work materials for this course were designed with similar goals as the action planning guide in mind. Lastly, the CCAI

had been used previously at the University of Arizona and was available for immediate use, minimizing the financial costs associated with this study.

Despite the reliability of the CCAI noted above, Davis and Finney (2006) cast doubt upon this reliability in their article, “A Factor Analytic Study of the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory.” By using a confirmatory factor analysis, their results, “indicated that there might be substantial overlap between the factors, as demonstrated by the factor correlations (.87 to .97). These high correlations suggest that there is a considerable problem with discriminant validity between subscales” (p. 324). Concluding their article, Davis and Finney (2006) noted that the CCAI should not be used until more extensive studies can be done. In response to this, Nguyen, Biderman, and McNary (2010) examined the factor structure of the CCAI. Because Kelley and Myers (1995a) designed the CCAI with the concept that “cross-cultural adaptability is a psychological skill that is amenable to training” (Nguyen et al., 2010, p. 113), Nguyen et al. tested a number of factor analytic models and applied these at the item level both to the CCAI and Goldberg’s Big Five Inventory, “the most well-known taxonomy of personality” (Nguyen et al., 2010, p. 115). This study concluded that the CCAI, “if analysed appropriately such that common method variance is taken into account, demonstrates some construct and criterion related validity” (Nguyen et al., 2010, p. 125). Further, the Big Five was not found to correlate significantly with any of the dimensions of the CCAI. The authors noted that the instrument may need further refinement, but that two of the CCAI subscales, emotional resilience and personal autonomy were found to predict the number of international assignments, the dependent variable which was included to show an individual’s readiness to interact or adapt to different cultures. While it is not the focus of this study to address the validity of the CCAI, scores for all participants tested showed minimal changes for the sub scores of flexibility/openness and

perceptual acuity. ~~Thus, in light of these two findings, this study only considered the subscales of emotional resilience and personal autonomy.~~

Beyond the use of the CCAI as an instrument, shortcomings in self-reported measures of cultural competence have been raised. Quoted in Sinicrope et al. (2007), Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) wrote that, “a major short-coming in studies in the past is that often participants who have little experience in intercultural situations are asked for self-reports of behavioral choices in hypothetical intercultural simulations” (p. 141 as cited in Sinicrope et al., 2007, p. 34). However, Sinicrope et al. (2007) countered this concern by noting that “Although this factor may not apply in post-study abroad or post-training assessments, it could affect the pre-study abroad and pre-training results that are used as a baseline to determine individual gains in intercultural competence” (p. 34). As such, using a self-reported measure of cross-cultural adaptability in ~~the valid and reliable measures of emotional resilience and personal autonomy in~~ post-study abroad students can be used as a valid instrument to examine some aspects of the “difficult-to-pin-point nature” of cultural competence noted above.

**Qualitative instruments.** This study used portfolios as the direct, qualitative assessment measure. As noted above, the portfolio included all coursework that was submitted digitally via the University of Arizona’s Desire to Learn (D2L) online platform. Individual items included: four critical reflection papers based on four textbook units, two exams (midterm, and final), and weekly/bi-weekly online discussions. Data in this study was coded using the framework outlined above by extracting instances where students were examining experiences abroad or their existing frames of reference. For example, any instance where the students reflected on ‘why’ or ‘how’ culture manifested itself a certain way, or, contrastingly, any time they made a judgment about the way culture manifested itself or about their own or others’ cultural perspectives, was

included. After these instances were selected, a thematic analysis was done to observe how the students reflections did, or did not, relate to ELT, TLT, and the DMIS dimensions of ethnocentric and ethnorelative worldviews.

## **Results**

### **Hypothesis**

The question presented in this study was, “How does intercultural competence develop in post-study abroad students over the span of a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural communication skills through critical reflection?” The two components of intercultural competence examined in this study were pre- and post-study performance on the CCAI, and the process of unpacking a study abroad experience as viewed through the lens of TLT and ELT. It was hypothesized that the two post study abroad students would score higher on the post-test measures on the CCAI. Additionally, it was hypothesized that students would use their studies abroad as concrete experiences, and that the coursework focused on understanding intercultural communication would incite observation and reflection, which would enable them to form abstract concepts, which would be tested in new situations as described in Kolb’s (1984) ELT. Additionally, it was hypothesized that the result of critically reflecting on their experiences and positionality with regards to their existing frames of reference would transform their frames of reference, which are often cultural paradigms (Mezirow, 2000, p. 16), to include an ethnorelative perspective (Bennett, 1993).

### **Data Analysis**

Throughout the course, both Liz and Patrick used topics and themes presented in the textbook, *Experiencing Intercultural Communication* (Martin & Nakayama, 2011) to examine not only their experiences abroad, but also their relation to their own frames of reference. The

model of ELT (Kolb, 1984) and TLT (Mezirow, 2000) help describe how this process of learning and reflection manifested itself in an ethnorelative point of view (Bennett, 1993). As a result, it can be argued that both Liz and Patrick became more intercultural competent as a result of taking a course focused on teaching skills involved with intercultural communication after returning back to the United States from studying abroad. Interestingly, Liz and Patrick's scores on the CCAI decreased from their pre- to their post-tests; a breakdown of their scores is included in Table 2.0. This contrasts with their coursework, which shows very rich, and detailed, progression in a number of different areas outside of their experiences abroad. This dichotomy will be discussed later. Due to the rich and detailed progression, the few examples presented here are but mere representations of the transformative learning that took place for these students over the course of the semester. An attempt was made to include demonstrative examples within enough context to provide meaning to the reader.

Table 2.0

## Participant Scores on CCAI

	Liz Pre	Post	Patrick Pre	Post
Emotional Resilience	73	66	94	82
Flexibility/ Openness	65	68	70	71
Perceptual Acuity	46	48	51	47
Personal Autonomy	26	21	40	34
Totals	210	203	255	234



**Liz.** Liz entered the course as a 20-year-old junior majoring in art history. She identified herself as “Caucasian, non-Hispanic” and did not describe her upbringing as being “bi-cultural,” although she did note that her mother had Polish and Scandinavian ancestry, while her father was mostly Irish. She did not believe that these cultures deeply affected their household. Before entering the course, Liz had amassed quite a bit of experience outside of the country, however. She traveled abroad on vacation with family, participated on a two-week high school exchange program in France, and participated in two credit-bearing study abroad programs: one five-week program in London, England and one five-week program in Orvieto, Italy. Additionally, at the time of the course, Liz had experience learning both French and Italian, and was planning on studying abroad the following semester in Florence, Italy. Thus, when Liz entered the course, she had a substantial amount of experiences abroad that could be the subject of critical reflection.

In the first-half of the course, Liz reflected superficially on her experiences abroad, choosing, instead, to focus on experiences of cultural consciousness, notably identity. Liz’s experiences abroad only surfaced in limited ways in the first half of the course. In one portion of the first online exercise, students are invited to reflect on their experience in the first cultural simulation, *Barnaga/5-Tricks*. Liz equated this experience with her study abroad program in Italy that summer by noting that she felt “defeated” both in the game and studying abroad when she could not follow cultural rules demanded of her. She went on to describe particular incidents where she felt like a “fish out of water,” and also her attempts to adapt to Italian cultural practices to overcome this:

I joined the Italian 201 and 202 classes and went into full Italian emersion mode! I began to speak expressively using hand gestures! I enjoyed the Italian siesta and lenient work hours even if it had originally seemed strange compared to my Western ‘time is money’

mentality! I, an organically strict white chocolate mocha drinker, even began to look forward to the rigorous Italian rule of cappuccino at breakfast and espresso after lunch and dinner! I feel like I came home from my trip as a little bit of an Italian myself. Now when I see a stray cat on the side of the road, my first instinct is to try and pet it regardless of if it looks mean or dirty. And when I go into a church without my shoulders covered and showing too much skin for Italian standards, I still feel like God himself will somehow show his wrath for my disgrace. The “5-Trick” game really re-iterated that one must go outside their comfort zone to figure out how to successfully win a new game.

(Online Discussion, 8/30/2011)

This quote demonstrates that although Liz employed a strategy to learn the language, her reflection upon her experience is largely descriptive. She referred to her experience as “the biggest culture shock of my life,” but only elaborates further that she felt like a fish out of water without any linguistic background. Further, by using “fish out of water,” she used the clichéd words of others to describe her feelings abroad that she appeared to not yet be able to articulate. Although she noted the differences in cultural norms in church and enjoying the Italian siesta, the extent of her “feeling Italian” was wanting to pet stray cats upon return to the U.S. As a student studying abroad, she did make a concerted effort to adapt in a relatively short period of time. She demonstrated having learned factual knowledge about Italy, a willingness to accept cultural differences, and even a willingness to try new things such as a cappuccino rather than white chocolate mocha, yet her descriptions of her experience do not represent a change in any of her frames of reference. At the beginning of the semester, Liz did not appear to use her experience as a starting point for experiential learning. However, near the mid-point of the semester, Liz began to relate coursework to her experience abroad as a starting point for critical reflection

more significantly; her reflections become dramatically more in-depth and insightful. While there are a number of instances of Liz reflecting on her experiences abroad, there are two concrete examples that resurface on more than one occasion: an experience in London, England and the cultural approach to ‘work to live’ versus ‘live to work,’ which she elaborated with examples from America, Mexico, and Italy.

In the midterm exam, students were given a choice of concrete questions to respond to that were related to the textbook and outside assignments. Responding to the question regarding “culture is learned,” Liz wrote that “To claim that something is learned, implies the duty to not only always continue learning, but also to be willing to correct one’s educational and didactic mistakes” (Midterm Exam, 10/14/2011). Speaking in hypothetical terms, she noted what students of intercultural communication, wherein she includes herself by later giving a concrete example of her own learning, must be able to do if they want to achieve positive intercultural relations:

[Students of intercultural communication] must be open to the varying perceptions, values, feelings, and behaviors which may results from this process as culture[e] is intricately connected [to] each. . . . [They] must be willing to recognize the barriers they have created such as ethnocentrism, stereotypes, prejudices, and discrimination, which hinder their cultural education. (Midterm Exam, 10/14/2011)

Liz is not only able to recognize that cultural differences exist, but also that she has understood the importance of shifting perspectives in order to account for other interpretations through a different cultural lens. She provided meaning to this framework by reflecting further on her experience studying abroad in London in her midterm:

For example, two summers ago I studied abroad at the University of Westminster in London, England. I falsely believed that since we spoke a similar language, our culture would be alike and our communication would be flawlessly and easily achievable. However, after completing my first pub visit and attempting to speak with the natives I realized I couldn't have been more incorrect. After being teased and (I felt) attacked from all the pub goers, I was ready to call it quits and go home safely away from all of the "mean" Brits. Seeing my friends and I distress, one woman kindly explained that British men flirted with "unkind" humor. She explained in general the British tended to not shy away from negative aspects in life and didn't allow it to affect them the way it affected our group. This proved true throughout the remainder of the trip. For instance, my native British teacher described my group project (that by the way received the full marks and achieved the only 100% in the class) as "not horrible at all". I was about to "throw in the towel" on my London experience due to my inability to relearn my American culture that I had so rigidly subscribed to and embrace the British way of life. (Midterm Exam, 10/14/2011)

Insightfully, Liz concluded that if culture is learned then it can be relearned, a key component of shifting a frame of reference in transformative learning. It is also interesting to note that Liz was aided in critically reflecting on her experience to ultimately shift her own frame of reference for interpreting this incident by a third party, a woman in the bar, who acted as a cultural mentor to identify and explain Liz and her friends' distress in the bar from a British point of view. Additionally, by acquiring this new information, she was able to apply this knowledge to other situations, which helped her interpret the negative feelings that resulted from having her work appraised as "not horrible at all." It is unclear whether Liz was already able to make this

connection while studying abroad, but at this point in the course, she is able to bring together her experience within an organized framework to render meaning out of two seemingly distinct cultural clashes abroad. The reflection that culture is learned and that this applies to how one approaches any number of values and/or beliefs in one's own frame of reference resurfaced in Liz's reflection on how different cultures approach work values.

Liz' reflection in her fourth critical reflection paper submitted in the last week of class on the notion of 'live to work' versus 'work to live' is one of the most meaningful demonstrations of Kolb's (1984) cyclical model of experiential learning in her coursework. In reference to chapter 12, Liz highlighted the author's notion of work ethic in relation to cultural values, "the authors argue that not only does culture deeply affect one's work ethic, but also the lens with which one judges other societies" (Fourth Critical Reflection Paper, 12/1/2011). To illustrate this, Liz examined the textbook's 'live to work' versus 'work to live' framework, where European and Mexicans tend to gravitate towards the first and Americans more towards the second. Rather than accepting this ipso facto, she took this insight as an invitation to examine this phenomenon from the perspective of other members of these cultures by interviewing her uncle John, and her best friend Luis, a Mexican-American raised in Tucson, AZ to Spanish-speaking parents and who frequently returned to Mexico to visit family. Of her uncle, she wrote that he was a fairly well-known CEO and owner of a company, whose "occupation [is] his source of self-worth and value, with each promotion and raise he felt as if he was somehow proving his self-respect to the world" (Fourth Critical Reflection Paper, 12/1/2011). Yet, she noted that this led to a divorce from his wife. Luis, who was the subject of many related reflections throughout the course, worked at a clothing store and often treated his friends and family to meals at his home and restaurants refusing compensation saying, "What else is a job

for?” While it is unclear to what extent these two examples are fair comparisons, an adult businessman and a young college student, Liz moved beyond their relation to work and life writing,

While my uncle primarily described himself in terms of his vocational occupation, [Luis] describes himself first with his nationality, family background, personality, and preferred leisure activities before even mentioning his employment. The manners in which both my Uncle [John] and my best friend, [Luis], described themselves demonstrate not only the divergence of their work-related values, but also the importance that these principles can have on a person’s self-identity and therefore their methods of intercultural communication. (Fourth Critical Reflection Paper, 12/1/2011)

Liz took a newly learned concept, tested it out in other arenas and then, ultimately, brought this back to her concrete experience in the context of studying abroad in Italy:

I personally experienced the fallout from not remaining open to the myriad of existing cultural work-related values. I was lucky enough to study abroad last summer in Orvieto, Italy with the University of Arizona program, Arizona in Italy. I originally was shocked by the Italian store hours. A majority of the Italian “negozi” closed during the mid-day afternoon hours for a “siesta”. The “siesta”, the Spanish word for nap, is a two hour-long break in which Italian workers and students go to lunch and take a nap to ward off the after meal drowsiness. In utter contrast to my American standards of appropriate store hours, which include 24 hour Walgreens, Targets, Walmarts, CVS’, and even restaurants and banks, the Italian siesta’s bewildered me beyond belief! Coming from a country home even to a “city that never sleeps” (NYC), the Italian siesta seemed at first to be a product of laziness and unreliability. My closed minded attitude, which prized the

American value of living to work as the proper and correct means of business, lead to unjust prejudice and discrimination of Italian culture and society. However, after learning more about the true valued work-ethic of Italian culture, which prides itself on allowing for a life outside of employment for workers, I realized that my misconstrued signs of laziness was in actuality a form of self-respect for workers. By not allowing their vocation to control their life, Italians were simply practicing their ideal of proper employment, rather than simply being indolent and idle. In short, Italians simply worked to lived, while Americans live to work. Neither being wrong. (Fourth Critical Reflection Paper, 12/1/2011).

It is through reading Liz' response that one can see how she used a combination of concrete experiences; reflection; new frameworks; and the testing of new ideas, which became further grounded in a concrete experience, to shift her frame of reference and adopt an ethnorelative point of view in contrast to her initial ethnocentric point of view seeing the "siesta" as a "sign of laziness." Moreover, Liz has cultural concepts to interpret her experience and the ability to use these concepts to create meaning from her reflection in a concrete manner. Her learning does not stop at this point, however.

While Kolb's model seems to imply that the next tangible experience to apply learning to will take place in the future, in this situation, Liz was relying on her past experiences to continually serve as reflection points in a myriad of ways. Moreover, one recalls Liz's original mention of the siesta as simply a cultural difference in her first online post, where she noted that "I enjoyed the Italian siesta and lenient work hours even if it had originally seemed strange compared to my Western 'time is money' mentality!" (8/30/2011). Liz took this lived experience and re-construed what it could mean from an Italian perspective and then further

tested these new theories in other contexts. In the second reflection, she went much further to investigate her initial “bewilder[ment]”, but also her negative judgments that Italians were lazy. She was able to move beyond the nondescript interpretation that she felt “culture shock” as “a fish out of water” by using work-related value dimensions to explain why she experienced a cultural conflict. By investigating underlying reasons for her interpretations of the different work-related values across cultures and application thereof in new settings, she demonstrated a complete cycle of experiential and transformative learning resulting in an ethnorelative point of view.

In contrast to the marked development of intercultural competence over the semester, Liz’s CCAI scores were not as remarkable. Overall, Liz’ CCAI score shows a decrease of only seven points. However, her scores on the sub-measures of emotional resilience and personal autonomy, the two measures found by Nguyen et al. (2010) to significantly correlate with the dependent variable of international trips taken as job assignments, show a seven-point and a five-point decrease respectively, whereas the measures of flexibility/openness and perceptual acuity increased three points and two points respectively. This inconsistency will be discussed later.

**Patrick.** Patrick entered the course approximately two weeks late as a 21-year-old junior majoring in accounting. He considered himself “Caucasian, non-Hispanic,” as having grown up in a monocultural home, and noted his family’s historical roots in Russia and Italy, “But that was many generations ago. There is no difference in culture anymore” (Experience Survey, 12/5/2011). In this survey, and elsewhere, Patrick spoke of his extensive travels to diverse places such as Mongolia, Europe, Singapore, Israel, and more with his family and alone. In the summer previous to this course, Patrick spent eight weeks abroad in Bangalore, India through the business school, studying at the Xavier Institute of Management and Entrepreneurship. He lived



in a dorm on this trip, which he described as resembling, “the soviet block era concrete apartment complexes you see on the history channel” (Final Exam, 12/2/2011). Patrick had Spanish in high school, and one semester in college, and belonged to the Jewish faith.

Similar to Liz, Patrick also shifted his frames of reference and was able to talk about cultural differences in a more substantial manner over the course of the semester. Patrick was able to reflect on the “Indian head bobble” in the chapter about nonverbal communication; his confusion in understanding it, and the reasons it exists; and his learned appreciation for the Indian variety of English. However, examining two instances that surfaced both at the beginning and then the end semester is more representative of the process of experiential and transformative culture learning.

In Patrick’s first critical reflection paper, he used a number of theories presented in the first three chapters of the book to reflect on his experiences in India:

Geert Hofstede’s theory of value dimensions helps individuals understand their culture by comparing it to other cultures on the basis of power distance, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation. After applying Hofstede’s theory to my stay in Bangalore, India, I immediately noticed the significant power distance that exists there. Individuals who hold power in India will wield their power over others in every means possible. The police hassled me several times for bribes, getting tourist information from the government required a bribe, and even the school teachers there are required complete blind obedience from their students. Students were really discouraged from asking their teachers questions or commenting on the lecture. This obedience extended beyond the classroom as well. The students there were subject to a strict set of life dictating rules such as curfews, dress codes, and restricted interactions between male

and female students. By comparing India's power distance to America's, one could conclude that the United States has a very low power distance.

Another approach to comparing cultures is to focus on the society's values instead of their ideology. Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck's value orientation compares cultures by asking questions regarding human nature, preferred personality, time orientation, and the relationships among humans and nature. I noticed the India culture to have present-minded time orientations. The Indian people generally use a cheap and temporary quick fix mentality for everything. For example, if a window breaks they tape the glass together, or if the sidewalk cement is breaking apart they simply pour more cement on top of the cracks. This time value orientation differs from the American culture's future-oriented approach where everything that breaks is thrown away and replaced with something new. (First Critical Response Paper, 9/19/2011)

Concluding his paper, Patrick did note that comparing can result in stereotyping and that "not every person in India exercised their power over others or has a present-minded time orientation" (First Critical Response Paper, 9/19/2011). In examining these examples, however, Patrick appeared to be making a judgment about how he viewed the differences in Indian culture through the lens of value dimensions and value orientations. However, he attempted to 'cover' himself / his interpretation by noting that while this is what he experienced, it might not be valid for all Indians. Patrick displayed an ethnocentric point of view when he described that the police "hassled" him for "bribes;" that professors do not consider the opinions of their students, but rather demand "blind obedience;" and that Indians had a "quick fix" approach for repairs. One item of consideration is what the nature of the "bribes" were and whether this is a standard procedure in Indian culture, a misinterpretation on his part, or a result of his status as a foreigner.

Of note is that he did not appear to be viewing American culture as superior in regards to this “quick fix mentality,” yet he did not consider his own point of view towards what American culture is, ignoring, or ignorant of, the fact that many Americans either do not have the financial means to throw broken items away or that some place value on the repair itself. Further essentializing American culture, Patrick only notes that in comparison to the police and professors, America has a “very” low power distance. Although, one cannot expect a full interpretation on every detail in such a college paper, Patrick did not appear to consider the differences present in American culture. Overall, he did attempt to use newly learned frameworks to interpret his experiences, yet his conclusions are largely ethnocentric.

The reflections provided in his final exam, however, which he entitled, “The Beginning of a Long Journey to Conscious Competence,” reflected a much more interculturally competent individual with an ethnorelative point of view:

Martin and Nakayma [2011] discuss the connection between perception and culture in their book. They define perception as “...ways of looking at the world,” and describe culture as, “...sort of lens through which we view the world.” This description of culture completely resonated with my previous experiences. While in India I immediately recognized the difference in time orientation between Americans and Indians. Americans typically have a future-oriented time orientation, while Indians have a present-minded time orientation. They use the “quick-fix” approach for everything. I once witnessed a local student there tape a pencil together that was broken in half. The sidewalks there are uneven and bumpy, since the construction crew simply pours cement on top of the deteriorating sidewalks, instead of gutting it and building a new one. I was unable to determine why this difference in orientation existed prior to taking your class.

Learning about Geert Hofstede's theory of value dimensions in your class has allowed me to better understand why these differences in values occur between cultures.

Hofstede's theory compares cultures in regards to their masculinity, uncertain avoidance, power distance, and long-term versus short-term orientation. Perhaps the Indian people prefer a quick fix solution when it comes to their belongings because they don't measure their success in life through the products they acquire?

Taking German 150b this semester has helped me digest my previous experiences while traveling abroad. Throughout the semester I was able to associate what I was learning in class with my attempts at intercultural communication in India. In one paper I discussed the differences between American and Indian universities with emphasis on the power distances. Learning about power distance helped me understand why the teachers in Bangalore behaved the way they did. They did not ignore any questions or comments we had during class because they did not care about my opinions as I originally thought, but rather because they had a bigger distance of power between students and teachers. I can't wait to go abroad again, and utilize everything I have learned this semester. (Final Exam, 12/2/2011)

In Patrick's final exam, we see the product of Patrick processing his experience and, ultimately, the end result of which was a shift in frame of reference. Whereas Patrick used the same theories to ground his experience in regards to the "quick fix" approach and the power distance in the classroom, he did not judge these situations negatively in his final exam. Instead, he came to new conclusions, reexamined his interpretations, and even attempted to hypothesize why Americans and Indians have different value dimensions when he wrote, "Perhaps the Indian people prefer a quick fix solution when it comes to their belongings because they don't measure

their success in life through the products they acquire?" Additionally, by ending this statement with an unrequired question mark, he seemed to be indicating that this was an idea that would require further evidence to substantiate.

Patrick used his experiences abroad as a subject of investigation. Further, he also applied a new cultural awareness to his experiences in the U.S.:

Being actively aware of culture, and being able to analyze intercultural communication has changed my perception of normally regular activities. My parents and I went to Temple for my grandfather's yahrzeit, which in Yiddish means anniversary of death, over thanksgiving break. I could not help but recognize the religious culture associated temple. For example everyone was praying in Hebrew, and all the guys wearing kippahs (small hats). My brother brought his wife with him to Temple, who has never been to a synagogue before. I could tell that she was exercising culture shock, but everyone else was oblivious to this. (Final Exam, 12/2/2011)

Patrick was not only able to use the new knowledge learned in class to critically reflect on his experiences abroad, but he also completed the learning cycle by reevaluating his original conclusions about Indian culture and applying this new perspective on culture differences back at home. Through guided coursework reflection, he was able to critically examine his underlying beliefs about his experiences abroad and transform his frame of reference into a more inclusive, ethnorelative point of view.

Overall, Patrick's score on the CCAI showed a larger decrease than that of Liz dropping from 255 to 234. Patrick's scores for all of the sub-measures dropped except for flexibility/openness, which only showed a one point decrease. On the measures of emotional resilience and personal autonomy, Patrick's scores decreased twelve points and six points respectively. This

difference is much more pronounced than Liz', yet of note, given the finding that both of the participants displayed more qualitative intercultural learning.

### **Discussion**

The qualitative data used in this study documents the process of becoming interculturally competent in post-study abroad students as a result of taking a course focused on intercultural communication, as it served as a forum to unpack their previous experiences abroad. The CCAI was used as a descriptive tool in this study. However, the quantitative data expressed overall decreases in the CCAI, and more notable decreases in the scores of emotional resilience and personal autonomy, which appear to contradict students' transformations over the course of the semester. There are three initial hypotheses to account for this contradiction. The first is that while shown to be predictive in nature to one's ability to adapt cross-culturally (Kelley & Myers, 1995b; Nguyen et. al., 2010), perhaps the CCAI is not well-suited for measuring one's changes over time. The second is that it is possible that the process of reflecting on one's lived experiences as represented by the qualitative data does not garner additional 'meaning making' in students, contradicting many scholar's impressions and findings on the same issue (Kelly, 1963 as cited in Bennett and Bennett, 2001; Montrose, 2002; Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012; Williams, 2005). The last is that the qualitative data in this study, which focused on experiential and transformative learning, does not align with the cross-cultural adaptability measured in the CCAI.

An interpretation of the data from a different vantage point is based on the few studies that have looked at individuals returning home. A common reflection about returned students is that they have a heightened sense of personal achievement (Downey, 2005; Meyer-Lee, 2005; Savicki, 2008b; Williams, 2009), but Adler (1981), who examined the cross-cultural transitions

of returned business workers, noted that the common assumption is that while the transition abroad is expected to be difficult, few expect the return home to be difficult. In fact, she found that “Contrary to this implicit assumption, returnees in the present study found re-entry slightly more difficult than the initial entry transition” (p.344). Moreover, Adler noted that there was a high period during reentry, but that it typically lasted for less than one month and returnees’ lowest periods were during their second and third months. Although examining this dimension was outside the scope of this study, it could help to explain the discrepancy between the qualitative and quantitative data. Perhaps, upon returning home, Liz and Patrick overestimated their ability to adjust cross-culturally because they were in the ‘honeymoon’ phase of returning home or perhaps they were still experiencing a heightened sense of accomplishment (Downey, 2005; Meyer-Lee, 2005; Savicki, 2008b; Williams, 2009) upon reentry when they first took the test. Thus, while it is possible that the CCAI might not reflect changes over time well, it is equally plausible that after critically reflecting upon the difficulties they encountered abroad Patrick and Liz had a more realistic perception of their ability to adapt to another culture.

### **Limitations of the Present Study**

There are a number of limitations in this study. First and foremost, this study only used two participants to examine the process of becoming more interculturally competent. Larger studies could address the generalizability across more students with more sources of data in an attempt to uncover any latent variables that may have affected the degree of reflection represented by the qualitative data. Additionally, it is unclear how the CCAI relates to these student’s experiences, whether the measure should no longer be used, or whether it is, actually, validly addressing the changes in students’ perceptions of their ability to adapt cross-culturally. In light of these limitations, using a number of batteries such the IDI or other psychological

measures instead of or in addition to the CCAI could better address personality differences or changes over time to better understand the reentry process of returning back home from studying abroad. Another consideration in the success of these students is the degree to which they were developmentally ready to process their experiences abroad in that they self-selected to enroll in a course entitled, "Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad." Further, study abroad is highly variable and it is possible that such a course could not meet the needs of all post study abroad students. Future studies should also address what effect a course of this nature could have for students who were provided with adequate support both before and during their study abroad experiences. A comprehensive study following students during the pre-, during-, and post-study abroad phase could examine what types of issues students deal with at each phase, thus providing solid research underpinnings for pedagogical intervention.

### **Conclusions and Future Projects**

In this study, both Liz and Patrick used coursework in intercultural communication to reexamine their experiences studying abroad. They used theoretical frameworks to examine their own frames of reference, often concluding that their original interpretation of an experience abroad was based on a limited cultural point of view. By being more inclusive of other cultural viewpoints, both Liz and Patrick were able to make more meaning out of their experiences and apply this learned intercultural knowledge to new situations, ultimately demonstrating an ethnorelative perspective for encountering cultural difference. This insight into the intercultural learning process underscores the irrefutable necessity to give students strategies and a forum for unpacking their experiences abroad so that they may refrain from judgmental stereotyping and apply their intercultural skills in a wider range of settings more thoughtfully. From a pedagogical standpoint, it could be beneficial to also have students draw out cultural clashes



from their studies abroad and have them attempt to use cultural frameworks over the course of the semester to explain the underlying reasons for why these clashes existed. Future studies should also examine what effect pre-study preparation, in-study intervention, and post-study reflection has on the development of intercultural competence and including an instrument, such as the IDI (Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) to track development between the stages of the DMIS. This could help ensure that the process of developing intercultural competence aligns with intercultural outcomes.

To end this piece, Patrick's words of his own learning are most insightful for what a course of this nature can do for students:

Experiencing first hand the cultural differences of India, Europe, Mongolia, Israel, Singapore, and Russia is completely different from learning about them in an academic setting. I had previously thought that all my success in intercultural communication was a direct result of my conscious knowledge and my extensive traveling. With each chapter I read in the book however, I soon realized that they were merely a product of my traveling companions, luck, and my subconscious. Martin and Nakayama [2011] discuss the four levels of intercultural communication competence in their book. These levels intercultural communication are unconscious incompetence, conscious incompetence, conscious competence, and unconscious competence. The first thing I learned in this class was that I merely knew the "what" behind cultural communication. I had never methodically or analytically thought about my previous experiences. I had never considered if my experiences would have panned out differently had I used a set of skills or strategies to communicate across cultures. Prior to taking this class I was between conscious incompetence and unconsciously competent. (Final Exam, 12/2/2011)

While many students may succeed as a result of “luck,” the academy holds responsibility to ensuring that students learn as effectively as possible while abroad on credit-bearing programs. To be successful in a globalized world, our students will need more than content knowledge; they will need the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to approach conscious competence.

## References

- Adler, N. J. (1981). Re-entry: Managing cross-cultural transitions. *Group & Organization Management, 6*(3), 341-356.
- Alred, G., & Byram, M. (2002). Becoming an intercultural mediator: A longitudinal study of residence abroad. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 23*(5), 339-352.
- Anderson, C. S. & Cunningham, K. (2009). Developing ethnographic skills and reflective practices connected to study abroad. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. 63-84). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Anderson, L. C. (2005). *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Arasaratnam, L. A. & Doerfel, M. L. (2005). Intercultural communication competence: Identifying key components from multicultural perspectives. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 29*(2), 137-163.
- Bennett, J. M., & Bennett, M. J. (2001). Developing intercultural sensitivity: An integrative approach to global and domestic diversity. *The Diversity Symposium*.
- Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 10*(2), 179-196.
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21-71). Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc.

- Brewer, E. & Cunningham, K. (2009a). *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Brewer, E. & Cunningham, K. (2009b). Introduction. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. xi-xxvi). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE Publications Inc.
- de Nooy, J., & Hanna, B. E. (2003). Cultural information gathering by Australian students in France. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 3(1), 64-80.
- Davis, S. L., & Finney, S. J. (2006). A factor analytic study of the cross-cultural adaptability inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66, 318-330.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2006a). Assessing Intercultural Competence in Study Abroad Students. In M.Byram & A.Feng (Eds.) *Living and Studying Abroad: Research and Practice* (pp. 232-255). Great Britian: MPG Books Ltd.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2006b) Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10, 241-266.
- Downey, G. (2005). From personal reflection to social investigation: Undergraduate research as an antidote to autobiographical cliché. In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 117-121). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

- Dupuy, B. (2006). Global simulation: Experiential pedagogy and preparing students for study abroad at home. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Insight from study abroad for language programs*, (pp. 134-156). Boston, MA: AAUSC.
- Einbeck, K. (2002). Using literature to promote cultural fluency in study abroad programs. *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 35(1), 59-67.
- Engle, L., & Engle, J. (2003). Study abroad levels: Toward a classification of program types. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 9(1), 1-20.
- Fantini, A. E. (2006). Exploring and assessing intercultural competence. Retrieved May 1, 2007, from [http://www.sit.edu/publications/docs/feil\\_research\\_report.pdf](http://www.sit.edu/publications/docs/feil_research_report.pdf)
- Freed, B. F. (1995). What makes us think that students who study abroad become fluent? In B.F. Freed (Ed.) *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 123-148). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27(4), 421-443.
- Hirshorn, J. (2009). *Rocket: A simulation on intercultural teamwork*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Hunter, A. (2008). Transformative learning in international education. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 92-107). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Jackson, J. (2006). Ethnographic preparation for short-term study and residence in the target culture. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30, 77-98.

- Jacobson, W., Schleicher, D., & Maureen, B. (1999). Portfolio assessment of intercultural competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(3), 467-492.
- Kearney, E. (2010). Cultural immersion in the foreign language classroom: Some narrative possibilities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 332-336.
- Kelley, C., & Meyers, J. (1992). *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory manual*. La Jolla: CA.
- Kelley, C., & Myers, J. (1995a). *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory*. Minneapolis, MN: National Computer Systems.
- Kelley, C., & Myers, J. (1995b) *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory manual*. Minneapolis, MN: National Computer Systems.
- Kelly, G. A. (1963). *A theory of personality: The psychology of personal constructs*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Kinging, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92, 1-124.
- Kinging, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Knight, S. M., & Schmidt-Rinehart, B. C. (2010). Exploring conditions to enhance student/host family interaction abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43, 64-79.
- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2011). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.

- Merryfield, M. (2003). Like a Veil: Cross-cultural experiential learning online. *Contemporary Issues in Technology and Teacher Education*, 3(2), 146-171.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-33). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. & Associates (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Montrose, L. (2002). International study and experiential learning: The academic context. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8, 1-15.
- Meyer-Lee, E. (2005). Bringing it home: Follow-up courses for study abroad returnees. In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 114-116). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Nguyen, N. T., Biderman, M. D., & McNary, L. D. (2010). A validation study of the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 12(2), 112-129.
- Passarelli, A. M., & Kolb, D. A. (2012). Using experiential learning theory to promote student learning and development in programs of education abroad. In M. Vande Berg, R.M. Paige, & K. Hemming Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 137-161). Sterling, VA: Stylus.

- Pruegger, V. J., & Rogers, T. B. (1994). Cross-cultural sensitivity training: Methods and assessments. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 18*(3), 369-387.
- Pusch, M. D. & Merrill, M. (2008). Reflection, reciprocity, responsibility, and committed relativism: Intercultural development through international service-learning. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 297-321). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Rivers, W. P. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of home stay placements on language gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 31*(4), 492-500.
- Ruben, B. D. (1976). Assessing communication competency for intercultural adaptation. *Group and Organization Studies, 1*, 334-354.
- Savicki, V. (2008a). *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Savicki, V. (2008b). Experiential and affective education for international educators. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 74-91). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Shively, R. L. (2010). From the virtual world to the real world: A model of pragmatics instruction for study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals, 43*(1), 105-137.
- Sinicrope, C., Norris, J., & Watanabe, Y. (2007). Understanding and Assessing Intercultural Competence: A Summary of Theory, Research, and Practice (Technical Report for the Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project). *Second Language Studies, 26* (1), 1-58.
- Straffon, D. A. (2003). Assessing the intercultural sensitivity of high school students attending an international school. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations, 27*, 487-501.
- Szkudlarek, N. (2010). Reentry – A review of the literature. *International Journal of*



- Intercultural Relations*, 34(1), 1-21.
- Taylor, E. W. (1994). Intercultural competency: A transformative learning process. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(3), 154-174.
- Vande Berg, M. (2009). Intervening in student learning abroad: a research-based inquiry. *Intercultural Education*, 20, 15-27.
- Vande Berg, M., Paige, R. M., & Hemming Lou, K. (2012). *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Wilkinson, S. (2000). Emerging Questions about Study Abroad. *ADFL Bulletin*, 32(1), 36-41.
- Williams, T. R. (2005). Exploring the impact of study abroad on students' intercultural communication skills: Adaptability and sensitivity. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9(4), 356-371.
- Williams, T. R. (2009). The reflective model of intercultural competency: a multidimensional, qualitative approach to study abroad assessment. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8, 289-305.

## Appendix A

### **GER 150 – Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad Fall 2011 - Course Syllabus The University of Arizona**

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad* is designed to be an introductory level course which assumes no particular previous coursework. The goal of this course is to provide students with a framework for maximizing their learning potential as they prepare for immersion contexts abroad (e.g., study abroad, research abroad, internship abroad, etc.)

The course will focus on heightening students' transcultural communication skills and ability to transition into new environments. We will read and analyze literature on language and culture learning. We will also work together to help students improve their transcultural communication skills. This will not be accomplished by learning a fixed set of rules or strategies for communication or facts and figures about another culture. We will, rather, engage in transcultural studies as a vehicle for learning critical thinking skills about culture and language. Students who have or intend to study abroad will be able to apply these new skills regardless of where they studied or intend to study.

Participants will learn by active engagement in lectures, discussions, simulation games, and small and whole group activities. Course activities may include engaging in cross-cultural comparisons/debates, analyzing the outcomes of cross-cultural simulations, and critical comparative analyses of a range of texts including those written by classroom peers, published academic papers, or videos on transculturalism as it relates to immersion contexts abroad.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course provides in-depth exposure to theories from applied linguistics, transcultural communication, and sociology as they relate to students preparing for immersion contexts abroad (e.g., study abroad, research abroad, internship abroad, service learning, etc). The format for 50% of the class meetings is lecture/discussion. The remaining 50% of the class meetings will focus on student presentations, simulation games, and group work activities. The course will give students an opportunity to express their own individual objectives for the course throughout the semester. Goals for students are to:

- Critically evaluate their own abilities to adapt to study abroad, research abroad, or work abroad contexts.
- Develop an appreciation of transcultural challenges presented in immersion contexts;
- Improve their transcultural communication skills and ability to transition into new environments;
- Realize that language is not fixed or self-contained, but related to culture, social life, politics, and personal experience.
- Find practical applications (i.e., career uses) for second-language and transcultural-communication skills.

## **REQUIRED READING**

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2011). *Experiencing intercultural communication: An Introduction* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Critical Response Papers (4)	40%
Exams (2)	25%
Group Presentation	10%
Online Participation	15%
Class Attendance/ In-class participation	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Critical Response Papers (4 at 10% each = 40%):** During the semester, students will be expected to complete four two-page response papers (double-spaced, 12 pt font, APA format) based on the assigned readings (see due dates in course calendar). The papers are designed to promote preparation for class, critical thinking about the material, and discussion participation. The course is divided into four topic areas: Foundations of Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Communication Processes, Intercultural Communication in Everyday Life, and Intercultural Communication in Applied Settings. Students will write one response paper per topic area of the textbook. Each response paper must be based on a chapter that corresponds with the part for which the paper is due. For example, response paper #1 must be based on an assigned readings from the first four weeks of the course. Keep in mind that:

- Evaluation of the response papers will be based on the extent to which they show evidence of critical engagement with the week's readings including for example, comparing/contrasting different theories presented in readings, addressing any ambiguities, consistencies and/or lack of clarity, interpreting current week's readings using previous readings/theories, extending ideas from readings to own experiences, and identifying connections with in-class activities and/or online discussions. Papers should be well written, cohesively structured, and contain no spelling or grammatical errors.

**Exams (1 at 10%, 1 at 15% = 25%):** For each exam, students will be asked to choose three questions from a set of five questions and write several paragraphs on each of the selected questions. The exam questions are designed to be broad in scope and encourage students to apply concepts developed in the course to the preparation or actual experience of studying abroad.

**Group Presentation (10%):** At approximately the mid-point in the semester, there will be class time devoted to student-lead activities/discussions (2-4 students) on issues that relate to the readings/videos/activities for that day. The number of students to lead a discussion and the number and size of discussion groups will be determined by course enrollments.

Facilitators for in-class student-led activities/discussions are required to do the following:

- Present discussion questions for fellow students and instructors on the morning of the day that you will facilitate. Discussion questions, for example, might focus on major theoretical issues or practical implications raised by the readings for students studying abroad.
- Facilitate group activity/discussion during class.

The goals of this part of the course are:

- to make the ideas found in the literature on transculturalism clearer to everyone;
- to provide ample discussion time to link course readings with studying abroad;
- to provide students with opportunities to collaborate and to learn how to prepare and orchestrate productive discussions on transculturalism. *Student facilitators are required to meet with the course instructor prior to the discussion that they lead.*

**Class Attendance and Participation (10%):** Course meetings will function best with full participation from everyone in attendance. Effective participation is contingent upon completing the readings before we meet as a group. Reading assignments are due the day for which they are assigned. Example: Chapter 1 should be read **before** coming to class on Thursday, August 25.

**Online Participation (15%):** A portion of your grade is contributed by your participation online, which will include discussions in the D2L (Desire 2 Learn) course website. Every week for which you have an online section, you are required to log in to D2L and participate in an on-line discussion based on the posted topic. In order to get credit, you will need to contribute three discussion posts. The first posting, should be between 100 and 150 words and should indicate that you have thought about the topic (“I agree with what she said” is not enough). Then, read what others have written and provide two additional posts at 25 to 50 words. These follow-up posts should be in direct response to what others have written.

### **Late Paper Policy**

Late Critical Response Papers will be reduced by one full grade (e.g., an A- becomes a B-) for each late week.

### **Writing Assistance**

If you are in need of help with your Critical Response Papers, or are unsure of proper methods for citations, the UA Writing Skills and Improvement Center can provide you with guidance or assistance. Further information is available at: <http://wsip.web.arizona.edu>

If you have any doubt about or difficulty with specific aspects of your writing, it is wise to access the resources available. In addition, feel free to approach the course instructor for assistance or with any questions or concerns.

**Course Website and D2L:** 15% of your grade is contributed by your participation online and in D2L (Desire 2 Learn), a web-based learning system. The D2L website is also the official website for the course and contains all assignments and important links. To access this course on D2L you must have a UA NetID and be officially enrolled in the course for at least 24 hours

## **APPENDIX B- PRE-STUDY ABROAD INTERCULTURAL PREPARATION: EXAMINING SHIFTING FRAMES OF REFERENCE**

### **Abstract**

This study examined the process of becoming interculturally competent in a pre-departure course, designed to prepare students for studying abroad, through the lens of ethnorelative/ethnocentric worldviews (Bennett, 1993), experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), and transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). While averages on the CCAI did not find significant differences pre- and post-course, by examining two students who had very large gains and two students who had very small gains on the measure of emotional resilience on the CCAI, it was found that the students who gained demonstrated a higher degree of transformative learning. The students who gained on the CCAI reflected on ‘how’ and ‘why’ cultural perspectives manifested themselves as they did both on the individual and collective level.

*Keywords: intercultural competence, study abroad, preparation, pre-departure, experiential learning, transformative learning, ethnocentric, ethnorelative*

*If a student's structures are not ready to be opened, the student then has only one mono-cultural frame in which to encounter experience. ~Anthony Ogden (2006)*

### **Introduction**

The 2012 Open Doors Report highlighted yet another increase in the number of U.S. students receiving academic credit for studying abroad in the 2010/11 academic year, a 1.3% rise over the previous year (Open Doors Report, 2012). With 14 of the top 25 destinations outside of Europe, and only five of the top 25 destinations to Anglophone countries, students are traveling to increasingly diverse destinations. Additionally, the report found that more and more students outside of foreign language programs are studying abroad: Social Sciences (+4.0%), Physical/Life Sciences (+6.7%), Health Professions (+14.2%), Math/Computer Science (+21.5%). While the foreign language classroom may be seen as an ideal space for preparing students to productively encounter foreign languages and cultures, there is an ever-increasing demand to prepare students outside of these majors for studying abroad, as neither language nor culture learning are a de facto result of studying abroad (Alred & Byram, 2002; de Nooy & Hanna, 2003; Einbeck, 2002; Freed, 1995; Kinginger, 2008; Kinginger, 2009; Kearney, 2010; Rivers, 1998; Wilkinson, 2000). Nevertheless, Mangan (2011) noted that business schools "...place more emphasis on studying abroad than on developing and integrating global content within the curriculum." If higher education continues to value the experience abroad, it must also be held accountable for the quality of learning by defining and supporting culture learning outcomes, such as intercultural competence (cf. Brewer & Cunningham, 2009).

Kearney (2010) noted that in many situations, sending students abroad unprepared is the equivalent of throwing students into the deep end of the pool wearing opaque goggles, "Students do indeed find themselves surrounded by water, but they often cannot orient themselves because they can refer only to what the pool looked like before they were thrown into it" (p. 333).

Particularly, as an increasing number of students are opting to participate in summer or short-term, less than eight weeks, programs (Open Doors, 2012), the academy must ensure that its students have been adequately prepared to benefit in positive ways from their experiences, instead of “reinforce[ing] stereotypes and encourage[ing] hostility rather than fostering comprehension and mutual respect” (de Nooy & Hanna, 2003, p. 65). This is not so say that students will not learn when left to their own devices, yet there may be a number of pre-conditions that must be met in order to foster positive outcomes. Administrators from the Danish Institute for Study Abroad alluded to this when recounting students’ experiences abroad at their institute in Copenhagen, “You see what you know. If you don’t know anything, you don’t see anything” (as cited in Fischer, 2009). Moreover, as well-intentioned as instructors may be, it cannot be assumed that all attempts will prepare students equally well. This study attempts to add to the literature on pre-study abroad preparation interventions by examining the relative successes and failures in the process to develop intercultural competence in a course designed to prepare students for studying abroad in order to answer the question: “Are there noticeable differences in the development of intercultural competence in pre-study abroad students who are enrolled in a semester-long course focused on the development of intercultural competence?”

### **Literature Review**

Past research on fostering intercultural competence has largely focused on strategies and course design in the study abroad program (Einbeck, 2002; Engle & Engle, 1999; Jackson, 2006; Knight & Schmidt-Rinehart, 2010; Ogden, 2006; Paige, Cohen, & Shively, 2004; Savicki, Adams, Wilde, & Binder, 2008; Talburt & Stewart, 1999; Vande Berg, 2009; Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou, 2012). A 75-page report chronicling the Georgetown Consortium Project on interventions in Study Abroad was published in *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study*

*Abroad* and focused on a large-scale, multi-year study of U.S. student learning abroad (Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). This report highlighted learner characteristics and program components that were significantly associated with student learning, and suggested intervention approaches to facilitate this learning. Vande Berg et al. (2009) concluded with two intercultural learning needs: to increase student learning both at home and abroad, and they also noted the potential to intervene in student learning by providing intercultural learning in pre-departure orientations (p. 28). Deardorff (2008) noted, however, that “Even when intercultural issues are addressed in pre-departure orientations, too little time is often spent on only a few random aspects of intercultural communication or cultural adjustment” (p. 43). She noted further that developing a series of workshops or even a course could be an effective solution (p. 43).

Workshops and courses aimed at pre-departure preparation have been designed and implemented in various college and university settings and have been documented in the form of institutional cases of study abroad integration (cf. Anderson, 2005, Brewer & Cunningham, 2009; Burn, 1991), and linguistic and cultural preparation (Anderson & Cunningham, 2009; Dupuy, 2006; Shively, 2010; Vande Berg, 2009). While each of these expositions and studies depicted certain aspects of integrating study abroad into the undergraduate curriculum in an attempt to bridge the gap between curricular and co-curricular learning, there are a number of studies that dealt with courses specifically designed to prepare U.S. students for studying abroad in intercultural contexts.

Solberg and Brockington (2005) and Brewer and Solberg (2009) provided descriptions of intercultural courses offered at Kalamazoo and Beloit Colleges that were designed to go beyond the pre-departure orientation program to help students succeed while abroad. The goals of the courses were to “help students acquire the habits (inquiry, observation, reflection), skills



(observation, documentation, analysis, communication), and knowledge (factual and conceptual) to prepare them to learn while abroad” (Brewer & Solberg, 2009, p. 45). These courses were presented in a largely descriptive manner, although some anecdotal evidence was given that confirmed the success of the courses. Another intervention strategy that has been widely published on is the University of Minnesota’s Maximizing Study Abroad Series (Cohen, Paige, Kappler, Demmessie, Weaver, Chi, & Lassegard, 2003; Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2002a ; Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2002b).

A number of the articles and chapters that present or use this series are descriptive in nature and described how a strategies-based approach can help students develop linguistic and cultural competence before, during, and after studying abroad (Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, & Hoff 2005b; Hoff & Paige, 2008; Shively, 2010). Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, and Hoff (2005a), however, presented a 414-page report from the University of Minnesota’s federally funded Language Resource Center, CARLA, based on the use of this series. The approach in this series “posits that language and culture learning may be enhanced if students become consciously aware of the range of strategies that they can employ in learning and using a second language and for interacting with members of the target sociocultural community” (Cohen et al., 2005b, p. 103). The portion of the study that focused on the student guide as an intervention technique concluded that although quantitative evidence cannot make strong claims of language and culture learning, the qualitative results, “suggest that the *Guide* did have a very positive affect on students’ study abroad experience, both language- and culture-wise” (Cohen et al., 2005a, p. 205). While qualitative gains were marginal, Paige and Vande Berg (2012) noted that this research project was “a pioneering effort that has served as an important foundation for intercultural interventions in study abroad” (p. 34)

In an attempt to understand “Why students are and are not learning,” Vande Berg and Paige (2012) reviewed recent intervention research, including the MAXSA program and the Georgetown Consortium Project described above, as well as other pre- and during-study intervention models. Of particular interest is the well-cited La Brack (1993) study at the University of the Pacific, whose “courses have set the standard for pre-departure and reentry programs” (Vande Berg & Paige, 2012, p. 49). In the same volume, La Brack and Bathurst (2012) provided an update on the University of the Pacific’s School of International Studies (SIS), where students are required to take both a pre- and post-study abroad course. “These courses are conceptually designed and pedagogically sequenced to facilitate intercultural competence by introducing students to key intercultural concepts and skills prior to departure, which students then apply while living and studying in the new culture” (p. 262). Demonstrating the effectiveness of their model, La Brack & Bathurst (2012) compared SIS students’ IDI scores in their first semester ( $M = 92.13$ ) and in the semester after studying abroad ( $M = 109.59$ ), which demonstrated a significant change ( $t = 8.954, p = .000$ ) (p. 274). Further they compared the SIS students with both post-study abroad Pacific Students who had not enrolled in SIS and had, thus, not had a preparatory course, as well as Pacific seniors who had not studied abroad finding that:

Those who had studied abroad outside of SIS had a mean IDI score of 95.9 after returning, significantly lower than the scores of the SIS students ( $t = 2.92; p = .004$ ) and not significantly higher than the scores of other Pacific seniors ( $t = .99; p = .33$ ). (p. 274)

Thus, the scores of the SIS students were significantly higher than those who studied abroad, but had not gone through the SIS pre- and post-study abroad courses. However, even these post-study abroad students who had not enrolled in the courses demonstrated a significantly higher score on the IDI than those seniors who had not studied abroad at all. As such, the program was

effective in fostering the growth of intercultural competence. The authors also noted, however, that, to their knowledge, their courses are the “oldest, conceptually linked, credit-bearing courses of this type in the U.S.” (p. 261). Their goal with this chapter was not only to highlight the success, but also share their lessons learned to aid other institutions in their endeavors to create similar courses and outcomes. While this exposé is incredibly informative, it does not include the level of inquiry required to examine how students’ intercultural learning developed.

Anderson and Cunningham (2009) presented, to date, the closest examination of what could be considered the process of developing intercultural competence. In this course, Anderson, a historian of religions, and Cunningham, an applied anthropologist, taught students the requisite skills in order to conduct an ethnography in an intercultural religious setting at the students’ college/home in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The course was designed to foster skill-learning in listening, observing, describing, interpreting, and reflecting. After completing the course, students’ final reactions were coded based on a continuum of transformative learning (Cunningham & Grossman, 2008<sup>9</sup>). Students’ responses were divided into three groups, with group three exhibiting the largest transformation and group one the least. Attempting to capture what caused these differences, the authors asked:

Were those in groups 2 and 3 farther along [the transformative learning continuum] to begin with than those in group 1? Did they have different attitudes toward intercultural engagement generally or fieldwork more specifically? Did they have less developed skills related to reflection? (p. 76)

Their analysis found that none of these was the case, but further investigation uncovered two observations. Of the eleven students, all of the seven pre-study abroad students were in groups

---

<sup>9</sup> This continuum is based on an unpublished manuscript and contains six levels of development: gains in knowledge, changes in attitudes, understanding of different perspectives, development of a structural understanding, and changes in frame of reference.

two and three, while all of the post-study abroad students were in group one, which demonstrated the least amount of transformative learning. They hypothesized that the returned study abroad students needed to first reflect on their experiences abroad before being thrown into another cultural setting because they “did not expect ongoing dissonance; rather, they expected that, compared with their study abroad experience, the fieldwork for this class would be fairly easy” (p. 77). The second observation highlighted that students in groups 2 and 3 were more actively processing not only the discomforts they felt in the intercultural settings than their counterparts in group 1 were, but also how this affected their learning (p.76). The authors concluded that the post-study abroad students needed a different type of course, and that although they had been “very deliberate in asking students to make connections between the conceptual theories in class and their field sites, [they had] not been as deliberate in asking them to bring their emerging self-understanding into the analysis” (p. 80). Ultimately, this study examined both student learning outcomes as well as the process of becoming more interculturally competent almost as a formative assessment procedure to examine their own pedagogical approach to better aid student learning and intercultural preparation for study abroad in the future.

The studies presented here highlight the current state of pre-departure preparation courses for U.S. students planning on studying abroad. Anderson and Cunningham (2009) examined intercultural learning on a continuum of transformative learning, while others showed that pre-departure courses can be successful in terms of statistical outcomes on the Intercultural Development Inventory (e.g. La Brack & Brathurst, 2012). Within any average change in pre- and post-measures of cultural competence for a group, however, there will be individuals who succeed, and those who do not. Thus, while many may learn and benefit from these intervention strategies, it is of utmost importance that researchers examine how pedagogical interventions can

better attempt to target **all** students more effectively, particularly those who did not perform as well. More than looking at intercultural outcomes on specific measures, which can cloud less successful learning endeavors with averages, examining the manner in which students learn about cultural difference and how to cope with it can aid the pedagogue in redesigning course materials and approaches to foster more positive outcomes in all students

### **Frameworks for the Development of Intercultural Competence**

Deardorff (2006b) noted that, “The development of intercultural competence needs to be recognized as an ongoing process and not a direct result of solely one experience...” (p. 259). As such, while a student may develop their intercultural competence abroad, an experience studying abroad cannot be seen as the sole impetus for this development. The academy can play an active role in inciting, fostering, and supporting this aspect of student learning by better understanding how this development occurs. Supporting this idea, Taylor (1994) underscored that:

Without understanding the process of becoming interculturally competent, it is difficult to determine what changes actually take place in the stranger and how those changes take place. Furthermore, without this understanding, it is difficult to better educate adults for successful intercultural experiences. (p. 157)

From the departure point that intercultural learning represents a process (Bennett, 1986; Byram, 1997; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003; Davis & Cho, 2005), the above-mentioned studies noted the successes in beginning that process before students even ventured abroad. As a result of the plethora of terms regarding cultural competence (intercultural competence, intercultural sensitivity, transcultural competence, etc.), it is important to remember that, “the difficult-to-pin-point nature of intercultural competence has led to a range of definitions, theories, and models that have served as the basis for different approaches to its assessment” (Sinicrope, Norris, &

Watanabe, 2007, p. 12). Ultimately, whether one discusses inter/transcultural sensitivity or competence, the goal is to better understand how students learn to be more successful in an environment where their existing cultural frameworks meet and are in potential conflict with others. A number of models exist that have been used to describe and explain the complex nature of developing intercultural competence in study abroad including the developmental model of intercultural sensitivity (DMIS; Bennett, 1993), experiential learning theory (ELT; Kolb, 1984), and Mezirow's transformative learning theory (TLT; 2000).

### **Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity**

In the decades since its inception, the DMIS (Bennett, 1993) has evolved into the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003). Bennett (1986) initially developed and then expanded (1993) this model to specify stages of intercultural sensitivity development to diagnose the 'level' of individuals, or groups participating in training modules (p. 180). This continuum could allow instructors to appropriately select materials and also assess outcomes of the intercultural sensitivity training based on students' progress (p. 180). The overarching change in the intercultural learner is from ethnocentric to ethnorelative stages. In the ethnocentric stages (denial, defense, minimization), an individual avoids cultural difference by experiencing their own culture as somehow central to their perception of reality (Bennett and Bennett, 2001, p. 14). In the ethnorelative stages (acceptance, adaptation, integration), individuals seek cultural difference by experiencing their own culture in the context of other cultures (p. 14). Contrasting a shift between the two overarching stages, Hammer, Bennett, and Wiseman (2003) wrote:

In general, the more ethnocentric orientations can be seen as ways of avoiding cultural difference, either by denying its existence, by raising defenses against it, or by

minimizing its importance. The more ethnorelative worldviews are ways of seeking cultural difference, either by accepting its importance, by adapting perspective to take it into account, or by integrating the whole concept into a definition of identity. (p. 426)

Thus, someone who has an ethnorelative worldview is likely to value another's perspective as equally valid and complex as their own. In contrast, someone who is ethnocentric, while potentially accepting superficial cultural nuances or differences, will universalize human similarities and differences across cultures. The DMIS model was designed to situate development in intercultural sensitivity as a result of intercultural training; particularly in combination with the IDI, which can quantify this development. Using ELT, however, helps elaborate the description of how intercultural changes came about. This is particularly true in the case of experiences studying abroad.

### **Experiential Learning Theory**

ELT has been used and referenced in many study abroad publications (Dupuy, 2006; Mezirow & Associates, 2000; Montrose, 2002; Pusch & Merrill, 2012). Passarelli & Kolb (2012) suggested that "Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1984) provided a model for educational interventions in study abroad because of its holistic approach to human adaptation through the transformation of experience into knowledge" (p. 138). In this model, "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (Kolb, 1984, p. 41). Ultimately, experiential learning is a "four-stage cycle involving four adaptive learning modes – concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation" (p. 40). In the study abroad context, a student may travel to Germany and first experience the discomfort of having to share a table at a crowded German café. With adequate, potentially guided, critical reflection the student may begin to examine the reasons

why this felt uncomfortable, possibly coming to the conclusion that Americans do not typically share tables and tend to have a larger area of personal space than many Germans do. The next time this student is in this situation, she can attempt to act accordingly, accepting this difference rather than judging the host culture for being rude by invading space that was clearly hers.

“Further iterations of the cycle continue the exploration and transfer to experiences in other contexts. In this process learning is integrated with other knowledge and generalized to other contexts leading to higher levels of adult development” (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012, p. 146). In this situation, the student may transfer this newly acquired knowledge to sharing a table at a restaurant, sitting on a train, or the informal greeting of kissing friends on the cheek, thus inciting more reflection and further iterations of the cycle. Of note is that, “Students have the opportunity to build these complexities abroad, and most of them will benefit from an educator’s skilled guidance” (p. 147). Indeed, to move beyond a negative interpretation that Germans do not respect personal space to an understanding that Germans and Americans may have different constructions of appropriate personal space, Vande Berg (2009) suggested that students may need a cultural mentor to help them in this endeavor; someone who understands both cultures well-enough to guide reflection. Montrose (2002) highlighted that in experiential learning in the study abroad context:

The most important stage for academic assessment is the conceptualization stage, where students generalize and interpret events. This stage is where students ask, ‘What does this mean?’ This is essential to the integration and understanding of relationships or general principles and theories that explain the experience. (p. 5-6)

The ideal study abroad program would include this, but given the plethora of programs, from the perspective of an individual institution, it may be more effective to prepare students with the



skills of critical reflection before they leave and follow up with students' experiences upon return. Concluding their article, Passarelli & Kolb (2012) wrote:

The crisis in American education has led to an excessive emphasis on performance and learning outcomes. . . . This is in contrast to the experiential learning view [...] that it is the process of learning that should be the primary focus. Education should focus on how students are arriving at answers by focusing on fundamental concepts, the process of inquiry, critical thinking, and choiceful creation of values.” (p. 149)

Along this line of inquiry, TLT can do much to help explain the process of how students make meaning out of experience.

### **Transformative Learning Theory**

TLT is another model of learning that has been used in a number of study abroad publications (cf. Savicki, 2008; Brewer & Cunningham, 2009). Mezirow (2000) summarized his model of learning as:

the process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind-sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove more true or justified to guide action. Transformative learning involves participation in constructive discourse to use the experience of others to assess reasons justifying these assumptions, and making an action decision based on the resulting insight. (p. 7-8)

In a cultural situation, it would appear that transformative learning is equateable to experiential learning in that the process is much the same as the example of the student studying abroad in Germany given above. However, the difference lies in that experiential learning posits

experience, concrete or hypothetical, as the departure point or precipitating cause, while transformative learning examines how becoming conscious, inclusive, and reflective upon other frames of reference can be the cause of shifts in one's own frames of reference. Mezirow's model adds the element of what makes up a frame of reference and how these can change as a result of a direct or accumulated experience; "many meaning schemes change over time culminating in a perspective transformation" (p. 291-292). As such, the model can also help describe changes in perspective that might be associated with piecemeal learning rather than the result of a sole experience. Mezirow (2000) further described that:

"A *frame of reference* is composed of two dimensions, a habit of mind and resulting points of view. A *habit of mind* is a set of assumptions – broad, generalized, orienting predispositions that act as a filter for interpreting the meaning of experience... A habit of mind becomes expressed as a *point of view*." (p. 17)

Moreover, transformative learning happens in one of the following ways: "by elaborating existing frames of reference, by learning new frames of reference, by transforming points of view, or by transforming habits of mind" (p. 19). Because an individual's frame of reference is often representative of cultural paradigms, (or seen from a different light, this cultural paradigm is often a frame of reference held by a larger group) (p. 16), it may be possible to encourage a shift in an individual's frame of reference by presenting other cultural paradigms in a manner that present a disorienting dilemma. While a disorienting dilemma may be experienced abroad, it is possible that the classroom can foster such disorienting dilemmas, thereby helping us to "change our point of view by trying on another's point of view" (p. 21). Mezirow (2000) noted that:

The most personally significant and emotionally exacting transformations involve a critique of previously unexamined premises regarding one's self... including self-examination with feelings of fear, anger, guilt, or shame; a critical assessment of assumptions; . . . exploration of options for new roles, relationships, and actions... (p. 21)

Studying abroad may incite this critique, yet coursework can also serve as a means to begin transformation by having students engage in a critical awareness of self and others. In order to have a transformation, Mezirow noted that one must have premise reflection, which "requires learners to evaluate and explore their long-standing, culturally constructed attitudes, values, and beliefs in the face of new and unfamiliar experiences" (Mezirow, 1991 as cited in Hunter, 2008, p. 98-99). Thusly, a classroom devoted to examining intercultural communication may serve as the ideal location for preparing students for studying abroad by requiring a critical reflection of one's own frame of reference.

## **Methods**

### **Course**

This study focused on students who enrolled in a three-credit course entitled, "Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad." This course was designed as a pre-study abroad preparation course offered to fulfill general education requirements at the University of Arizona. The basic outline of the course sequentially covered the topics included in the textbook *Experiencing Intercultural Communication* (Martin & Nakayama, 2011), but included classroom and online discussions, cultural simulations, and reflection essays. This textbook is particularly well-suited to prepare students for studying abroad, as Martin (1989) was also active in designing a pre-departure course for students studying abroad at the University of Minnesota. Further, the textbook provided students with theoretical frameworks for examining intercultural

communication (including: intercultural communication and history, identity, verbal issues, nonverbal communication, popular culture, conflict, relationships, etc.) as well as a multitude of practical examples from the authors' extensive background in the subject making it accessible to students new to the field.

Additionally included in the course were weekly classroom, and weekly to bi-weekly online discussions; cultural simulations; critical reflection essays; ethnographically guided extracurricular activities; and a midterm and final exam. These assignments were designed to allow students to make connections between the theoretical paradigms introduced in the class and real-world examples in their own lives, as well as to critically examine their own frames of reference with regards to cultural practices, which supported the course goals outlined in the syllabus.<sup>10</sup>

Online discussions played a key role in the course, as they offered students the occasion to independently and critically examine concepts that were introduced in the course/work. Students wrote initial posts for each assignment, and were then required to respond to two classmates' posts. In one example, students initially examined how they believed that personal and national history affected the construction of their own identity. Thereafter, they reexamined their ideas by reading and responding to other students' posts. Another portion of the course required students to give group presentations largely organized in the form of cultural simulations (e.g. Rocket: Hirshon, 2009), while others presented illustrations of cultural encounters (e.g. the failure of Wal-Mart in Germany). The intent of the cultural simulations was

---

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A for Syllabus

to briefly introduce what it can be like to enter a different culture where they must figure out unexpected rule changes in order to succeed (e.g. Barnga<sup>11</sup>).

Throughout the course, students completed four critical reflection papers that aligned with the four sections of the book: foundations of intercultural communication, intercultural communication process, intercultural communication in everyday life, and intercultural communication in applied settings. In these papers, students were assessed on their ability to compare/contrast theories presented in readings, address ambiguities, inconsistencies and/or lack of clarity; extend ideas from the readings to their own experiences; or identify connections between readings and in-class or online activities; as outlined in the syllabus. While the midterm was largely to assess the degree to which students had understood the content of the course, the final exam served as a final forum for students to reflect on their learning throughout the course.

The course was team-taught by the researcher and the Director of Study Abroad and Student Exchange in the Fall of 2010, and then subsequently solely by the researcher. Enrollment for the course is typically 25-30 students. The majority of students in this course had not studied abroad. However, given the nature of general education courses at large universities, there were a number of upperclass(wo)men, who had already studied abroad, and whose overseas experiences contributed to enriching class discussions by providing additional lived-examples in other contexts.

---

<sup>11</sup> Barnga is a proprietary card game designed for Doctor's Without Border participants to experience the disorientation often felt when traveling abroad. In this course, we played a similarly-styled, nonproprietary game accessible online named "5-Tricks." In this game, students are separated into 5-6 groups and are told to learn the rules of the game. When students understand the rules, they play in a tournament where they are not allowed to speak. After the first round the person with the most amount of tricks moves to the right, the person with the least amount of tricks moves to the left, and then continue the tournament. At this point, however, those who have moved to different tables (cultures) find themselves in a situation where the (cultural) rules that they learned at the first table are different at the second. Typically, frustration ensues as students attempt to negotiate rules, but are limited in their language use. This continues for a few rounds with some students returning to their original tables and readjusting well, while others remain disoriented.

## Participants

In total from the Fall of 2010 and the Fall of 2011, 28 students who had not previously studied abroad consented to this study. Of these 28 students, international students, students who grew up in bicultural homes, and students who had lived abroad during their childhood were eliminated from analysis. From the remaining students, four students were ideal candidates for an analysis of their journeys to becoming interculturally competent. Two of these students had large gains on the measure of emotional resilience on the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory (CCAI; Kelley & Myers, 1995a) while two had no gains on this measure. All four of these students in the case studies were enrolled in the course in the Fall of 2011. The CCAI pre- and post-scores of the 28 students across both semesters of the course being offered are included below for comparative purposes.

Table 1.0 - Overview of Participants

	Jennifer	Aaron	Noelle	Tina
Age	19	18	22	19
Class	Frosh	Frosh	Soph	Soph
Major	Engineering	Dance	Astrophysics	Mining Engr.
Experience Abroad	Travel with family to 2 or more countries	9-day HS travel to Europe	Travel with family to one country	Travel to 2 or more countries
Future SA Plans	New Zealand, Australia, or England	Ireland	Multi-country Medieval Summer Program	Italy, Greece or Ireland
Pre – ER	81	86	67	73
Post –ER	79	86	85	91

## Measures

There are a number of ways to measure different aspects of intercultural competence. Yet, due to the “difficult-to-pin-point nature of intercultural competence,” (Sinicrope et al., 2007, p. 12), these authors examined direct and indirect assessment tools<sup>12</sup> and concluded that, “the combined indirect and direct analyses in Fantini (2006) and Straffon (2003) revealed more layers and nuances in the growth of intercultural competence than those discernible by indirect assessments alone” (p. 31). While they noted further that portfolios may be used as direct assessment tools, they also underscored that researchers may never be able to have a true measure of intercultural competence without direct observation of an individual in a second culture. As such, the portfolio may be seen as one of the more direct qualitative assessment tools available. Given the multiple facets of cultural competence, whatever assessment tool is used will only capture a small portion of such a complex aptitude. A study conducted by Deardorff (2006a) found that intercultural experts agreed on a mixed methods approach, including both qualitative and quantitative measures, to best assess intercultural competence. In order of strongest agreement, the measures include: case studies and interviews (90% agreement); analysis of narrative diaries, self-report instruments, observation of others/host culture, and judgment by self and others (85% agreement). The same study found that intercultural administrators largely agreed with the intercultural experts, but were more likely to accept quantitative measures which included “pre-post tests, other-report measures, and critical incidents and essays” (p. 241). A concurrent triangulation approach is the most applicable method to analyze the data. Creswell (2009) explained that, “in a concurrent triangulation approach, the researcher collects both quantitative and qualitative data concurrently and then

---

<sup>12</sup> Direct Assessment Tools – performance assessment (Byram, 1997; Ruben, 1976) portfolio assessment (Byram, 1997; Jacobson, Sleicher, & Maureen, 1999; Pruegger & Rogers, 1994) and interviews (Fantini, 2006; Straffon, 2003); Indirect Assessment Tools – BASIC, ICSI, IDI, CCAI, ISI, AIC

compares the two databases to determine if there is convergence, differences, or some combination “ (p. 213). By using both methods, the weaknesses of one measure can be offset with the strengths of another. While data was available from both semesters of the course being offered, all four participants selected for this study were enrolled in the Fall of 2011. Data for this study consisted of both quantitative and qualitative data; additionally, participants completed a survey that documented their age, major, cultural background, experience abroad, and future plans for studying abroad.

**Qualitative data analysis.** Portfolios were used in this study as a direct, qualitative assessment measure. Portfolio items included all digitally-submitted coursework (see description under Course) on the University of Arizona’s Desire to Learn (D2L) online platform. The individual items included: four critical reflection papers based on four textbook units, two exams (midterm, and final), and weekly/bi-weekly online discussions. Portfolio items were coded using the three frameworks described in detail above in order to highlight instances where students were examining their points of view with regards to interactions with other cultures, whether domestic or foreign. The codes represented numerous categories, including: examining habits of mind/frames of reference, interest in the “other,” an ethnocentric or ethnorelative viewpoint, experience as trigger for reflection, encounters with other cultures, extension of course concept to real-world, and oversimplification of cultural differences. Coded items in the category “examining habits of mind/frame of reference” offered the richest data for analysis in this study, as it was in this category that Mezirow’s TLT allowed for a concrete explication of differences between the four students. However, although this single category based on TLT provided the richest data, all three frameworks were used to describe instances where students discussed or critically examined their own or others’ frames of reference or habits of mind. For



example, a student may have had a concrete experience with a different culture outside the classroom, or may have been forced to examine a particular aspect of their personal frames of reference. As a result of critical reflection, they may be able to shift their frame of reference to include another perspective other than their own and, thereby, be more likely to either view the world or behave in a more ethnorelative, rather than ethnocentric, manner when they find themselves in another multicultural situation. By examining individual reflections in comparison with these frameworks, one can attempt to extrapolate underlying successes or failures in the cyclical learning process.

**Quantitative data analysis.** The CCAI was used as an indirect, quantitative assessment measure in this study. Students completed the self-reported inventory both at the beginning and at the end of this course. This inventory was designed to assess four different dimensions of the ability to adapt cross-culturally: emotional resistance, flexibility/openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy. The measure of emotional resilience depicts someone who, “bounces back; [and] has emotional resilience, a positive attitude, a sense of adventure” (Kelley & Meyers, 1992). The measure of flexibility/openness depicts someone who, “lacks rigidity, is nonjudgmental, likes people, enjoys diversity,” whereas perceptual acuity depicts someone who is, “attentive to verbal/non-verbal cues, aware of communication dynamics, empathetic,” and personal autonomy depicts a “clear personal value system, strong sense of identity, self-directed, self-respecting” (Kelley & Meyers, 1992).

There were three reasons for which the CCAI was chosen: reliability, its function as a pedagogical tool, and its previous use at the institution where this study was conducted. Based on its norming with a large sample size of 653 individuals with .90 reliability, the CCAI was proven to be both a reliable and valid instrument (Kelley & Myers, 1992). As a pedagogical

tool, the CCAI can be paired with the *Action-Planning Guide* for participants to better understand how “to increase . . . skills in these important dimensions” by giving them ideas of how to increase their “chances for success when interacting with those of other cultural backgrounds” (Kelley & Myers, 1995b, p. 1). The action planning guide was not used in this course until the end of the semester so as to avoid a practice effect. Course/work materials were, however, fashioned with similar goals in mind. Finally, the financial costs associated with this study were minimized by using an inventory that had been previously used at the University of Arizona and was available for immediate use.

In spite of the reliability noted above, doubt was shed upon the reliability of the CCAI in Davis and Finney’s (2006) article, “A Factor Analytic Study of the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory.” The authors' results:

indicated that there might be substantial overlap between the factors, as demonstrated by the factor correlations (.87 to .97) [as a result of using a confirmatory factor analysis].

These high correlations suggest that there is a considerable problem with discriminant validity between subscales. (p. 324)

Davis and Finney (2006) concluded that the CCAI should not be used before more extensive case studies could be done. In response, Nguyen, Biderman, and McNary (2010) focused on the factor structure of the CCAI to survey the reliability of the four measures of the CCAI. Nguyen et al. (2010) examined a number of factor analytic models and applied them both to the item level of the CCAI as well as to Goldberg’s Big Five Inventory, “the most well-known taxonomy of personality” (p. 115) because Kelley and Myers had designed the CCAI around the premise that “cross-cultural adaptability is a psychological skill that is amenable to training” (p. 113). The study concluded that Kelley and Myers’ inventory, “if analyzed appropriately such that common

method variance is taken into account, demonstrates some construct and criterion related validity” (p. 125). Moreover, the authors found that the Big Five did not correlate significantly with any of the dimensions measured in the CCAI. However, the authors did note that the instrument itself may need some refinement, but also that the two subscales of emotional resilience and personal autonomy did positively predict the number of international assignments an individual had, which was the dependent variable included to illustrate an individual’s readiness to interact or adapt to different cultures. For the purposes of this study, only the factor of emotional resilience was used, as this showed the largest variance in students’ pre- and post-test scores.

### **Results**

A comparison of means showed that students who had not studied abroad ( $n = 28$ ) increased their scores on the emotional resilience measure of the CCAI from 80.64 ( $SD = 9.511$ ) to 86.29 ( $SD = 6.743$ ). However, a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) found that this change was not statistically significant for the given sample ( $p = .684$ ) for Pillai’s Trace, Wilks’ Lambda, Hotelling’s Trace, and Roy’s Largest Root. Further analysis on larger samples would need to be conducted in order to assess if any inferential hypotheses about the population hold in practice. While these scores do not bode well for the entire group on average, intercultural learning can be very individualized and, as such, within any average, there are often statistical outliers. Once four participants were selected, this study sought to understand if differences may exist between students enrolled in a course to develop intercultural communication. The most immediate observation was that two students had made large gains on the CCAI measure of emotional resilience, while two had not. As such, this study examined if and how “successful” and “non-successful” learners, as measured by scores on emotional

resilience, differed in the process of becoming interculturally competent with the ultimate goal of realigning pedagogical practices to maximize student learning.

Although speaking of study abroad programs with intervention strategies versus none at all, Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, and Paige (2009) wrote that “While some U.S. students do learn well abroad without intervention, our concern is for those who do not” (p. 5). It is imperative to examine which students are not benefiting from the intervention strategies as well as they could and whether this can be remedied in the future. For this reason, an examination of four students departed from the point that two students had made large gains on the emotional resilience score of the CCAI while two had not.

### **Group 1: Large gains on the CCAI measure of Emotional Resilience**

**Noelle.** At the time Noelle was enrolled in the course, she was a 22-year-old first semester sophomore majoring in astrophysics with plans for studying abroad on a multi-country, medieval study abroad course offered through the University of Arizona’s German Studies Department. Noelle identified herself as a “Caucasian, non-Hispanic” woman, who was not raised in a bicultural home. She had previously travelled abroad to one other country with family. Noelle’s score for Emotional Resilience for the CCAI increased from 67 to 85, an 18-point shift.

Throughout the course, Noelle expressed an interest in encountering other cultures and often caught herself reexamining her frames of reference and habits of mind. In reference to the cultural simulation Barnga (5-Tricks) on the first day of class, Noelle wrote in her online reflection post, “It really stops and makes me wonder what is right and what is wrong in life” (Online Discussion, 8/25/2011). Interestingly, she also accepted that her behavior may not have been appropriate, “I am grateful that we could not talk about it otherwise I might have been a

little pushy with the rules that I thought were ‘right’” (Online Discussion, 8/25/2011). Noelle’s attitude of being open towards understanding that right versus wrong is relative continued over the course of the semester when she went beyond an acceptance of this notion to making her frames of reference more inclusive. At the end of September, in another online post, she wrote, “I have come to realize that incorporating new cultures into your life gives out new dynamics in understanding the world we inhabit” (Online Discussion, 9/20/2011). Noelle not only accepted that what is right or wrong may differ, but also that including others’ perspectives could open an individual’s worldview. She went on further in her second critical reflection paper by attempting to understand how an individual’s frame of reference could be affected by their cultural background and how one might wish to express their identity nonverbally:

Nonverbal Communication can be expressed in many different ways such as: eye contact, facial expressions, the clothing and styles that we rock, the haircut that we choose to have, and even the brands of shoes that we choose to wear ([Martin & Nakayama, 2011, p.]178-179). For example the brand ‘TOMS’ shoes, for every shoe that is bought by a customer, TOMS will send a pair of shoes to a child in need, so someone who wears these shoes may pride themselves on doing something for others who are less fortunate. Another example is the brand of shoes called ‘Simple’; this is an all vegan shoe line that is more eco-friendly, thus implying that the person who wears these shoes is an environmentalist of some degree. (Second Critical Reflection Paper, 10/12/2011)

Noelle has taken a concept introduced in the textbook and attempted to find a real-world example for understanding how or why an individual might communicate their identity nonverbally. Interestingly, she also diverges from the more formal linguistic choice found elsewhere in her paper when writing “the clothing and styles that we rock,” potentially also

marking her identity in written form. She also went on to acknowledge that not only might an individual want to represent their identity nonverbally in a particular manner, but also that communicating nonverbally can vary from culture to culture and that, for this reason, it is important to “study different cultures, understand, and also accept their diversity” (Second Critical Reflection Paper, 10/12/2011).

Recognizing her own need for and intrigue in ‘otherness,’ she reflected upon seeking out cultural differences outside of class in an online post in mid-November:

On building intercultural skills, many attributes will aid me in building these skills. That is actually what I realized I needed to do when I came here to the University. I feel as though this class has already taken me so much further from where I was before. I felt as though I was very culturally deprived when I moved here. As I learn Spanish I also feel as though it has helped tremendously in understanding how different and diverse cultures can be. I even got to attend the All Souls Procession<sup>[13]</sup> which is a Spanish parade that gives people the ability to remember their loved ones who have passed away, I had never experienced such a type of event and I felt like I understood this holiday pretty well. It was highly effective in the sense that I was able to observe the dress/clothing along with the emotion felt from the souls that have been lost.

Importantly, Noelle’s perception of foreign cultures is also influenced in her foreign language classroom, a setting where students can also build cultural competence in preparation for studying abroad (Dupuy, 2006). Further, in this same post, Noelle described eavesdropping as an exchange student from Italy recounted his experiences in America and also an instance where she connected with a Chinese student who was interested in learning about American culture. It

---

<sup>13</sup> The annual All Soul’s Procession is in honor of the Mexican All Soul’s Day and is celebrated on a large scale in a southwestern city

is clear that Noelle was searching out cultural differences and knowledge in various settings to add to her own worldview. She was intrigued by how learning about different cultures could expand her own view of the world. Although she doesn't quite have the complete vocabulary to discuss her ideas fully in an online post in September, she examined that previous experience and her family's values guide her actions:

For myself, my history is an owner's manual to how I operate today. Different situations and happenings reflect back to pre-existing knowledge from previous interactions in order to make a plan of action in that happening that you are currently faced with. How do I know not to hang out with a "bad" group of people? I reflect back on when I did happen to hang out with bad people, which led to bad decisions, naturally. This most likely has roots back in the family life I am sure as well. My parents warned of whom to and not to hang out with, but ultimately we can make our own decisions and we may or may not follow our parent's advice. (Online Discussion, 9/12/2011)

What Noelle has done in this reflection post is relate how and why her current actions are based on experience and social guidance in her past. However, she further related this to identity formation and started to question whether one's past will predict their actions or whether this can be changed in the future, "So does that mean that our identities are never done being molded? . . . I feel that one may always be able to learn new things thus creating the chance of an identity taking on new attributes or even changing direction a little bit" (Online Discussion, 9/12/2011). Reflection on how and why one may act as they do has led Noelle to the conclusion that one can continually adopt new ways of acting or interpreting the world.

Of further interest is the fact that Noelle is also reflecting on how connecting her classroom learning with a concrete experience has helped her to make her frames of reference more inclusive. In her final exam, she summarized her learning experience in the course by writing:

This class has done what I exactly hoped that it would, I now can potentially have the most effective study abroad for myself. I know how to handle relationships involving cultural differences. Every day I am exposed to these different relationships and it will be most beneficial for me to know how to handle them. I am only an amateur astrophysicist so far but as I become more and more immersed into the scientific community I am finding out that astronomy has come from all over the world and from all sorts of cultures. If I can learn more about the cultural differences and how different viewpoints are taken from these differences then I can take different angles and realize different analytical features most likely. (Final Exam, 12/4/2011)

In this post Noelle demonstrated the knowledge that cultural differences can lead to variations in viewpoints and also the willingness to make her taken-for-granted frames of reference more inclusive by potentially adopting these viewpoints. Ultimately, Noelle shifted her frame of reference as a result of new experiences with and about cultures, thereby representing an ethnorelative point of view.

**Tina.** At the start of this course, Tina identified herself as a 19-year old sophomore woman majoring in mining engineering and listed “other” as her ethnicity. In an online post in mid-September, Tina reported that half of her family is Jewish and, as a result of her family moving so much through Europe, she did not really know her family’s background. She wrote, “Some people can say ‘I am Irish’ but what do I get to say? It doesn't feel right checking off the



box that says WHITE on paper work when I don't feel that way. Esp[e]c[i]ally since my skin color is always golden even in the winter” (Online Discussion, 9/13/2011). While Tina’s identity was not the subject of this study, it does add to the description of ‘who’ Tina was in the context of exploring cultural diversity. Tina had travelled to two or more countries, but did not indicate whether this was with family or alone; she mentioned travelling to London in passing in her assignments. Her plans were to study art in Italy, Greece, or Ireland, but she did not have confirmed plans. Tina’s score for emotional resilience for the CCAI increased from 73 to 91, an 18-point shift.

Throughout the course, Tina expressed a willingness and an orientation for being open towards other cultures. In reference to what she learned as a result of playing Barna (5-Tricks), Tina noted that she would try not to judge someone based on their beliefs or cultural background, but rather “I would rather learn about why and how they differ from me than being mad because they don’t do the c[u]st[o]mary hand shake gre[e]ting” (Online Discussion, 8/29/2011). Tina appeared to be very open towards transforming her own frames of reference, and did this throughout the course. Further, she was able to take specific experiences and explore their meanings based on classroom activities and cultural simulations. In her first reflection paper, Tina wrote:

A universalist sees the rules that apply across all cultures. For instance, that murder is wrong. Universalists do not recognize that cultures have different ways of seeing things, but rather they think everyone sees as they do. On the other hand, a relativist would only judge what a person does based on the other’s own personal background. I find myself to be more of a relativist since I have been enrolled in this class, especially after playing the 5 Trick game. I never understood what it really meant to have different rules in society,

such as what the right thing to do is and what is not. No matter where you go, you need to adapt to the changes that take place around you, even if it is just the people who surround you that change. For instance, one of my friends hates the word “gay” no matter how you use it. She was raised where the word was meant as derogatory and down grading, and as a result it was placing a negative impact on the gay community. I have never had anything against people that like the same sex and growing up it did not bother me. Half of my friends were bisexual, gay, or lesbian and we still got along. Even they used the term gay for things that they thought to be stupid, ugly, wired, etc. Upon learning that my new friend did not like to hear the word “gay“, I did not fully understand at first. I discovered it was just a difference in how we were raised. After this experience, I now no longer use the word at all in order to not offend others. (First Critical Reflection Essay, 9/20/2011)

In this instance, Tina took a concept from intercultural communication, examined it through the lens of ‘what is correct in one culture may not be in another culture’ (a lesson learned as a result of a cultural simulation performed in class), and extended it to differences that she had seen between where she grew up and where she finds herself in college. While her reflections on the gay community are somewhat superficial in that despite their orientation, “we still got along” and the number of LGBTQ friends she claimed to have is most likely an exaggeration, her reflection does point to an understanding that using the word “gay” to mean “stupid, ugly, weird, etc.” in one cultural environment was no longer acceptable in another. Additionally, she stated that she changed her behavior as a result of incorporating another viewpoint into her frame of reference.

Another interesting aspect of Tina's development of intercultural competence was a keen interest in understanding 'why' things manifest themselves as they do. For example, at the end of September Tina responded to a classmate's online post regarding identity:

Do you really think your physical identity doesn't affect you? What do your friends look like? Similar to you? What would you[r] life be like if you were obese? Do you think you would have the same friends? Would you participate in the same activities you do now? What about if you couldn't hear do you think you would have gone to the same schools and met the same people that helped shape you into who you are today? I didn't think physical ability was that important either [I] figured I would deal with it when I can't walk but what if you never could? I don't know it just got me thinking. (Online Discussion, 9/26/2011)

Clearly, Tina could have added a bit of tact to her response, but, ultimately, she was seeking to understand and challenge her classmate's perception of physical identity that was presented as one of many identities that one can associate with. She was trying to uncover why her classmate was not viewing her physical identity as important and Tina also appeared to question her own assessment of her orientation towards physical identity.

In a similar situation, Tina attempted to find underlying reasons for surface level situations. Responding to a film about bilingual education in America, a classmate of Tina's wrote, "This video reminded me of a scenario where I went to Miss Saigon [Vietnamese restaurant] with some of my friends whose parents are from Vietnam. They speak fluent Vietnamese, but they refuse to speak it to anyone beside their parents" (Online Discussion, 9/28/2011). Although the scenario is not described in detail, Tina was intrigued by the situation and attempted to uncover 'why' this might have been the case by asking:

I was thinking the same thing about people that learned a different language before [E]nglish then move[d] to [A]merica. Do you think that they don't find the[ir] language as important as [E]nglish because the[y] came to "the land of opportunity". Maybe they think all the opportunity is here. To your friends that didn't want to speak [V]iet[namese] because they were embarrassed? (Online Discussion, 9/29/2011)

Despite the many grammatical errors in Tina's online post, by writing "land of opportunity" in quotations, Tina appeared to be questioning, for herself, the widely-held belief that America is the land of opportunity, and that these Vietnamese might have overvalued the use of English/undervalued the use of their native language, something that her classmate did not appear to be able to understand. Thus, while Tina might not come up with an answer, per se, she attempted to understand what underlying predispositions might act as a filter in interpreting her classmate's experience. In her third critical reflection paper, Tina described an experience, attempted to interpret what went wrong in the experience by searching for the underlying reasons why she and her professor viewed the situation differently, and ultimately changed her behavior as a result:

Between two people there will always be some sort of relationship but the way you identify each other will define that relationship. For example I know that in my culture you are to respect teachers and do as they ask. However my math teacher and I do not see eye to eye so it is very difficult to be accepting of her when she will not meet me half way. The way I was raised it was ok to be a few minutes late or turn in one or two homework's late or even that if you are sick you should not go to class. To my teacher these are all insults. Due to the fact I was raised not to disrespect teachers I had to change the way I was acting. This happens in all relationships, if you were taught

differently th[a]n the other person you are communicating with you must be able to create common ground if you wish to continue the relationship. . . .

We must first understand each other and by understanding we will create style of the relationship that works for both parties, and then we can carry out the relationship to a further level. For example with my math teacher we did not understand our differences until they were made evident. Then by the differences becoming so evident we could understand w[h]ere the other was coming from. The relationship soon became submissive because I wanted to be a good student and get a good grade and now we have a relationship w[h]ere we get along and she is much kinder to me. (Third Critical Response Paper, 11/8/2011)

In this instance, Tina recognized that there was a problem, that her meaning perspective was different than that of her math teacher, and, although she expressed frustration that her math teacher would not “meet halfway,” she ultimately changed her behavior in the submissive style of dealing with (cultural) differences in a relationship because she saw that she had to do this in order to get the result that she wanted: a good grade in the class. In this instance, one sees the full cycle of experiential learning with the expansion of transformative learning by shifting one's frame of reference. Insightfully, Tina wrote in the same reflection paper, “When a friend [...] does something you think is wrong like discriminating unfairly, you have to ask why they are doing it to understand and accept them” (Third Critical Response Paper, 11/8/2011).

In addition to having made large gains for emotional resilience, Noelle and Tina both accepted that there were cultural differences and that these cultural differences could explain how one could perceive and interact with the world. However, Noelle and Tina also searched for other explanations for any given phenomenon by either extending a concept in order to find a

real world example, or questioning the underlying principles and values that might lead a culture or individual to their equally valued perspective. By doing this, they moved further along the spiral to critically reflect on what might be the underlying structures of their own and others' meaning schemes. In contrast, the next two students, Jennifer and Aaron whose scores changed very little, *did* both accept that there are cultural differences and that these cultural differences could help explain how one perceives and interacts with the world, yet this is where their reflection ended. At times each one of them showed potential for shifting a frame of reference, but in other instances they prioritized their interpretation over that of another. Their interpretations appeared to be static in that they accepted different frames of reference as a given but were not, or infrequently, able to shift their own frame of reference in order to understand or explore why the underlying perspective was as such. They could see deficiencies in their own approach, but could not critically reflect to reexamine their own meaning schemes.

### **Group 2: No gains on the CCAI measure of Emotional Resilience**

**Jennifer.** Jennifer began the course as a 19-year-old first semester freshman majoring in engineering and identified herself as “Caucasian, non-Hispanic” female. She indicated that she had a Spanish-speaking nanny as a child, although she did not learn Spanish from her, but otherwise grew up in a monocultural home. She had travelled to two or more countries, but always with family on vacation. Her plans to study abroad included a semester or a summer around her junior year to New Zealand, Australia, or England. Her emotional resilience score for the CCAI went from 81 to 79, a negligible 3-point decrease.

In Jennifer's first online post in reference to the Barnaga (5-tricks) cultural simulation, she highlighted her openness towards accepting other frames of reference:

What I took from this game is if I dislike what others are accustomed to, the correct approach is not to fight but to prepare accordingly to be able to be open minded to others opinions and approaches cause not everyone has the same views on things. (Online Discussion, 8/29/2011)

While this is an excellent first step, Jennifer appeared to lack the ability to go beyond accepting the status quo that other perspectives exist. To that end, she even acknowledged the importance of other perspectives in her midterm when writing about language diversity:

The fact that I would be completely lost if someone from another speaking language talked to me affects my thought process today because I feel I only surround myself with people who know the same language as me. This creates a huge language barrier and makes it so I miss out on what other people from different languages have to say. That is important because then what I am surrounded by becomes one dimensional as oppose[d] to diverse. (Midterm, 10/14/2011)

Again, this is a wonderful departing point for a student to recognize that an individual might be limiting their point of view by only surrounding themselves with English speakers, although she does not acknowledge whether she surrounds herself with native or English as a second language speakers. In contrast to Noelle and Tina, however, Jennifer did not seek to explain ‘why’ or ‘how’ things are the way that they are, nor did she attempt to otherwise explain what certain things can mean for certain people. For example, in reference to a classmate, Jennifer wrote:

After reading that part in the book I started to think about all the times I have immediately walked away or have gotten scared because of stereotyping certain types of people because of their clothing. An example of this that I am kind of embarrassed to talk about was at first on the first day of class when I saw [Noelle]. I got scared because

of the way she dressed and wore the many different colors in her hair, but I was able to get to know her and understand how cool her insights were and how nice she really was.

(Third Critical Reflection Paper, 11/8/2011)

Here, Jennifer was able to recognize that her initial judgment about a person should not necessarily be based upon outward appearance. However, she did not attempt to understand how Noelle's dress, for example, might be an outward representation of her identity, but only that she had "cool insights" and was "nice." While this could be an important step for Jennifer, it might not be enough to ultimately affect her learning process completely. Similarly, Jennifer was able to find extensions of the concepts covered in the book in her own life, but was unable to search for deeper meaning. In a mid-November online post, students were asked to reflect on six intercultural skills outlined in the book and reflect on which one would be the most important in a touristic situation. Jennifer used an experience that she had abroad to illustrate the importance of observation:

'Observe. Perhaps this is the primary skill to practice, especially for many Americans who are used to acting or speaking first when presented with ambiguous or unfamiliar situations,' ([Martin & Nakayama, 2011, p.]302). I believe that this intercultural communication can be vital in knowing when traveling and placing yourself in a tourists shoes because when you[re] in a new place expecting the unexpected is impossible to know. If you are immediately to jump to conclusions or ask questions, one never knows whether or not in another's culture if they might be offending someone or not acting "normally" in the eyes of the others culture. . . . While traveling through Europe my brother almost got into a fight with a French man because of this. Instead of listening and



observing he interrupted and offended the man and because of it got punched in the face. (Online Discussion, 11/15/2011)

Certainly, observation is a very important skill. However, Jennifer did not include the context of the situation in order to explain how observation could have helped her brother avoid getting punched in the face. She failed to explore possible underlying reasons, potentially cultural, to understand the conflict or even connect this incident with the conflicts discussed in the preceding chapter and online post to hypothesize any further reasons that her brother failed in the intercultural encounter other than that he “interrupted and offended the man.” She did not examine why the interruption might have caused the French man to act this way, or how her brother acted in turn. It is unlikely that simply interrupting someone would have caused such an escalation, although it is important to note that she placed blame on her brother’s incompetence and did not negatively stereotype the Frenchman. Moving backwards chronologically to the chapter on conflict, Jennifer wrote about a conflict with her brother in an online post at the end of October. However, she used the theoretical concepts covered in class to justify her behavior rather than as a means for understanding why the two approached the conflict differently:

One time my brother asked to borrow money from me, instead of listening to me when I told him no he decided it was time for a fight to start. At first he started by trying to remain calm to not look crazy by immediately getting mad but then it escalated to him yelling when I repeatedly told him no. The conflict style started with a discussion style by us talking but then it further more escalated into a more intense verbal conversation. Instead of putting myself in a dangerous situation where it could have been a more nonverbal, I decided to protect myself by calling my sisters name (mediator) and stepping back from the situation in a more accommodating style. (Online Discussion, 10/27/2011)

While one could argue that Jennifer had started to examine her own beliefs and was potentially shifting her frame of reference, she was not able to transform her beliefs. Not only does she use the conflict styles to justify her actions, but she also describes her actions as overall more rational than her brothers because he could not take no for an answer and, consequently, “decided it was time for a fight to start.” She used the conflict styles to prove her actions as correct and her brothers as incorrect, rather than examining how the conflict escalated away from a discussion style, which she appeared to be equating to both of their actions at the beginning of the conflict. Additionally, one must question whether it is possible that her use of discussion style provoked her brother to get “crazy.” Overall, Jennifer had accommodated new information learned in class, but she was not able to take her experiences and transform them to the extent that she would question her own “fundamental reasoning” behind how she viewed the world. Aaron’s learning transpired in a similar manner.

**Aaron.** Aaron began the course as an 18-year-old first semester freshman majoring in dance. He identified himself as a “Caucasian, non-Hispanic” male and noted that he grew up in a monocultural home with parents of Irish and Italian heritage. Aaron had travelled to two or more countries prior to taking the course, which was later explained as a high school trip to Europe. He noted that it was difficult to take time away from his major, but that he would like to study abroad in Ireland. Aaron’s score for emotional resilience on the CCAI stayed exactly the same at 86 for both the pre- and post-tests.

In a similar manner to the other three students, Aaron noted in his first critical reflection paper that he acknowledged that different cultures may have different meanings for the same cultural expression. “Just because Americans put certain meanings to certain phrases, does not

mean that other cultures do the same” (First Critical Reflection Paper, 9/20/2011). However, Aaron failed to go any further. In the same critical reflection paper, he wrote that:

Stereotyping is also very interesting. People cannot go without holding stereotypes. They help people know what to expect when interacting with others. The stereotype that was shown in the book was one I have been thinking about for years. People always talk about how bad Muslims treat their women. Little do people know that this is not happening with all Muslim women. People will see a story on the national news, and immediately jump to conclusion that everyone associated with that culture does the same thing. (First Critical Reflection Paper, 9/20/2011)

Aaron was open to the idea that one incident in the news was not cause to believe that an entire culture or society should be lumped into this action. However, what he failed to do, for example, was consider that treating Muslim women “badly” might be a judgment from the Western world, his own frame of reference, or examine ‘why’ Americans might view these stereotypes the way that they do. Further, similarly to Jennifer, Aaron used the theoretical concepts of conflict style to first describe, but ultimately defend his own style over that of a friend of his in an online post at the end of October:

The first conflict that comes to mind is one with an old friend of mine. We were best friends for about a year, but after that many conflicts erupted. We were constantly fighting, and disagreeing on everything. Since we fought a lot, we had to confront each other about it. She would rather use the engagement style when she was confronting me about things. She always was so emotional when it came to fighting, or working things out. I on the other hand hated, and still do hate being emotional. When I had to confront her about things I used the accommodating style. In the book it says people that use this

style try to make sure that the conflict doesn't get out of control. That is exactly what I did not want. I never wanted things to get out of control. (Online Discussion, 10/28/2011)

Aaron did acknowledge that their conflicts were a result of two different styles, yet he prioritized his own as a way of making sure that the conflict didn't get out of control, thereby implying that he was correct and his friend incorrect. He viewed the use of emotions negatively and seemed to equate this conflict style with getting out of control. While it is important that he examined their conflict style, which was part of the exercise, with their ultimate incompatibility, he did not venture further to value the other style or examine if there might be any other explanatory reasons that they approached conflict with different styles.

Aaron prioritized his own frame of reference in the same online post that Jennifer responded to in mid-November about intercultural suggestions for touristic situations by referring to a class trip to Europe while in high school:

Another suggestion the book gives is to be flexible when traveling. For me this can go either way. I definitely agree that it is right to be polite and flexible to what the rules and customs are, but you can't let this takeover. I have a great example for this. When I was traveling we stayed in a hotel in Innsbruck, Austria. One night my roommate got sick and threw up on his bed sheets. The next morning we cleaned it up before we left, and while we were gone housekeeping also cleaned up. When we returned the room was fine and nothings was ruined. On the day we were leaving the hotel tried charging us two hundred extra euros because they said we ruined the hotel's beds. Now this can be an example of foreign people trying to take advantage of you because you're from America,

and think they can take your money. You need to be sure to be flexible but not too flexible. (Online Discussion, 11/15/2011)

In this instance, Aaron was utterly incapable of understanding that there might be any other explanation for this incident beyond Austrians wanting to take advantage of American tourists. While it is impossible to know the exact situation beyond Aaron's description, there are a number of other interpretations possible. One is that Aaron could have questioned whether Austrians and Americans, or perhaps even adolescents and adults, might have different perceptions of cleanliness. Another might even have been for Aaron to question how clean he now believes he and his friend actually got the bed. Similarly, in an explanation of a high school service trip in his fourth critical reflection paper, Aaron appeared to be woefully naïve as to what it meant to "be" a member of the Lakota tribe:

[I]n the summer before my senior year I went on a service trip to an Indian reservation in South Dakota called the "Lakota tribe". I can truthfully say that I got the most authentic experience out of this trip than any other trip I've taken. First off, we had to live and sleep in a run down boys and girls club. This really showed me how it feels to live in poverty like 90% percent of the reservation does. Everyday the kids came to the club and we would play games with them and have them participate in different activities. At the end of the day we drove some of them home, and got to see where they lived. It was so sad having to see the living conditions of some of the kids. We also had some hard labor in addition to helping out at the club. Although South Dakota is part of the United States, it still has a huge cultural difference from most parts of our country. At some points in the trip I felt like I was in a different county. I lived in South Dakota for about ten days and can honestly say that it was the most life changing experience of my life. I think that a

huge part of this is because I wasn't a tourist while on this trip. I was living there and living the life of a member in the Lakota Indian reservation. (Fourth Critical Reflection Paper, 12/1/2011)

In this instance, Aaron acknowledged that this experience made him feel as though he was in a foreign country. He described it as a life changing experience, yet he did not provide any reason for why this was beyond the fact that they lived and slept in a rundown Boys and Girls Club and did hard labor. Aaron appeared to equate the experience being "life changing" because he was not a tourist and because he was "living the life of a member in the Lakota Indian reservation." This is not to say that Aaron did not learn anything in the course, nor that he was unable to take anything away from this experience, but he was unable to examine what cultural differences there might have been beyond the fact that most Native American Indians on the reservation live in poverty. In fact, in his final exam, he noted that he will be returning to the tribe and hoped to:

get a more in depth experience than the last by using my new skills that I have learned in this class. . . . this time there will only be about four or five of us going and we will be staying at someone's house instead of a boys and girls club. I'm hoping that my experience can be an even better than the one prior to taking this course. (Final Exam, 12/6/2011)

Certainly, it is hoped that Aaron would be able to use some of the knowledge acquired in the class to make this experience a truly transformative one for him. However, as a pedagogue, it is critical to reexamine how intercultural preparation courses are taught in order to ensure that students such as Aaron and Jennifer can make even more progress in the course pre-departure by examining the 'why' and 'how' of cultural difference to truly make the most of their future experiences.

## Discussion & Implications

The goal of this study was to determine whether or not there were noticeable differences in the development of intercultural competence between four students who were planning to study abroad, and who had enrolled in a course focused on the development of intercultural competence. Using the CCAI as a departure point to examine their learning differences, Noelle and Tina had marked changes in their pre- and post-scores on the measure of emotional resilience, while Tina and Aaron did not. The qualitative data, using the frameworks of the DMIS focused on ethnocentric and ethnorelative worldviews, ELT, and TLT, supported the quantitative data. Aaron and Jennifer appeared unable to transform their 'taken-for-granted' frames of reference described by Mezirow (2000) to make them more open and inclusive, thus maintaining their own culture or frame of reference as central to their own ethnocentric worldview. Noelle and Tina, however, both attempted to expand their worldviews throughout the course by critically examining the reasons for 'why' and 'how' certain cultures represent themselves as they do. At times, they even discussed how a 'take-for-granted' frame of reference caused them trouble and further outlined the steps taken to correct this problem (e.g. Tina and her math teacher). The ability to shift one's habits of mind and thusly guide action in the future is representative of a complete experiential learning cycle with an ethnorelative worldview. This is not to say that neither Jennifer nor Aaron learned anything in the course nor that Noelle or Tina would, necessarily, act in an ethnorelative manner in the future. However, Jennifer and Aaron's learning did not appear to be as pronounced or self-reflective as Noelle and Tina's did.

Nevertheless, these findings can lead the pedagogue to intervene in student learning earlier in the semester in an attempt to foster the type of learning that will be crucial for spending

time abroad successfully. For example, instructors can place an added emphasis on leading effective online discussions (cf. Bender, 2003; Conrad & Donaldson, 2011). Specifically, the instructor can push students to seek the answers for ‘how’ and ‘why’ cultures may manifest themselves as they do. In the instance of Aaron in Austria, he could be questioned as to whether he was indeed being charged extra for his room because he was American, whether Austrians and Americans have a different level of cleanliness, or whether this issue could be chalked up to the follies of adolescence, as vomiting in bed as an adolescent in Europe for the first time certainly raises questions of the cause of his friend’s sickness. Further inquiries could also be made about his concrete experiences with the Lakota tribe by having him research cultural differences and ground them in what he may have seen, rather than allowing a surface level explanation that this tribe was “poor.” Moreover, for students who may not have had such experiences, it can be important for them to examine cultural differences in their own communities, such as Noelle did by trying to understand ‘how’ or ‘why’ one projects their identity as they do, going beyond the interpretation that Jennifer made that Noelle was “nice” and had “cool ideas.” What ideas of hers were “cool,” and did Noelle's choice of dying her hair blue have any meaning to her? While it may be less important to uncover true underlying reasons, the skill of seeking out underlying causes, at least at the level of inquiry, could lead students to more open worldviews while abroad by preventing superficial, and often negative, stereotypes. While many of the students were successful in this course as Noelle and Tina were, it is equally important to ensure that all students are presented with materials, activities, and strategies to help them value other worldviews as equally valid.

One such example that could be used in addition to course materials is the D-I-V-E (Description, Interpretation, Validation, Explanation) model, which is presented in various forms



at many pre-departure orientations. In this model, students describe an incident; e.g. a woman did not make eye contact with me. They then interpret the event; e.g. she was embarrassed. However, the student must go further and examine whether the woman was really embarrassed, or whether she might have been operating under other cultural rules. Thus, they must examine whether their interpretation is valid for themselves and for the host culture. Finally, they must bring all of this information together to explain what happened more completely. In this example, a student could conclude: the woman was being respectful of personal space because we were in a crowded atmosphere. Thereby, students have practical and concrete steps to follow, which can expand their reassessment of their own worldviews. This conclusion supports Vande Berg, Paige, and Hemming Lou's (2012) statement that:

Study after study demonstrates the importance of providing learners with cultural content such as value orientations, communication styles, nonverbal communication, conflict styles, and ways of learning. This knowledge enables them to become more culturally self-aware and more observant of cultural patterns different from their own. . . . Cultural content anchors the intercultural experience by serving as a foundation for reflection and learning. . . . It is only through ongoing reflection that students make meaning of their intercultural encounters. They begin to challenge their own cultural assumptions, consider other cultural perspectives, and shift their frame of reference to the particular cultural context. (p. 54)

By providing students with the content to become more cognizant of their own frames of reference and habits of mind, students can be more inclusive of other points of view, which can help them when they venture abroad to act in more culturally appropriate manners to avoid ethnocentric judgments of the host culture. The pre-departure classroom is the ideal location for

this, as the instructor can foster students to not only become more culturally self-aware, but also to foster students to seek out ‘how’ or ‘why’ individuals and cultures act the way that they do.

### **Limitations and Future Studies**

While this study appeared to support an ethnorelative experiential and transformative learning process as linked with high scores on the CCAI’s measure of emotional resilience, the numbers are too small to draw any generalizability. Further, as quoted in Sinicrope et al. (2007), Arasaratnam and Doerfel (2005) wrote that, “a major short-coming in studies in the past is that often participants who have little experience in intercultural situations are asked for self-reports of behavioral choices in hypothetical intercultural simulations” (Arasaratnam & Doerfel, 2005, p. 141 in Sinicrope et al., 2007, p. 34). While Sinicrope et al. (2007) noted that this might not be a factor in post-study abroad students, this study did use the CCAI as a self-reported measure in pre-departure students. As such, while this study does not suggest any generalizability, it must also acknowledge that the participants may not have been able to accurately predict how they would act in an intercultural situation.

While considering these limitations, the conclusions drawn from this study can be applicable to aiding students who may not learn as intensively as others. Another interesting note is that while participants' ages were similar, the two first-semester students scored lower than the first-semester sophomores. While it was not the focus of this study, it may be interesting for future studies to examine whether or not students’ learning is affected by how long they have been independently living away from their parents. Referencing Mezirow (1997), Taylor (2000) highlighted that this learning process is a unique experience of adults because they have “acquired a coherent body of experience – assumptions, concepts, values, feelings,

conditioned responses – frames of reference that define their world” (Mezirow, 1997, p.5 as cited in Taylor, 2000, p. 288). Further, Hunter (2008) wrote that:

Life experience that causes a student to recognize existing *schemes* in order to accommodate new information and negotiate new environments represents learning that leads to normative development. On the other hand, life experience that challenges students to reconsider the fundamental reasoning behind their most basic notions of the way the world works can precipitate an entire change in *perspective*. Learning of this nature is said to be transformative. (p. 94-95)

While it was hoped that the course provided the “cultural content such as value orientations, communication styles, nonverbal communication, conflict styles, and ways of learning” noted above (Vande Berg, Paige, & Hemming Lou’s, 2012, p. 54), it is possible that sophomores have had more life experiences that lead to a change in perspective than fresh(wo)men have had by virtue of the fact that sophomores have typically been out on their own longer. Thus, it is possible that the sophomores in this study had more experiences that caused them to reconsider their frames of reference, more time to question these frames of reference and, thus, may be more inclusive of others’ worldviews. Further, it is possible the two students whose scores increased more dramatically might have been individuals who were more open to change from the onset of the course. The final limitations echoes Martin (1989), who noted that it is difficult to evaluate the effectiveness of a pre-departure course since the outcomes of the course will not be completely assessable until after the students return from study abroad.

Future studies should examine what specifically constitutes an intercultural experience that can lead to students fundamentally questioning their existing frames of reference. It would also be important to shadow students on their journeys abroad to examine how their learning

actually transpired. These studies could also address whether or not students become overly confident as the result of taking such a course and whether there is a potential danger in this when encountering cultural dissonance in the future. Further, assessing students with an instrument which is intended to document student learning at specific stages, such as the IDI, could be relevant and provide generalizability to the field of study abroad intervention strategies.

### **Conclusion**

This study of four students enrolled in a pre-departure study abroad course designed to foster the development of intercultural competence found that students who were more successful on the emotional resilience score of the CCAI had more complete experiential and transformative learning cycles while exhibiting an ethnorelative worldview. The more successful students not only recognized and accepted that cultural differences existed, but they also attempted to examine ‘how’ and ‘why’ they, and others, view the world as they do and/or ‘how’ and ‘why’ cultures manifest themselves as they do. It was hypothesized that this element of reflection could be what led to increases on the emotional resilience score of the CCAI. Suggestions have been made to target and intervene in student learning for those who did not gain, as any intervention strategy should ultimately target those who appear to be learning the least.

## References

- Alred, G., & Byram, M. (2002). Becoming an intercultural mediator: A longitudinal study of residence abroad. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 23(5), 339-352.
- Anderson, L. C. (2005). *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Anderson, C. S. & Cunningham, K. (2009). Developing ethnographic skills and reflective practices connected to study abroad. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. 63-84). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Arasaratnam, L. A., & Doerfel, M. L. (2005). Intercultural communication competence: Identifying key components from multicultural perspectives. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 29(2), 137-163.
- Bennett, J. M., & Bennett, M. J. (2001). Developing intercultural sensitivity: An integrative approach to global and domestic diversity. *The Diversity Symposium*.
- Bennett, M. J. (1986). A developmental approach to training for intercultural sensitivity. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 10(2), 179-196.
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21-71). Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc.
- Bender, T. (2003). *Discussion-based online teaching to enhance student learning: Theory, practice, and assessment*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.

- Brewer, E. & Cunningham, K. (2009). *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Brewer, E., & Solberg, J. (2009). Preparatory courses for students going to divergent sites. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. 41-62). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Burn, B. B. (1991). *Integrating study abroad into the undergraduate liberal arts curriculum: Eight institutional case studies*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Byram, M. (1997). *Teaching and assessing intercultural communicative competence*. Bristol, England: Multilingual Matters.
- Cohen, A. D., Paige, R. M., Kappler, B., Demmessie, M., Weaver, S. J., Chi, J.C., & Lassegard, J. P. (2003). *Maximizing study abroad: A language instructor's guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use*. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota.
- Cohen, A. D., Paige, R. M., Shively, R. L., Emert, H. A., & Hoff, J. (2005a). Integrating culture and language learning strategies into the classroom at home and abroad. In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 103-108). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Cohen, A. D., Paige, R. M., Shively, R. L., Emert, H. A., & Hoff, J. (2005b). *Maximizing study abroad through language and culture strategies: Research on students, study abroad program professionals, and language instructors*. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota.
- Conrad, R. M., & Donaldson, J. A. (2011). *Engaging the online learner: Activities and resources for creative instruction*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE Publications Inc.
- Davis, N., & Cho, M. O. (2005). Intercultural competence for future leaders of educational technology and its evaluation. *Interactive Educational Multimedia*, (10), 1-22.
- Davis, S. L., & Finney, S. J. (2006). A factor analytic study of the cross-cultural adaptability inventory. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66, 318-330.
- de Nooy, J., & Hanna, B. E. (2003). Cultural information gathering by Australian students in France. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 3(1), 64-80.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2006a). Assessing Intercultural Competence in Study Abroad Students. In M.Byram & A.Feng (Eds.) *Living and Studying Abroad: Research and Practice* (pp. 232-255). Great Britian: MPG Books Ltd.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2006b). Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10, 241-266.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2008). Intercultural Competence: A definition, model, and implications for education abroad. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 32-52). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Dupuy, B. (2006). Global simulation: Experiential pedagogy and preparing students for study abroad at home. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Insight from study abroad for language programs*, (pp. 134-156). Boston, MA: AAUSC.
- Einbeck, K. (2002). Using literature to promote cultural fluency in study abroad programs. *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 35(1), 59-67.

- Engle, J., & Engle, L. (1999). Program intervention in the process of cultural integration: The example of French practicum. *Frontiers: The interdisciplinary journal of study abroad*, 5(2), 39-59.
- Fantini, A. E. (2006). Exploring and assessing intercultural competence. Retrieved May 1, 2007, from [http://www.sit.edu/publications/docs/feil\\_research\\_report.pdf](http://www.sit.edu/publications/docs/feil_research_report.pdf)
- Fischer, K. (2009). Short study-abroad trips can have lasting effect, research suggests. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Charlottesville, VA.
- Freed, B. F. (1995). What makes us think that students who study abroad become fluent? In B.F. Freed (Ed.) *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 123-148). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Hammer, M. R., Bennett, M. J., & Wiseman, R. (2003). Measuring intercultural sensitivity: The intercultural development inventory. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27(4), 421-443.
- Hirshorn, J. (2009). *Rocket: A simulation on intercultural teamwork*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Hoff, J. G. & Paige, R. M. (2008). A strategies-based approach to culture and language learning in education abroad programming. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 17, 89-106.
- Hunter, A. (2008). Transformative learning in international education. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 92-107). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Jackson, J. (2006). Ethnographic preparation for short-term study and residence in the target culture. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 30, 77-98.



- Jacobson, W., Schleicher, D., & Maureen, B. (1999). Portfolio assessment of intercultural competence. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 23(3), 467-492.
- Kearney, E. (2010). Cultural immersion in the foreign language classroom: Some narrative possibilities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 332-336.
- Kelley, C., & Meyers, J. (1992). *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory manual*. La Jolla: CA.
- Kelley, C., & Myers, J. (1995a). *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory*. Minneapolis, MN: National Computer Systems.
- Kelley, C., & Myers, J. (1995b) *The Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory manual*. Minneapolis, MN: National Computer Systems.
- Kinginger, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92, 1-124.
- Kinginger, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Knight, S. M., & Schmidt-Rinehart, B. C. (2010). Exploring conditions to enhance student/host family interaction abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43, 64-79.
- Kolb, D. (1984). *Experiential learning: experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- La Brack, B. (1993). The missing linkage: The process of integrating orientation and reentry. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 241-279). Yarmouth, ME: Intercultural Press.
- La Brack, L. & Bathurst, B. (2012). Anthropology, Intercultural Communication, and Study Abroad. In M. Vande Berg, R. M. Paige, & K. Hemming Lou (Eds.), *Student learning*

- abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 188-214). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Mangan, K. (2011). Business Schools Worldwide Fall Short on Globalization, Report Says. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Charlottesville, VA.
- Martin, J. N. (1989). Predeparture orientation: Preparing college sojourners for intercultural interaction. *Communication Education*, 38(3), 249-257.
- Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2011). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Mezirow, J. (1991). *Transformative dimensions of adult learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. (1997). Transformative learning: theory to practice. In P. Cranton (Ed.), *Transformative learning in action: insights from practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1997.
- Mezirow, J. (2000). Learning to think like an adult: Core concepts of transformation theory. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 3-33). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Mezirow, J. & Associates (2000). *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Montrose, L. (2002). International study and experiential learning: The academic context. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8, 1-15.
- Nguyen, N. T., Biderman, M. D., & McNary, L. D. (2010). A validation study of the Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory. *International Journal of Training and Development*, 12(2), 112-129.

- Ogden, A. C. (2006). Ethnographic Inquiry: Reframing the Learning Core of Education Abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 13, 87-112.
- Opendoors. (2012). *Fast facts*. Institute of International Education. Retrieved January 20, 2013 from: <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data/Fast-Facts>
- Paige, R. M., Cohen, A.D., Kappler, B., Chi, J.C., & Lassegard, J. P. (2002a). Maximizing study abroad: A program professional's guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota.
- Paige, R. M., Cohen, A.D., Kappler, B., Chi, J. C., Lassegard, J. P. (2002b). Maximizing study abroad: A students' guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use. Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition, University of Minnesota.
- Paige, R. M., Cohen, A. D., & Shively, R. L. (2004). Assessing the Impact of a Strategies-Based Curriculum on Language and Culture Learning Abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 10, 253-276.
- Paige, R. M. & Vande Berg, M. (2012). Why students are and are not learning abroad. In M. Vande Berg, R.M. Paige, & K. Hemming Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 29-58). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Passarelli, A. M., & Kolb, D. A. (2012). Using experiential learning theory to promote student learning and development in programs of education abroad. In M. Vande Berg, R.M. Paige, & K. Hemming Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad: What our students are*

- learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 137-161). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Pruegger, V. J., & Rogers, T. B. (1994). Cross-cultural sensitivity training: Methods and assessments. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 18(3), 369-387.
- Pusch, M. D. & Merrill, M. (2008). Reflection, reciprocity, responsibility, and committed relativism: Intercultural development through international service-learning. In V. Savicki (Ed.), *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education* (pp. 297-321). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Rivers, W. P. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of home stay placements on language gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31(4), 492-500.
- Ruben, B. D. (1976). Assessing communication competency for intercultural adaptation. *Group and Organization Studies*, 1, 334-354.
- Savicki, V. (2008). *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Savicki, V., Adams, I., Wilde, A., & Binder, F. (2008). Intercultural development: Topics and sequences. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 15, 111-126.
- Shively, R. L. (2010). From the virtual world to the real world: A model of pragmatics instruction for study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43(1), 105-137.
- Sinicrope, C., Norris, J., & Watanabe, Y. (2007). Understanding and Assessing Intercultural Competence: A Summary of Theory, Research, and Practice (Technical Report for the Foreign Language Program Evaluation Project). *Second Language Studies*, 26 (1), 1-58.
- Solberg, J. & Brockington, J. L. (2005). The Kalamazoo Project in Intercultural Communication (KPIC). In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating*

- study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 96-102). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Straffon, D. A. (2003). Assessing the intercultural sensitivity of high school students attending an international school. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 27, 487–501.
- Talbert, S., & Stewart, M. A. (1999). What's the Subject of Study Abroad?: Race, Gender, and "Living Culture." *The Modern Language Journal*, 83(2), 163-175.
- Taylor, E. W. (1994). Intercultural competency: A transformative learning process. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 44(3), 154-174.
- Taylor, E. W. (2000). Analyzing research on transformative learning theory. In J. Mezirow & Associates (Eds.), *Learning as transformation: Critical perspectives on a theory in progress* (pp. 285-328). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Vande Berg, M. (2009). Intervening in student learning abroad: a research-based inquiry. *Intercultural Education*, 20, 15-27.
- Vande Berg, M., Connor-Linton, J., & Paige, M. R. (2009). The Georgetown consortium project: Interventions for student learning abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 18, 1-75.
- Vande Berg, M., Paige, R. M., & Hemming Lou, K. (2012). *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Wilkinson, S. (2000). Emerging Questions about Study Abroad. *ADFL Bulletin*, 32(1), 36-41.

## Appendix A

### GER 150 – Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad Fall 2011 - Course Syllabus The University of Arizona

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad* is designed to be an introductory level course which assumes no particular previous coursework. The goal of this course is to provide students with a framework for maximizing their learning potential as they prepare for immersion contexts abroad (e.g., study abroad, research abroad, internship abroad, etc.)

The course will focus on heightening students' transcultural communication skills and ability to transition into new environments. We will read and analyze literature on language and culture learning. We will also work together to help students improve their transcultural communication skills. This will not be accomplished by learning a fixed set of rules or strategies for communication or facts and figures about another culture. We will, rather, engage in transcultural studies as a vehicle for learning critical thinking skills about culture and language. Students who have or intend to study abroad will be able to apply these new skills regardless of where they studied or intend to study.

Participants will learn by active engagement in lectures, discussions, simulation games, and small and whole group activities. Course activities may include engaging in cross-cultural comparisons/debates, analyzing the outcomes of cross-cultural simulations, and critical comparative analyses of a range of texts including those written by classroom peers, published academic papers, or videos on transculturalism as it relates to immersion contexts abroad.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course provides in-depth exposure to theories from applied linguistics, transcultural communication, and sociology as they relate to students preparing for immersion contexts abroad (e.g., study abroad, research abroad, internship abroad, service learning, etc). The format for 50% of the class meetings is lecture/discussion. The remaining 50% of the class meetings will focus on student presentations, simulation games, and group work activities. The course will give students an opportunity to express their own individual objectives for the course throughout the semester. Goals for students are to:

- Critically evaluate their own abilities to adapt to study abroad, research abroad, or work abroad contexts.
- Develop an appreciation of transcultural challenges presented in immersion contexts;
- Improve their transcultural communication skills and ability to transition into new environments;
- Realize that language is not fixed or self-contained, but related to culture, social life, politics, and personal experience.
- Find practical applications (i.e., career uses) for second-language and transcultural-communication skills.

## **REQUIRED READING**

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2011). *Experiencing intercultural communication: An Introduction* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Critical Response Papers (4)	40%
Exams (2)	25%
Group Presentation	10%
Online Participation	15%
Class Attendance/ In-class participation	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Critical Response Papers (4 at 10% each = 40%):** During the semester, students will be expected to complete four two-page response papers (double-spaced, 12 pt font, APA format) based on the assigned readings (see due dates in course calendar). The papers are designed to promote preparation for class, critical thinking about the material, and discussion participation. The course is divided into four topic areas: Foundations of Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Communication Processes, Intercultural Communication in Everyday Life, and Intercultural Communication in Applied Settings. Students will write one response paper per topic area of the textbook. Each response paper must be based on a chapter that corresponds with the part for which the paper is due. For example, response paper #1 must be based on an assigned readings from the first four weeks of the course. Keep in mind that:

- Evaluation of the response papers will be based on the extent to which they show evidence of critical engagement with the week's readings including for example, comparing/contrasting different theories presented in readings, addressing any ambiguities, consistencies and/or lack of clarity, interpreting current week's readings using previous readings/theories, extending ideas from readings to own experiences, and identifying connections with in-class activities and/or online discussions. Papers should be well written, cohesively structured, and contain no spelling or grammatical errors.

**Exams (1 at 10%, 1 at 15% = 25%):** For each exam, students will be asked to choose three questions from a set of five questions and write several paragraphs on each of the selected questions. The exam questions are designed to be broad in scope and encourage students to apply concepts developed in the course to the preparation or actual experience of studying abroad.

**Group Presentation (10%):** At approximately the mid-point in the semester, there will be class time devoted to student-lead activities/discussions (2-4 students) on issues that relate to the readings/videos/activities for that day. The number of students to lead a discussion and the number and size of discussion groups will be determined by course enrollments.

Facilitators for in-class student-led activities/discussions are required to do the following:

- Present discussion questions for fellow students and instructors on the morning of the day that you will facilitate. Discussion questions, for example, might focus on major theoretical issues or practical implications raised by the readings for students studying abroad.
- Facilitate group activity/discussion during class.

The goals of this part of the course are:

- to make the ideas found in the literature on transculturalism clearer to everyone;
- to provide ample discussion time to link course readings with studying abroad;
- to provide students with opportunities to collaborate and to learn how to prepare and orchestrate productive discussions on transculturalism. *Student facilitators are required to meet with the course instructor prior to the discussion that they lead.*

**Class Attendance and Participation (10%):** Course meetings will function best with full participation from everyone in attendance. Effective participation is contingent upon completing the readings before we meet as a group. Reading assignments are due the day for which they are assigned. Example: Chapter 1 should be read **before** coming to class on Thursday, August 25.

**Online Participation (15%):** A portion of your grade is contributed by your participation online, which will include discussions in the D2L (Desire 2 Learn) course website. Every week for which you have an online section, you are required to log in to D2L and participate in an online discussion based on the posted topic. In order to get credit, you will need to contribute three discussion posts. The first posting, should be between 100 and 150 words and should indicate that you have thought about the topic (“I agree with what she said” is not enough). Then, read what others have written and provide two additional posts at 25 to 50 words. These follow-up posts should be in direct response to what others have written.

### **Late Paper Policy**

Late Critical Response Papers will be reduced by one full grade (e.g., an A- becomes a B-) for each late week.

### **Writing Assistance**

If you are in need of help with your Critical Response Papers, or are unsure of proper methods for citations, the UA Writing Skills and Improvement Center can provide you with guidance or assistance. Further information is available at: <http://wsip.web.arizona.edu>

If you have any doubt about or difficulty with specific aspects of your writing, it is wise to access the resources available. In addition, feel free to approach the course instructor for assistance or with any questions or concerns.

**Course Website and D2L:** 15% of your grade is contributed by your participation online and in D2L (Desire 2 Learn), a web-based learning system. The D2L website is also the official website for the course and contains all assignments and important links. To access this course on D2L you must have a UA NetID and be officially enrolled in the course for at least 24 hours



## **APPENDIX C- MOVING BEYOND “I LEARNED HOW TO PACK LIGHT AND EFFECTIVELY:” HELPING STUDENTS TRANSLATE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCES FOR THE REAL WORLD**

### **Abstract**

As demand for a globalized workforce increases, the United States struggles to find employees with the requisite skills to meet this growing need (Orahood, Woolf & Kruze, 2008, p. 133). Studying abroad presents students with the opportunity to develop the relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes, yet if they fail to make meaning out of their experiences or fail to articulate how their experience can benefit their future employers, the experience may be reduced to a line on a résumé. This study examined the ability of post-study abroad students to articulate what they had learned abroad. The data analysis focused on the final exams of one group of post-study abroad students who had enrolled in a three-credit course based in intercultural communication and an online survey completed by students who had returned from studying abroad who had not enrolled in such a course. A frequency analysis found that the word “culture(s)” was the most regularly used, non-function word employed by both groups. Sociocultural theory was used to describe how course students used the scientific concepts of intercultural communication to allow them to mediate and communicate their experience, while those who had not enrolled in the course described their learning in vague, everyday concepts.

*Keywords: study abroad, reentry, articulation, sociocultural theory, frequency analysis*

*Globalization is both the biggest opportunity and the greatest challenge for business schools worldwide as they struggle to keep up with the demand for graduates who can work across countries and cultures. ~Katherine Mangan, 2011*

### **Introduction**

Internationalizing the undergraduate curriculum has been and continues to be a concern in American institutions of higher education. While studying abroad is often touted as the experience that can internationalize the undergraduate degree and provide students with an extra edge on the job market, the reality of student learning in this context is not a given. In fact, an alarming number of studies have shown that being abroad is not enough to promote language or culture learning (Alred & Byram, 2002; de Nooy & Hanna, 2003; Einbeck, 2002; Freed, 1998; Kearney, 2010; Kinginger, 2008; Kinginger, 2009; Rivers, 1998; Wilkinson, 2000). Montrose (2002) wrote, “And so it is also true of study abroad experiences; it is not the activity of leaving one’s homeland that creates learning, but the subsequent analysis of that activity is where the real learning begins” (p. 6-7). There is an inextricable, yet necessary link between providing academic credit for studying abroad and ensuring that experiences abroad remain relevant for both academic work and future professional applications.

Introducing a volume on integrating study abroad into the curriculum, Brewer and Cunningham (2009b) wrote, “The more we do to integrate study abroad with the home campus curriculum, the more study abroad will benefit both our students and our campuses” (p. *xii*). Further elucidating this point, Robert F. Brunner, Dean of the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business, who headed a task-force that critiqued, “the flurry of global activities that business schools have initiated in recent years...” reported that business schools “...place more emphasis on studying abroad than on developing and integrating global content within the curriculum” (as cited in Mangan, 2011). Brunner also noted in *The Chronicle of Higher*

*Education* interview that, "The big takeaway from this report is the sobering message that schools can't hide from globalization . . . [it is an] inexorable and disruptive force of change" (Mangan, 2011). Further, this holds for most regional businesses as well, as their competitors are no longer just down the street, they are competing on a global scale (Orahood, Woolf, & Kruze, 2008; Mangan, 2011). Thus, it appears that even if students do not have a decidedly international career in mind, they will, ever increasingly, be actors in a globalized world. If higher education seeks to prepare its students for the workforce post-graduation, it cannot simply preach the value of studying abroad for acquiring the global skills required of the workplace without defining specific learning outcomes and supporting students in the endeavor to translate their experiences into the concrete and applicable skills that employers demand. A study abroad is only a bullet point on a résumé, but the experience garners meaning when students have reflected on their experience in an organized manner that allows them to see the benefits for their personal, academic, and professional lives. Further, the study abroad experience can only provide students with an extra edge on the job market if they are able to translate their experiences into meaningfully crafted answers in job interviews.

To this end, administrators from Michigan State University published a Research Brief that highlighted both what students were failing to do upon return from studying abroad, and also intervention strategies offered through the home institution to target the problem:

Students have given very little thought to how their study abroad has shaped and prepared them for the world of work. In other words, graduating seniors have flunked one of their most important exams – the hiring interview because they were not prepared with appropriate examples of skills required from their international experiences. (Gardner, Gross, & Steglitz, 2008, p. 1)

Students will inevitably learn *something* while abroad, whether it be how to book a plane ticket or how to navigate cultural differences affectively and appropriately; yet the challenge is to ensure that students can also *speak* of their experiences in concrete and translatable ways that can increase their chances on the job market. Thus, integrating study abroad into the curriculum includes not only preparing students for studying abroad and supporting them with well-designed programs to specifically meet their needs and foster language and culture learning. Additionally, students need to reflect on their experiences in a systematic, organized manner upon return to help them articulate what they learned in a way that is applicable to their future personal and professional lives. This study examined the specific language used by two groups of post-study abroad students to articulate their experiences abroad. One group enrolled in a semester-long course focused on intercultural communication, while the other did not.

### **Literature Review**

One can be witness to a number of cultural incidents or conflicts, but if the element of reflection is missing, students may miss the opportunity to make meaning out of their experiences abroad (Kelly, 1963 as cited in Bennett & Bennett, 2001; Einbeck, 2002; Williams, 2005). The limited number of publications on post-study abroad reentry research largely focuses on course-design intervention strategies. For example, a course at Kalamazoo College was offered to both pre- and post-study abroad students with the goal of teaching students the skills needed to conduct an ethnography at a local religious institution near their home campus. The researchers hoped that the post-study abroad students would be able to use their newly acquired skills in a new setting (Anderson & Cunningham, 2009). Finding that the post-study abroad students demonstrated the lowest level of transformative learning, the authors concluded that:

What [post-study abroad students] need to process and continue their intercultural learning when they return is not another cross-cultural experience; rather, they need a different kind of course – one that is more focused on processing and extracting the learning from the experience they just had. (Anderson & Cunningham, 2009, p. 80-81)

This conclusion is similar to the one that prompted a course to be offered at the University of Notre Dame. This course was designed to help students move beyond an egocentric view of study abroad as an ‘achievement,’ to study abroad as a call to action for students to make meaning of their experiences and ‘do’ something with their experiences. Participants in the course concentrated on a single social, economic, political, education, or health problem in which they could promote change in their future lives (Downey, 2005). Students need to take their myriad of experiences abroad, mesh them with academic focus, and translate them to their future careers and goals. Ultimately, as Linda S. Gross, associate director of career services at Michigan State University noted, “Study abroad doesn’t count to an employer unless the job candidate can say how it has made them a better person, scholar, citizen, and professional” (as cited in Kowarski, 2010).

To this end, Trooboff, Vande Berg, and Rayman (2007) surveyed representatives of 352 U.S. firms, organizations, and agencies from a wide range of industries in order to determine what types of international education experiences, study abroad programs, personal qualities, and personal skills are valued by employers in their hiring decisions. Certainly, it is not surprising that the authors found that the number one item that employers valued was that the candidate had majored in a subject relevant to the firm. “Employers looking for engineers do not hire accountants just because they have studied abroad” (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 20). However, not

only did the authors find that employers “do in fact value study abroad, when compared to a variety of other education experiences,” but also that following the relevance of academic major to the firm, majoring or minoring in a foreign language was the second most important value, which was then followed by an array of study abroad program types (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 20). Additionally, a study abroad program combined with a second language major was highly valued by employers, yet also one that was valued even more by firms that earned >25% of their revenue internationally (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 22). In order to assess which global skills were valued by employers today, the authors combined the top personal qualities and skills desired by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE), a more traditional list, with personal qualities and skills from a more recent doctoral dissertation published by Darla Deardorff on “intercultural competence” (cf. Deardorff, 2004, 2006a, 2006b) and an unpublished dissertation by William Hunter (2004) on “global competence.” Trooboff et al. (2007) explored:

whether employers continue to value the traditional sorts of personal qualities and skills revealed in the annual NACE surveys, or whether they are at least beginning to show a preference, in their hiring decisions, for the sorts of intercultural and global skills that many study abroad professionals regard both as desirable and as necessary for preparing students for work and life after graduation. (p. 26)

Additionally, they asked employers whether they believed that these qualities and skills could be enhanced by studying abroad. The table below summarizes their findings.<sup>14</sup> In comparing the findings, it is clear that the intercultural skills that are often associated with studying abroad are also valued by employers. Further, the authors found that employers who had studied abroad were more likely to value the abroad experience and noted:

---

<sup>14</sup> The items in bold are those items that Deardorff (2004) and Hunter (2004) had identified in their dissertations, “learning outcomes that many of us who send students abroad would typically associate with studying abroad” (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 27)

Table 1.0 <i>Personal Qualities and Skills in Prospective Employees: Ranking for All Employers (5-point Likert scale, with 5 indicating the highest, and 1 the lowest, importance)*</i>					
Personal Qualities	Importance in Hiring	Employers Rated as Enhanced by Study Abroad	Personal Skills	Importance in Hiring	Enhanced by Study Abroad
Honesty and integrity	4.93	2.25	Effective working in teams	4.73	2.93
Shows strong work ethic	4.87	2.79	<b>Works well under pressure</b>	<b>4.69</b>	<b>2.94</b>
Self motivated, shows initiative	4.85	3.63	<b>Analyzes, evaluates, interprets well</b>	<b>4.60</b>	<b>2.92</b>
<b>Listens and observes well</b>	<b>4.68</b>	<b>3.24</b>	<b>Works effectively outside comfort zone</b>	<b>4.54</b>	<b>4.03</b>
<b>Flexible, adapts well</b>	<b>4.58</b>	<b>4.02</b>	Expresses self effectively in writing	4.22	2.60
Rational and logical	4.47	2.77	Knowledgeable about firm's core activities	4.22	2.31
Innovative and Creative	4.33	3.32	<b>Communicates effectively in intercultural situations</b>	<b>3.41</b>	<b>4.06</b>
Enthusiastic and outgoing	4.29	3.35	Knowledgeable doing business elsewhere	2.92	3.20
<b>Curious; wants to discover more</b>	4.28	4.27	<b>Understands global econ., and political trends</b>	<b>2.74</b>	<b>3.58</b>
<b>Non-judgmental toward other world views</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>4.16</b>	<b>Well-informed re: world events/history</b>	<b>2.68</b>	<b>3.71</b>
<b>Willing to take risks to learn new things</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>Effective socializing/doing business elsewhere</b>	<b>2.14</b>	<b>3.96</b>
<b>Recognizes own world view is not universal</b>	<b>3.91</b>	<b>4.24</b>	<b>Knowledgeable re: other history/culture</b>	<b>1.93</b>	<b>4.12</b>

\*adapted from Trooboff, Vande Berg, & Rayman, 2007

As US study abroad enrollments continue to increase in the coming years, there is every reason to believe that this halo effect – the valuing of “folks like me” – will continue to grow, as increasing numbers of former participants join the ranks of human resource professionals in US firms, organizations and agencies. (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 29)

This bodes well for students who have studied abroad, but despite the findings that employers hold the values and skills associated with studying abroad in high regard, the authors also found that many employers failed to ask about these experiences during the interview. Moreover, there was a “pronounced and nearly consistent inverse relationship between the value that employers place on personal qualities [and values], and the extent to which they believe that study abroad enhances these qualities” (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 27). This should not, however, be taken as a negative indication of the value of study abroad. The authors thus challenged study abroad professionals to meet their call to action:

Study abroad and career professionals should collaborate in order to give students some basic training in how to present what they have learned through studying abroad, in ways that employers will appreciate. In our experience, former study abroad participants are more likely to discuss the place where they studied, and aspects of local cultural life, than they are the sorts of learning outcomes – the specific knowledge, skills and perspectives they learned abroad. This study provides clear evidence about which of these employers are most likely to value. And the fact that employers often fail to ask students about study abroad during interviews means that it’s important to train and coach students about the



importance of bringing up their experiences abroad in the first place, whether the employer does or not. (Trooboff et al., 2007, p. 30).

These findings support what the Assistant Director of Michigan State's Office of Study Abroad, Inge Steglitz, highlighted in her interview with *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, when she noted that students sell themselves short in the interview, "I continue to be amazed by students' inability to articulate what they've learned. . . . 'I can't put it into words' is not a convincing argument in a job interview" (Kowarski, 2010).

In an attempt to define exactly how students talk about what they learned abroad, Root and Ngampornchai (2012) examined 18 reflective papers from students who had returned from studying abroad:

It is apparent that education abroad has an impact on the participants, especially in terms of immersing them into an unfamiliar environment. With this immersion, participants learned new knowledge, such as connecting content learned in the classroom regarding the politics or economy of a country to the real site. . . . However, we are also concerned that many of the participants' accounts reflect only superficial levels of intercultural understanding. (p. 12)

Root and Ngampornchai (2012) include recommendations<sup>15</sup> in response to their study that outline training in intercultural communication to aid in the development of pre- and post-orientation programs. Interestingly, these recommendations parallel the topics covered, the

---

<sup>15</sup> The recommendations are: include elements of personal cultural awareness; include elements of positioning with regard to social identities such as race/ethnicity, social class, gender, and language; encourage students to engage in critical reflection; include specific instruction in culture-general frameworks; include instruction in aspects of perception, including concepts of ethnocentrism, stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination; include elements of instruction on both verbal and nonverbal communication (Root & Ngampornchai, 2012, p. 12-15)

textbook used, and even the course objectives in the intercultural communication course that one group of students in this study enrolled in.

In sum, the research has shown that students are, in fact, learning abroad, but if they neither reflect on their experiences to make meaning of them, nor learn how to articulate their learning outcomes through critical reflection, potentially through the lens of intercultural communication, and, further, if employers are not asking about them in the interview, an individual who has studied abroad may not be able to demonstrate the skills they acquired when it really matters, the job interview. The guiding question in this study was: “Are post-study abroad students who enrolled in a course designed to foster the development of intercultural competence better able to articulate what they learned than post-study abroad students who did not enroll in such a course?”

### **A Sociocultural Approach to Articulation of Learning Abroad**

Many studies have used experiential learning (Dupuy, 2006; Montrose, 2002; Passarelli & Kolb, 2012), transformative learning (cf. Brewer & Cunningham, 2009a; Savicki, 2008), as well as activity theory (Allen, 2010) to describe different aspects of studying abroad. Sociocultural theory was the best-suited theory to examine the language use of post-study abroad students because it most succinctly encapsulates how students can take knowledge learned to facilitate new ways of conceptualizing the world around them. Since Vygotsky’s conceptualization of sociocultural theory, it has been used in and reconstrued for a wide range of applications. As such, it is important to situate the theory from the appropriate angle in a relevant field. Second Language Acquisition and the work of Lantolf (2000) and Kramsch (2000) is particularly informative.

The aspect of sociocultural theory in this study focused on the use of signs and tools. Describing Vygotsky's view of the human mind, Lantolf (2000) wrote that humans do not simply "act directly on the physical world" but, instead, use symbolic tools and signs to "mediate and regulate [their] relationships with others and with [themselves] and thus change the nature of these relationships" (p. 1). In the same volume, Kramsch (2000) noted that "tools serve to master nature; signs serve to influence others, then to master oneself" (p. 137).

The tools' function is to serve as the conductor of human influence on the object of activity; it is externally oriented; it must lead to changes in objects... The sign, on the other hand, changes nothing in the object of a psychological operation. It is a means of internal activity aimed at mastering oneself; the sign is internally oriented. (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 55 as cited in Kramsch, 2000, p. 137)

Providing an example, Kramsch (2000) noted that a language learner might attempt to use a new linguistic feature as a tool in order to complete a particular assignment and as a sign to express a particular meaning to the audience, yet may, concurrently, influence the manner in which they view the reality that was the subject of assignment. This translates very succinctly to a course on intercultural competence. A student may learn about a new concept, e.g. conflict styles, in discussing culture, communication, and conflict. In the process of completing an assignment about an intercultural conflict that the student has experienced, she may use a specific conflict style, e.g. discussion style, which emphasizes a direct, verbal approach in dealing with conflict, to describe her reaction in the conflict. The student is using this conflict style as a tool to complete the assignment, and as a sign to convey meaning to the reader. In the process, however, she may internalize this concept to the degree that she may even alter the way she views the world and/or her behavior in future conflicts. Kramsch (2000) noted that, "Making

students conscious of their motivated semiotic choices is precisely what, according to Vygotsky, leads learners to higher forms of mental development” (p. 141). These higher mental capacities “include voluntary attention, intentional memory, planning, logical thought, and problem solving, learning, and evaluation of the effectiveness of these processes” (Lantolf, 2000, p. 1-2). In light of these insights, the academic setting can introduce students to new tools and signs that can help them mediate their experiences in the world around them. This conclusion was also highlighted by Vygotsky’s colleague Luria, who conducted a study comparing Uzbek peasants who had been in school only a short amount of time, approximately one to two years, with those who had never been schooled, asking them to categorize objects. Luria found that as a consequence of schooling:

these individuals not only grasped principles of categorical classification and deductive inferencing, but tended to use these as their chief mode of thinking. Thus their mental systems had been reformed as a result of their participation in a culturally specific activity known as schooling. (Lantolf, 2000, p. 5)

By introducing students to some of the main concepts of intercultural communication, students have a variety of tools at their disposal to help them mediate their experiences and, then, potentially use these concepts as a communicative sign in the job market to succinctly articulate what they learned.

### **Method**

This study used a corpus analysis to highlight the frequency of word-usage by two groups of post-study abroad students. One group ( $n = 6$ ) enrolled in a three-credit course focused on the development of intercultural competence, while the second ( $n = 34$ ) did not enroll in the course,

but participated in the study by completing an online survey. The results of the corpus analysis were analyzed through the lens of sociocultural theory.

### **Intercultural Communication Course**

The group of six students in this study enrolled in a three-credit course entitled, “Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad,” which followed the textbook *Experiencing Intercultural Communication* (Martin & Nakayama, 2011), in two semesters of offering the course in Fall 2010 and Fall 2011. This course was designed to prepare students for studying abroad by familiarizing them with the theoretical underpinnings as well as practical applications of intercultural communication including: intercultural communication and history, identity, verbal issues, nonverbal communication, popular culture, conflict, relationships, etc. Given the nature of general education courses at large universities, however, many students enroll in these courses as upperclass(wo)men. Throughout the course, there were many opportunities for students to critically reflect upon and examine cultural differences in their own lives or while abroad in the weekly classroom and weekly to bi-weekly online discussions, cultural simulations, critical reflection essays, ethnographically guided extracurricular activities, the midterm, and the final exam. These opportunities aligned with the course goals outlined in the syllabus<sup>16</sup>. For example, in one online discussion, students critically examined their own construction of identity by connecting it with as many real-world examples as possible, and were challenged further to consider/react/respond to their classmates’ posts about their personal construction of identity. In this course, students also completed group projects, which were largely in the form of leading a cultural simulation (e.g. Rocket: Hirshorn, 2009), but some also included examples of cultural encounters (e.g. the failure of Wal-Mart in Germany). The cultural simulations provided students with the opportunity to experience how it can feel to be in

---

<sup>16</sup> See Appendix A for Syllabus

a different culture where the rules may be different than expected (e.g. Barnga<sup>17</sup>). The four critical reflection papers aligned with the four overarching sections of the textbook: foundations of intercultural communication, intercultural communication process, intercultural communication in everyday life, and intercultural communication in applied settings. As outlined in the syllabus, these papers required students to compare/contrast theories presented in readings, addressing any ambiguities, inconsistencies and/or lack of clarity; extend ideas from the readings to their own experiences; or identify connections between readings and in-class or online activities. Additionally, in each semester, the associate director of career services gave an hour-long presentation on the connections between studying abroad and employability. The midterm prompted students to demonstrate content knowledge, whereas the final exam asked students to articulate what they learned in the course and how they could apply these to their professional, personal, and educational pursuits. A complete example of the final exam prompt is available in Appendix B, as these final exams served as data in this study. Although the final exam prompted students to specifically outline what they had learned in the course, they were also prompted to provide examples of theoretical paradigms with real-world examples, many of which were from their time abroad. In the two semesters of data collected for this study, the course was team-taught by the researcher and the director of the study abroad office in Fall 2010, and then solely by the researcher in the second semester, Fall 2011. Enrollment for this course is typically around 25-30 students.

---

<sup>17</sup> Barnga is a proprietary card game designed for Doctor's Without Border participants to experience the disorientation often felt when traveling abroad. In this course, we played a similarly-styled, nonproprietary game accessible online named "5-Tricks." In this game, students are separated into 5-6 groups and are told to learn the rules of the game. When students understand the rules, they play in a tournament where they are not allowed to speak. After the first round, the person with the most tricks moves to the right, the person with the least amount of tricks moves to the left, and they continue the tournament. At this point, however, those who have moved to different tables (cultures) find themselves in a situation where the (cultural) rules that they learned at the first table are different at the second. Typically, frustration ensues as students attempt to negotiate rules, but are limited in their language use. This continues for a few rounds with some students returning to their original tables and readjusting well, while others remain disoriented.

### **Course Participant Selection**

The participants for this portion of the study were selected as a convenience sample. Although a minority in the overall course enrollment, ten students from the two semesters had studied abroad. Post-study abroad students were considered to be those who had studied abroad in either a credit-bearing or non-credit bearing program abroad after beginning at the university. For example, one student participated in a language course in Japan and was housed with a Japanese family, but did not receive a transfer of college credit for this course. Of the ten students who fit these criteria, six consented to the study. These students' final exams were used as the data for analysis.

### **Non-course Participant Selection**

In January, 2013 an email was sent to a post-study abroad listserv by the office of study abroad and student exchange. The email stated the general goal of the study and, if students consented to participate, they followed a hyperlink to a SurveyMonkey survey which asked students to provide their name, class year, major/minor, and outline their experience abroad (travel dates, program, destination, age abroad, etc.). Once completing this demographic information, students were prompted to discuss what they learned while abroad and how they could apply this to their personal, educational, and professional pursuits. The complete questions are included in Appendix C. 85 students began the survey, however, only 35 students completed the full survey with the open-ended questions. One student's responses were disqualified because he had enrolled in the course in Fall 2010. Thus, 34 complete student responses were available for analysis; 7 participants were male, 27 were female.

## Data Analysis

A corpus analysis was used in an attempt to balance incongruities in the data collected. The six students enrolled in the course were required to write approximately 1,500 words in their final exams, while the 34 participants who completed the survey online typically wrote two sentences to a paragraph for each of the three question groups. More specifically, the course participants wrote an average of 1408 words per student, and the non-course participants wrote an average of approximately 160 words per student. In order to utilize a more equivalent means of comparison to deal with the discrepancy in the length of responses, a frequency analysis was run on the two groups' responses with AntConc<sup>18</sup> to highlight the most reoccurring words in both groups. As such, a direct comparison could be made between how the two groups were articulating their experiences with regards to specific word frequencies despite response length. After a frequency analysis was run, data was coded according to concepts taught in the course as well as emergent themes. These codes will be discussed further in the results below. Sociocultural theory was used to explicate how the two groups were articulating their experiences differently in regards to the results of the frequency analysis.

## Results

It was hypothesized that post-study abroad students who enrolled in a course on intercultural communication would better be able to articulate their learning abroad as a result of having more tools/signs at their disposal to mediate and discuss their experiences. Running a frequency analysis on both sets of data revealed that the top three words used by the course students, that were neither function words nor words included in the phrasing of the question were “culture(s)” (89),” communication” (45), and “cultural” (45); whereas the top three words

---

<sup>18</sup> AntConc is a freeware concordance program available at: [http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc\\_index.html](http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc_index.html)



used by the non-course students were “culture(s)” (67), “people” (47), and “different” (45). Proportionally speaking, the group that had not enrolled in the course used the word “culture(s)” slightly more often (67/5,432) than the group that had enrolled in the course focused on intercultural communication (89/8,449).

Once it was determined that the word “culture(s)” would be the focus of the study, the use of the word “culture(s)” was initially coded according to the textbook’s building blocks of culture: culture is learned, culture involves perceptions and values, culture involves feelings, culture is shared, culture is expressed as behavior, culture is dynamic and heterogeneous (Martin & Nakayama, 2011, p. 29). The use of “culture(s)” was also coded according to emerging themes, which will be discussed in the corresponding sections below.

### **Appropriating the meaning of “culture(s)”**

The main difference in the usage of “culture(s)” between the two groups is that those who did not enroll in the course used “culture(s)” to name a vague notion of what they learned while abroad, while students who were enrolled in the course overwhelmingly utilized specific uses of “culture(s)” in reference to the variety of aspects of culture covered in the course. The course students had a repertoire of cultural terms at their disposal that could serve both as a tool to describe what they learned while abroad, and as a more poignant sign to communicate what they learned to the reader. Table 2.0 highlights the usages of the word by course participants. As noted above, the first six items in Table 2.0 were categories defined in the textbook as the building blocks of culture. The next three were emergent themes; however, it must be noted that each of these three emergent themes were topics discussed in the textbook and course. There were other uses of the word culture, but they were marginal and, thus, not included. With the

exception of Luis, the students who took the course used the word on more than one occasion in a number of different ways. Notably, Patrick, who had just returned from a summer-study in

Code	Patrick	Liz	Dan	Lina	Norm	Luis
Culture is learned	1	4	1			
Culture involves perceptions and values	3			3		
Culture involves feelings	2					
Culture is shared	1				10*	
Culture is expressed as behavior		1				
Culture is dynamic and heterogeneous	1			1		
Motivation to research/understand other cultural beliefs	3		3	4	2	
Culture Shock	3			1		1
Learned about own culture/self (self-reflexivity)	1				2	

*\*Norm’s use of culture in these instances was “pop culture”*

Bangalore, India highlighted culture 15 times in all of the categories except one. The other students’ use of the word largely paralleled the topics of their finals, or highlighted a specific example. Norm, for instance, who had participated in a language program that was coupled with volunteer work in Costa Rica referenced “pop culture” ten times as a means of describing how he was able to find a point of connection with other students from various countries around the world as well as learn about pop culture nuances internationally.

Table 3.0 highlights the usages of the word by non-course participants. The codes devised for the course participants were initially employed for the non-course participants. However, there were so few instances of the non-course participants’ responses aligning with these codes that only emergent themes could provide any insight into how the non-course participants used “culture(s).” The themes in Table 3.0 reveal the vagueness with which students used “culture(s)” to describe their encounters abroad.

Code	Number of Instances Used	Participant <sup>19</sup>
Learned about cultural differences	6	1 (Michelle), 2 (Shannon), 3, 5, 11, 25
Learned to be flexible and open-minded towards other cultures	19	4 (x3), 8(Kim), 12, 17, 18 (x2), 19, 20, 22, 23, 26 (Erika), 28, 32, 33
Learned how to assimilate/adapt to other cultures	17	2 (Shannon), 5, 7 (Michaela), 8 (x3, Kim), 12, 18, 22, 24 (x4, Tessa), 27, 30, 34
Learned culture specific knowledge	11	2 (Shannon), 8 (Kim), 9, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18, 33,
Learned about own culture	2	11, 24 (Tessa)

### **Thematic Comparisons of the Use of the Word “Culture(s)”**

As noted above, it must be acknowledged that the students enrolled in the course wrote an average of 1408 words in their final exams, whereas the students who did not enroll in the course wrote as little or as much as they desired in the online survey, which was approximately 160 words per student. This being the case, however, there is a clear difference between how the two groups of students articulated what they had learned abroad. For example, speaking of differences between India and the U.S., Patrick wrote:

I was unable to determine why this difference in orientation existed prior to taking your class. Learning about Geert Hofstede’s theory of value dimensions in your class has allowed me to better understand why these differences in values occur between cultures.  
  
(Final Exam)

In contrast, a non-course student wrote, “I learned a lot about what makes American culture different as well as a lot about myself” in the online survey. While Patrick’s response is

---

<sup>19</sup> Student #6 was disqualified from the study, as he had enrolled in the course two years prior to filling out the survey

certainly much more elaborate, this is how Norm phrased a similar notion in his final exam, “When I returned from my time in Costa Rica and Panama, I felt as though I had learned more about other cultures and myself (self-reflexivity).” While all seem to be conveying the same idea, Norm additionally uses the term “self-reflexivity,” which he then explicates by describing exactly what it was that he learned about himself in the course/studying abroad and what he will need to do to avoid cultural blunders in the future. From a sociocultural perspective, the examples analyzed highlighted how concepts introduced in the course helped students to mediate their experiences abroad. The following analysis will provide comparable instances of thematic uses of “culture(s)” by post-study abroad students who enrolled in a course grounded in intercultural communication with post-study abroad students who had not enrolled in such a course. Because the two groups did not use “culture(s)” in the same manner, one example for each course participant was chosen to represent each individual category of coded themes. A corresponding idea from a non-course student was then selected for each idea presented by a course student. As such, a comparison could be made to contrast how students differed in the use of the word “culture(s)” to convey the same meaning. In each instance analyzed below, the closest level of comparison possible was made in an attempt to better highlight how participants differed.

Table 4.1 <i>Coded Comparisons between Course and Non-course Student Responses</i>	
<i>Culture is learned –</i> Course Student Response	<i>How to Assimilate/Adapt to Another Culture—</i> Non-Course Student Response
To claim that something is learned, implies the duty of one to not only continue learning, but also perhaps to even re-learn one’s culture and fix one’s educational mistakes. (Liz, Final Exam)	We learned how to adapt in intercultural situations and ways to be more prepared for the customs of other cultures. (Shannon)  I have learned what it means to adapt to a new culture as quick as possible. (Michaela)

In this example, Liz’s use of culture hinged on the notion that “culture is learned.” Under the course textbook subheading “Culture Is Learned,” the topic is introduced with the example that there are certain universal habits, such as eating, sleeping, etc., yet, “Culture is the unique way we have learned to eat, sleep, and seek shelter because we are American or Japanese, male or female, and so on” (Martin & Nakayama, 2011, p. 32). Liz, however, took this notion further to imply that when one is in another culture, one may need to un-learn one’s cultured frame of reference in order to avoid a cultural faux pas. Extended slightly, this also implies that one must adapt and assimilate to a new culture. While Liz was able to use this term to convey what it actually means to adapt to a new culture, the students who had returned from studying abroad and had not enrolled in the course simply wrote that they learned to, or they learned what it means to, adapt to a different culture. There was neither specificity in their account nor a discussion of how this might happen or what might be involved in adapting to another culture. Essentially, Liz is able to take a concept learned in the course and use it to articulate how one may avoid cultural conflict or adapt to a new culture. Her use of culture is specific to the meaning that ‘culture is learned,’ whereas the non-course students both appropriate culture to stand for what was new or different.

Table 4.2 <i>Coded Comparisons between Course and Non-course Student Responses</i>	
<i>Culture involves perceptions and values – Course Student Response</i>	<i>How to assimilate/adapt to another culture— Non-Course Student Response</i>
If people cannot accept that other cultures have different values and belief systems, they may get into trouble when they come into contact with someone who plays by different rules* and does not respond well to being told they are wrong. (Lina, Final Exam)	Being able to adapt in all locations is extremely important for my future if I truly want to be a diplomat because without being able to immerse myself into the culture, it could be misconstrued as offensive or rebellious, both of which are undiplomatic. (Kim)
<i>*Lina is referencing a cultural-simulation in class with different rules, Barnaga</i>	

Under the subheading in the textbook, “Culture Involves Perceptions and Values,” Martin and Nakayama (2011), described that:

Culture is sometimes described as a sort of lens through which we view the world. . . .

Our cultural experiences influence every phase of the perception process and ultimately determine how we make sense of the world and how we respond to people, places, and things in it. (p. 32-33)

In these instances, both students are discussing that there can be implications for not knowing or abiding by different cultural rules. However, Lina extended the idea that “culture involves perceptions and values” to a cultural simulation played in class, in which the rules change without the players being completely aware that this has happened. She made the connection between the two to illustrate that if you come into contact with someone from another culture who has a different set of cultural values and neither is “aware” that these values are variable, or learned, a conflict may ensue. While this is the same idea that the non-course student conveys, her response is much more vague. Kim recognized that she would need to adapt in order to succeed in her future career because, as a diplomat, she would not want to be viewed as offensive. Yet, her solution to this was to “immerse [herself] into the culture” without fully describing how immersing yourself in a culture leads to avoiding a conflict. Certainly, it may, but the missing element is the fundamental understanding that different cultures can have inherently different value systems that can lead to actions being “misconstrue[d] as offensive or rebellious.” Lina was able to combine a concept learned in class with a concrete experience, also from class, in order to discuss how different cultures may unwittingly clash.

Table 4.3 <i>Coded Comparisons between Course and Non-course Student Responses</i>	
<i>Culture involves feelings –</i> Course Student Response	<i>Learned to be flexible and open-minded</i> <i>towards other cultures –</i> Non-Course Student Response
I can still vividly recall many frustrating moments of unproductive culture clash, as well as, recall satisfaction experiences of successful intercultural communication. (Patrick, Final Exam)	I think it made me both much more open minded and accepting of other ways of living at the same time as making me frustrated with all of Latin American culture and being able to come to reason with that is something I need to work on. (Erika)

While Patrick did not explicitly write in this instance that “culture involves feelings,” he did specifically reference this idea elsewhere in his final exam. In this example, however, he described both the negative and positive feelings he had while studying abroad in India. In fact, in these two descriptions, both students probably experienced something along the lines of “culture shock,” although they both use frustration to convey what is described in the textbook as “culture involves feelings:”

When we are in our own cultural surroundings we *feel* a sense of familiarity and a certain level of comfort in this space, behavior, and actions of others. We might characterize this feeling as a kind of embodied ethnocentrism, which is normal. . . . This aspect of culture has implications for understanding adaptation to other cultural norms and spaces. (Martin & Nakayama, 2011, p. 34)

While, it is not the objective of this study to examine the ethnocentric/ethnorelative worldviews (Bennett, 1993) held by these students, Patrick appeared to be cognizant of both his successes and failures. He described them as “satisfaction experiences of successful intercultural communication” and “frustrating moments of unproductive culture clash.” In contrast, the non-course student referred to being successful as having learned to be “more open minded and accepting of other ways of living” and less successful by feeling “frustrated with all of Latin

American culture.” Erika was cognizant that this could be overcome by “working on it,” yet the experience appears to be viewed from a negative light here. She appeared to view Latin American culture from an ethnocentric point of view. Of note, is that Patrick may have been in the proverbial “same shoes” as this student after returning from India, as he wrote in his final exam, “My experiences in India depleted my desire to experience new cultures and travel the world. [This] class has reinvigorated my previously unwavering desire to travel.” Thus, while it is the goal of this study to discuss how students used “culture(s)” differently to describe and mediate their experiences abroad, it must be noted that a course such as this one can also help students to explain why they may have experienced feelings of frustration and, thereby, “reinvigorate” their desires to interact with foreign cultures rather than just “accepting” that they might need to work on understanding a second culture better. As Kramsch (2000) described of second language learners, Patrick not only used these cultural terms as tools to complete an assignment, he used them as signs to communicate information and, in the process, also mediated his experience, transforming the frustration he felt into explicable differences across cultures.

Table 4.4 <i>Coded Comparisons between Course and Non-course Student Responses</i>	
<i>Culture is shared –</i> Course Student Response	<i>Learned about cultural differences —</i> Non-Course Student Response
In fact, because [a Costa Rican friend] and I shared similar pop culture, he was able to introduce me to another foreign pop culture. (Norm, Final Exam)	The social interactions with new friends within and outside of the program taught me about relational similarities and differences in cultures. (Michelle)

While more data was available to contextualize Norm’s response, one representative sentence is highlighted to convey the idea that he was expressing. The textbook highlights the notion that “culture is shared,” by describing that:



The idea of culture implies a group of people. These cultural patterns of perceptions and beliefs are developed through interactions with different groups of individuals – at home, in the neighborhood, at school, in youth groups, at college and so on. Culture becomes a group experience because it is shared with people who live in and experience the same social environments. (Martin & Nakayama, 2011, p. 34)

In this example, Norm used a variation of “pop culture” ten times to describe that he was able to connect with the foreign students he was with in Costa Rica because they shared an international popular culture, music. Norm described his experience in the following manner:

I was able to hold a conversation with people from any country or social background because I listen to many genres of music. For example, while I was volunteering in Montezuma I lived with a Costa Rican who loved rap and Spanish rap. Although I could not understand most of the raps he showed me, we were able to hold endless conversations comparing the two types. (Final Exam)

This example was only given to provide more detail of Norm’s experience, not to detract from what was, or was not, said by the non-course student. Norm was able to articulate the similarities and differences in international youth (shared) pop music culture as a means to forge friendships and learn about other countries’ popular music cultures. What Michelle failed to do in her response was articulate a notion that culture can be shared beyond a de facto statement that she learned about cultural similarities and differences. Did she learn about cultural differences between her home culture and her host culture, or did she learn about different cultural values between herself and potentially another American student from a different region from herself? What were the “relational similarities and differences in cultures?” There is no indication of what it was that she actually learned beyond that she learned “about” difference.

Table 4.5 <i>Coded Comparisons between Course and Non-course Student Responses</i>	
<i>Culture Shock – Course Student Response</i>	<i>Ethnocentric view of culture — Non-Course Student Response</i>
I can see now with my initial trip to Japan, I didn't quite have the necessary skills to cope with stay[ing] in an environment there that was so foreign to what I had known. . . . Though I was able to overcome [homesickness], . . . if I had known what I know now I would've been able to avoid feeling that way or at least been better able to cope with it as I would've known that I was at the bottom or second phase of the U-curve theory, the state of feeling culture shock. (Luis, Final Exam)	I realize how much trouble I have living in such a macho society and accepting that sort of culture as simply another way of life coming from my background which is very much in education and open-minded ideas just makes me want to scream. (Becky)

Although coded as such, the goal of this study was not to assess students' ethnocentric or ethnorelative worldviews (Bennett, 1993), as noted above. In these examples, both students described their culture shock living in a foreign environment. Although somewhat similar to the notion discussed above that "culture involves feelings" this example related to how students dealt with and described the specific feeling of culture shock. Not only did Luis use the term "culture shock," an emergent theme in the course student data, he described feeling "homesick" and then used the U-curve model that was described in the book as, "A theory of cultural adaptation positing that migrants go through fairly predictable phases (excitement/adaptation, shock/disorientation, and adaptation) in adapting to a new cultural situation" (Martin & Nakayama, 2011, p. G-7) to process his experience *expo facto*. He was also able to use this description as a sign to mediate the experience he had abroad, and, interestingly, went on further in his final exam to describe how he would be better able to adapt to a foreign culture in the future with the explicit knowledge that humans tend to go through these predictable stages. In a marked contrast, the non-course student recognized that she had a difficult time living in a foreign culture, but she lacked the tool/sign to allow her to mediate her experience. Instead,

while Becky accepted that she had trouble adapting, it appeared that she was not able to recognize or overcome the culture shock, even post facto. While this course offered upon reentry helped Luis and other post-study abroad students process their negative experiences upon return, Vande Berg (2009) found that a cultural mentor on-site, someone who understands students' home as well as the foreign culture, during the study abroad experience could be an effective strategy to help students, such as this non-course student, overcome cultural differences as they experience them. Thereby, it is hoped that such a negative assessment of the host culture could be avoided. A cultural mentor may even have been able to help Becky process the cultural differences to such an extent that she may have been better able to adapt to culture while she was still in-country, potentially leading to an overall more positive experience for her.

Table 4.6 <i>Coded Comparisons between Course and Non-course Student Responses</i>	
<i>Culture is learned &amp; Motivation to research/ understand other cultural beliefs –</i> Course Student Response	<i>Can relate to other cultures —</i> Non-Course Student Response
Before this course, I would have been scared to move to Paris (mostly because of the language) but now knowing that culture is learned is empowering in aspirations to live abroad; I have the resources to learn properly, and the motivation to challenge myself to live in a culture different from my own. (Dan, Final Exam)	I now know how to effectively communicate with different types of people and cultures. (Tessa)

In the last comparison, Dan used the idea that “culture is learned” in addition to expressing the “motivation to research/understand other cultural beliefs,” an emergent theme that was used by four of the six students who enrolled in the course on 12 different occasions. Beyond having studied abroad, Dan was “empowered” by the idea that “culture is learned,” potentially implying that he would be able to adapt to, and thereby also “learn,” the French culture in addition to his native American, British, and Israeli cultures. Additionally, he noted

that as a result of taking the course, he had tools available to him to research how he could adapt to yet another environment in a more explicit manner rather than the implicit manner in which he acquired his first three cultures. The non-course student response also highlighted the notion of adapting or relating to other cultures, yet she rather matter of factly stated that as a result of studying abroad she knew how to “effectively” communicate with a number of different people and cultures. Tessa’s statement is not only non-descript, but also largely a generalization. While Dan spoke of the challenge that living in foreign country would incite, even noting that he had the resources to learn another culture, Tessa reduced cultural difference to a universal notion that once one knows how to interact with one culture, it is applicable to others. While this student may be implying that she, in fact, had an ability to learn another culture, she was unable to articulate this in a manner that is salient to her audience. Through the tools at Dan’s disposal, he was able to specifically state how what he learned would help him “communicate with different types of people and cultures.”

### **Discussion**

This study concluded that the word “culture(s)” was the most frequent, non-function, word used by both post-study abroad students who had enrolled in a three-credit course based on intercultural communication and post-study abroad students who had not enrolled in such a course. Further, the course students used the word “culture(s)” in a more specific manner than those who had not enrolled in the course. Similar to the findings of Root and Ngampornchai (2012), it was clear that all students who had studied abroad had learned something. However, those students who had enrolled in the course were able to move from superficial articulation of learning outcomes to more specific uses of tools and signs that allowed them to not only mediate their experiences, but also provide meaning to their audience. In a Vygotskian understanding of

this process, the course students were able to use “scientific concepts” acquired in the course, whereas the non-course students only had “everyday” or “spontaneous concepts” at their disposal. Wells (1994) described this difference:

In early childhood, children learn to construe the world of their experience in terms of the spontaneous concepts that are realized in the dynamic, narrative modes of spoken language that occur in everyday activities in the life of the family and local community. By contrast, the development of scientific concepts occurs chiefly in the course of educational activities that emphasize reflective and metarepresentational thinking and takes place in later childhood through the gradual appropriation and mastery of genres of written discourse, which have themselves evolved over time to mediate the social construction of scientific knowledge. (no page provided)

While certainly speaking of child development, this description is particularly suited to describe the differences seen between the two groups of post-study abroad students. Contextually speaking, it is interesting to consider the discourse often used to promote study abroad.

The general narrative sold to students about studying abroad typically revolves around “a chance to see the world” or “a life-changing experience.” In a 2009 publication from international affairs at the University of Arizona, study abroad is marketed to students as an experience that can provide an “extra edge” in a competitive job market, “While valid reasons for studying abroad include personal growth, increasing proficiency in another language, [and] gaining cultural awareness... the career component may be one of the most important reasons to go...” (Miller, 2009). The author notes that “The acquired skill sets from study abroad include not only all the items listed above, but [also]... adaptability... flexibility... [and an] ability to handle difficult or stressful situations” (Miller, 2009). This account is certainly not unique and

is, most likely, perpetuated beyond study abroad administrators, by friends, faculty, and even students' families.

In this study, without the benefit of guided instruction that contributes to the development of “scientific concepts,” it appeared that the non-course students relied on the usage of more everyday concepts of culture that are appropriated in marketing study abroad. As such, if there is no targeted intervention to give students the tools to mediate their experiences, it will be difficult for them to translate their experiences for future audiences, whether in a job interview or an application for graduate school. What does it mean to be “culturally aware” or to have experienced “personal growth?” How have students learned to be “adaptable” or “flexible?” How did students overcome “difficult or stressful situations?” Similar to Talburt and Stewart’s (1999) and Isabelli-Garcia’s (2006) finding that some women had “gendered experiences” abroad, the data above showed that one student never overcame the “macho” society that she studied in. Having been presented with scientific concepts of intercultural communication from the classroom could have helped her mediate her negative experience and articulate to an employer how she has since overcome the initial culture shock of being abroad. While Patrick experienced discomfort abroad and wrote that studying abroad in India had depleted his desire to experience new cultures and travel the world, he noted that the course actually “reinvigorated” his desire to travel. For Patrick, participation in the course gave him concrete answers to how he “overcame a stressful situation.” As Anderson and Cunningham (2009) highlighted, students need an opportunity to extract meaning from their experiences. Scientific concepts associated with intercultural communication allowed students to unpack their experience in ways that are not only meaningful, but applicable to their personal future endeavors. Further, doing so in the academic classroom where students are required to produce both orally and in written form gives

students the time and opportunity to make use of the tools. Wells (1994) wrote that, “by appropriating this cultural tool [of writing] for reflective thinking, the learner brings under conscious and deliberate control meaning-making capacities that he or she has, until that time, only deployed spontaneously in oral speech.” Offering students the means and space to process their experience so that they can more clearly articulate their experience and what they learned first in the classroom may be the “extra edge” on the job market that is touted by so many as a concrete outcome of studying abroad.

### **Limitations and Implications**

While this study concluded that post-study abroad students who enrolled in a three-credit course were better able to articulate what they had learned abroad than students who had not enrolled in this course, there are a number of limitations that must be addressed. A corpus analysis showed that the non-course students used the word “culture(s)” more often than the non-course students overall, yet the students who enrolled in the course submitted final exams that averaged 1408 words in length. The non-course students, in contrast, could write as much or as little as they chose and often limited their responses to one paragraph for each of the three open-ended questions posed, an average of 160 words per student. Additional considerations with this type of data are the extent to which students enrolled in the course were more developmentally ready to process their experiences as well as whether or not their reflections were colored by the fact that they received grades for their assignments. Future studies may attempt to examine these two groups of post-study abroad students in a more comparable fashion by eliciting answers in the same context for both groups. An additional implication of this study was that students who enrolled in the course may be better able to articulate what they learned in a job interview, and, thus, be more likely to succeed. Without following these two groups of students through the

interviewing process, however, it is impossible to surmise how they would actually fare. As such, future studies should not only focus on training students to articulate what they learned abroad in a job interview when not prompted (Trooboff et al., 2007), but also how students appropriate the scientific concepts associated with intercultural communication as a sign to create meaning for their audience by either recording job interviews, following up with individual students after job interviews, or assessing the success rate of students on the job market who have enrolled in such a course. Additionally, it would be valuable to assess how backgrounds in specific majors shape the way that students frame their study abroad experiences, as it is expected that different majors will articulate their learning differently in discipline-appropriate ways.

### **Conclusion**

While much more attention is being paid to how to most effectively design study abroad programs and integrate them into the curriculum both before and after the experience, it is of utmost importance to consider how students are able to take their learning and apply it to their personal and professional careers, regardless of location or discipline.



## References

- Allen, H. W. (2010). Language-Learning Motivation During Short-Term Study Abroad: An Activity Theory Perspective. *Foreign Language Annals*, 43(1), 27-49.
- Alred, G., & Byram, M. (2002). Becoming an intercultural mediator: A longitudinal study of residence abroad. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 23(5), 339-352.
- Anderson, C. S. & Cunningham, K. (2009). Developing ethnographic skills and reflective practices connected to study abroad. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. 63-84). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Bennett, J. M., & Bennett, M. J. (2001). Developing intercultural sensitivity: An integrative approach to global and domestic diversity. *The Diversity Symposium*.
- Bennett, M. J. (1993). Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity. In R. M. Paige (Ed.), *Education for the intercultural experience* (pp. 21-71). Maine: Intercultural Press, Inc.
- Brewer, E. & Cunningham, K. (2009a). *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Brewer, E. & Cunningham, K. (2009b). Introduction. In E. Brewer & K. Cunningham (Eds.), *Integrating study abroad into the curriculum: Theory and practice across the disciplines* (pp. xi-xxvi). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- de Nooy, J., & Hanna, B. E. (2003). Cultural information gathering by Australian students in France. *Language and Intercultural Communication*, 3(1), 64-80.

- Deardorff, D. K. (2004). The identification and assessment of intercultural competence as a student outcome of internationalization at institutions of higher education in the United States. Unpublished dissertation. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina State University.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2006a). Assessing Intercultural Competence in Study Abroad Students. In M.Byram & A.Feng (Eds.) *Living and Studying Abroad: Research and Practice* (pp. 232-255). Great Britian: MPG Books Ltd.
- Deardorff, D.K. (2006b) Identification and Assessment of Intercultural Competence as a Student Outcome of Internationalization. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 10, 241-266.
- Downey, G. (2005). From personal reflection to social investigation: Undergraduate research as an antidote to autobiographical cliché. In L.C. Anderson (Ed.), *Internationalizing undergraduate education: Integrating study abroad into the curriculum* (pp. 117-121). Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.
- Dupuy, B. (2006). Global simulation: Experiential pedagogy and preparing students for study abroad at home. In S. Wilkinson (Ed.), *Insight from study abroad for language programs*, (pp. 134-156). Boston, MA: AAUSC.
- Einbeck, K. (2002). Using literature to promote cultural fluency in study abroad programs. *Die Unterrichtspraxis*, 35(1), 59-67.
- Freed, B. F. (1995). What makes us think that students who study abroad become fluent? In B.F. Freed (Ed.) *Second language acquisition in a study abroad context* (pp. 123-148). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

- Gardner, P., Gross, L., & Steglitz, I. (2008). *Unpacking Your Study Abroad Experience: Critical Reflection for Workplace Competencies*. CERI Research Brief 1-2008. Collegiate Employment Research Institute. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University.
- Hirshorn, J. (2009). *Rocket: A simulation on intercultural teamwork*. Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Hunter, W. (2004). Knowledge, skills, attitudes, and experiences necessary to become globally competent. Unpublished dissertation. Bethlehem, PA: Lehigh University.
- Isabelli-García, C. (2006). Study abroad social networks, motivation, and attitudes: Implications for second language acquisition. In M. A DuFon, & E. Churchill (Eds.), *Language Learners in Study Abroad Contexts* (pp. 231-258). Clevedon, GB: Multilingual Matters.
- Kearney, E. (2010). Cultural immersion in the foreign language classroom: Some narrative possibilities. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(2), 332-336.
- Kelly, G. A. (1963). *A theory of personality: The psychology of personal constructs*. New York, NY: Norton.
- Kinging, C. (2008). Language learning in study abroad: Case studies of Americans in France. *The Modern Language Journal*, 92, 1-124.
- Kinging, C. (2009). *Language learning and study abroad: A critical reading of research*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Kowarski, I. (2010). Colleges Help Students to Translate the Benefits of Study Abroad. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from: <http://chronicle.com/article/Colleges-Help-Students-to/123653/>

- Kramsch, C. (2000). Social discursive constructions of self in L2 learning. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 133-154). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Lantolf, J. P. (2000). Introducing sociocultural theory. In J. P. Lantolf (Ed.), *Sociocultural theory and second language learning* (pp. 1-26). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Mangan, K. (2011). Business Schools Worldwide Fall Short on Globalization, Report Says. *Chronicle of Higher Education*. Charlottesville, VA.
- Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2011). *Experiencing Intercultural Communication*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Miller, S. (2009). International Affairs Update. University of Arizona.
- Montrose, L. (2002). International study and experiential learning: The academic context. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 8, 1-15.
- Orahood, T., Woolf, J., & Kruze, L. (2008). Study abroad and career paths of business students. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 17, 133-141.
- Passarelli, A. M., & Kolb, D. A. (2012). Using experiential learning theory to promote student learning and development in programs of education abroad. In M. Vande Berg, R.M. Paige, & K. Hemming Lou (Eds.), *Student learning abroad: What our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 137-161). Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Rivers, W. P. (1998). Is being there enough? The effects of home stay placements on language gain during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 31(4), 492-500.

- Root, E., & Ngampornchai, A. (2012). "I Came Back as a New Human Being": Student Descriptions of Intercultural Competence Acquired Through Education Abroad Experiences. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 1-20.
- Savicki, V. (2008). *Developing intercultural competence and transformation: Theory, research, and application in international education*. Sterling, VA: Stylus.
- Talburt, S., & Stewart, M. A. (1999). What's the Subject of Study Abroad?: Race, Gender, and "Living Culture." *The Modern Language Journal*, 83(2), 163-175.
- Trooboff, S., Vande Berg, M., & Rayman, J. (2007). Employer attitudes toward study abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 15, 17-33.
- Vande Berg, M. (2009). Intervening in student learning abroad: a research-based inquiry. *Intercultural Education*, 20, 15-27.
- Wells, G. (1994). Learning and teaching "scientific concepts": Vygotsky's ideas revisited. *Vygotsky and the Human Sciences*, Moscow.
- Wilkinson, S. (2000). Emerging Questions about Study Abroad. *ADFL Bulletin*, 32(1), 36-41.
- Williams, T. R. (2005). Exploring the impact of study abroad on students' intercultural communication skills: Adaptability and sensitivity. *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 9(4), 356-371.

## Appendix A

### GER 150 – Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad Fall 2011 - Course Syllabus The University of Arizona

#### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

*Becoming Transcultural: Maximizing Study Abroad* is designed to be an introductory level course which assumes no particular previous coursework. The goal of this course is to provide students with a framework for maximizing their learning potential as they prepare for immersion contexts abroad (e.g., study abroad, research abroad, internship abroad, etc.)

The course will focus on heightening students' transcultural communication skills and ability to transition into new environments. We will read and analyze literature on language and culture learning. We will also work together to help students improve their transcultural communication skills. This will not be accomplished by learning a fixed set of rules or strategies for communication or facts and figures about another culture. We will, rather, engage in transcultural studies as a vehicle for learning critical thinking skills about culture and language. Students who have or intend to study abroad will be able to apply these new skills regardless of where they studied or intend to study.

Participants will learn by active engagement in lectures, discussions, simulation games, and small and whole group activities. Course activities may include engaging in cross-cultural comparisons/debates, analyzing the outcomes of cross-cultural simulations, and critical comparative analyses of a range of texts including those written by classroom peers, published academic papers, or videos on transculturalism as it relates to immersion contexts abroad.

#### **COURSE OBJECTIVES AND LEARNING OUTCOMES**

This course provides in-depth exposure to theories from applied linguistics, transcultural communication, and sociology as they relate to students preparing for immersion contexts abroad (e.g., study abroad, research abroad, internship abroad, service learning, etc). The format for 50% of the class meetings is lecture/discussion. The remaining 50% of the class meetings will focus on student presentations, simulation games, and group work activities. The course will give students an opportunity to express their own individual objectives for the course throughout the semester. Goals for students are to:

- Critically evaluate their own abilities to adapt to study abroad, research abroad, or work abroad contexts.
- Develop an appreciation of transcultural challenges presented in immersion contexts;
- Improve their transcultural communication skills and ability to transition into new environments;
- Realize that language is not fixed or self-contained, but related to culture, social life, politics, and personal experience.
- Find practical applications (i.e., career uses) for second-language and transcultural-communication skills.

## **REQUIRED READING**

Martin, J. N., & Nakayama, T. K. (2011). *Experiencing intercultural communication: An Introduction* (4th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING**

Critical Response Papers (4)	40%
Exams (2)	25%
Group Presentation	10%
Online Participation	15%
Class Attendance/ In-class participation	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Critical Response Papers (4 at 10% each = 40%):** During the semester, students will be expected to complete four two-page response papers (double-spaced, 12 pt font, APA format) based on the assigned readings (see due dates in course calendar). The papers are designed to promote preparation for class, critical thinking about the material, and discussion participation. The course is divided into four topic areas: Foundations of Intercultural Communication, Intercultural Communication Processes, Intercultural Communication in Everyday Life, and Intercultural Communication in Applied Settings. Students will write one response paper per topic area of the textbook. Each response paper must be based on a chapter that corresponds with the part for which the paper is due. For example, response paper #1 must be based on an assigned readings from the first four weeks of the course. Keep in mind that:

- Evaluation of the response papers will be based on the extent to which they show evidence of critical engagement with the week's readings including for example, comparing/contrasting different theories presented in readings, addressing any ambiguities, consistencies and/or lack of clarity, interpreting current week's readings using previous readings/theories, extending ideas from readings to own experiences, and identifying connections with in-class activities and/or online discussions. Papers should be well written, cohesively structured, and contain no spelling or grammatical errors.

**Exams (1 at 10%, 1 at 15% = 25%):** For each exam, students will be asked to choose three questions from a set of five questions and write several paragraphs on each of the selected questions. The exam questions are designed to be broad in scope and encourage students to apply concepts developed in the course to the preparation or actual experience of studying abroad.

**Group Presentation (10%):** At approximately the mid-point in the semester, there will be class time devoted to student-lead activities/discussions (2-4 students) on issues that relate to the readings/videos/activities for that day. The number of students to lead a discussion and the number and size of discussion groups will be determined by course enrollments.

Facilitators for in-class student-led activities/discussions are required to do the following:

- Present discussion questions for fellow students and instructors on the morning of the day that you will facilitate. Discussion questions, for example, might focus on major theoretical issues or practical implications raised by the readings for students studying abroad.
- Facilitate group activity/discussion during class.

The goals of this part of the course are:

- to make the ideas found in the literature on transculturalism clearer to everyone;
- to provide ample discussion time to link course readings with studying abroad;
- to provide students with opportunities to collaborate and to learn how to prepare and orchestrate productive discussions on transculturalism. *Student facilitators are required to meet with the course instructor prior to the discussion that they lead.*

**Class Attendance and Participation (10%):** Course meetings will function best with full participation from everyone in attendance. Effective participation is contingent upon completing the readings before we meet as a group. Reading assignments are due the day for which they are assigned. Example: Chapter 1 should be read **before** coming to class on Thursday, August 25.

**Online Participation (15%):** A portion of your grade is contributed by your participation online, which will include discussions in the D2L (Desire 2 Learn) course website. Every week for which you have an online section, you are required to log in to D2L and participate in an online discussion based on the posted topic. In order to get credit, you will need to contribute three discussion posts. The first posting, should be between 100 and 150 words and should indicate that you have thought about the topic (“I agree with what she said” is not enough). Then, read what others have written and provide two additional posts at 25 to 50 words. These follow-up posts should be in direct response to what others have written.

### **Late Paper Policy**

Late Critical Response Papers will be reduced by one full grade (e.g., an A- becomes a B-) for each late week.

### **Writing Assistance**

If you are in need of help with your Critical Response Papers, or are unsure of proper methods for citations, the UA Writing Skills and Improvement Center can provide you with guidance or assistance. Further information is available at: <http://wsip.web.arizona.edu>

If you have any doubt about or difficulty with specific aspects of your writing, it is wise to access the resources available. In addition, feel free to approach the course instructor for assistance or with any questions or concerns.

**Course Website and D2L:** 15% of your grade is contributed by your participation online and in D2L (Desire 2 Learn), a web-based learning system. The D2L website is also the official website for the course and contains all assignments and important links. To access this course on D2L you must have a UA NetID and be officially enrolled in the course for at least 24 hours

## **Appendix B**

### **Final Exam Question**

At this point in the semester you have read a significant portion of the book, “Experiencing Intercultural Communication,” participated in a cultural simulation activity, participated and led discussions online and in the classroom related to culture and transcultural communication, reflected on these discussions, and watched movies and listened to presentations dealing with topics ranging from language to cultural conflict. In your final exam, you are presented with the



challenge of applying what you have learned in class to your current life at the University of Arizona, your future careers, and future transcultural interactions:

- Please articulate what you learned specifically in this course. Focus on tangible and intangible skills and capabilities you gained through this course and how you could apply them to your professional, personal, and educational pursuits. Be sure to apply concepts, ideas, and vocabulary that you have learned.
- Has this class increased your desire or willingness to travel or study abroad? If you have already studied abroad, how did the class allow you to process your experience in new ways?
- How would you use the skills that you have learned in this course in travelling or studying abroad, or even at home in your interaction with other cultures (note: culture need not be limited to “foreign” cultures)?

Your paper should be approximately 1,500 words (double-spaced, Times New Roman size 12 font) and should address each question. Be sure to not only use the book, but also coursework, and personal experience as references to highlighting your point.

### Appendix C

#### Non-course Student Prompt

*An Institutional Review Board responsible for human subjects research at The University of Arizona reviewed this research project and found it to be acceptable, according to applicable state and federal regulations and University policies designed to protect the rights and welfare of participants in research*

This research study attempts to evaluate what students have learned while participating in a Study Abroad program. Approximately 25 students will participate in this portion of the study. Your name will be removed from survey. You may refuse to participate in this study. If you decide to take part in the study, you may leave the study at any time. You may choose not to participate without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. There are no costs involved other than 10-15 minutes of your time. If you choose to participate in the study, you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. For questions, concerns, or complaints about the study you may contact **Kacy Peckenpaugh:** kpeckenp@email.arizona.edu .

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact the Human Subjects Protection Program at 520-626-6721 or [orcr.vpr.arizona.edu/irb](http://orcr.vpr.arizona.edu/irb).

#### Online Survey

I have read (or someone has read to me) this form, and I am aware that I am being asked to participate in a research study. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have had them answered to my satisfaction. By completing this survey I have agreed to participate in this research study.

Name/email:

Class year:

Major/Minor:

Experience Abroad

Travel date(s)

Program (if applicable)

Destination:

Age when abroad:

Did you need/have any language skills for the country in which you studied?

Have you travelled or studied abroad previously? (Where/when?)

1. Please discuss what you learned while studying abroad. If possible, focus on tangible and intangible skills and capabilities you gained through studying abroad and how you could apply them to your professional, personal, and educational pursuits. Be sure to apply any concepts, ideas, and vocabulary that you might be familiar with.
2. Has studying abroad increased your desire or willingness to travel or study abroad again in the future? How does your experience studying abroad allow you to process your experience in new ways?
3. How would you use the skills that you have learned studying abroad in future travels, study, or work abroad, or even at home in your interaction with other cultures (note: culture need not be limited to “foreign” cultures)?