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STUDY ABROAD AS A MULTIFACETED APPROACH TO SUPPORTING
COLLEGE SOPHOMORES: CREATING OPTIMAL ENVIRONMENTS TO
PROMOTE INTERCULTURAL MATURITY

by

JESSICA LUCHESI

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for a degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2014

Dissertation Committee

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ABSTRACT

Leaders in higher education bear the responsibility of creating educational environments and programming that promote student development and help prepare graduates to work, live, and lead in today's interconnected and global society. Such institutional programming, which fosters *intercultural maturity*, defined as the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal developmental capacities that enable students to act in ways that are aware and appropriate, should be available to all students. Scholarly work, however, demonstrates that sophomore students receive the least amount of institutional attention and thus have fewer programs directed at fostering their development. As a result, sophomores can find themselves negotiating developmental challenges with little support or guidance. In an effort to explore the efficacy of one approach to providing developmental support for sophomores, this study examined the Second Year Experience Abroad program, one university's attempt to re-engage sophomore students by fostering intercultural maturity. Specifically, the purpose of this mixed-methods explanatory sequential case study was to explore the relationship between study abroad programming and the extent to which it supports sophomore students by fostering intercultural maturity.

Data collected using the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI), a pre- and post-experience survey measuring the various capacities of intercultural maturity, revealed that sophomores experienced significant gains in awareness and understanding of various cultures and their impact on the global society (knowledge scale), and awareness and acceptance of the dimensions of their identity (identity scale). Regression analysis indicated that gender was associated with increases in almost all capacities related to

intercultural maturity, where females experienced higher gains than their male counterparts. Interviews suggested that their experiences abroad influenced participants' development of intercultural maturity to varying degrees, with more significant growth in the cognitive and intrapersonal domains. Cognitive gains included an increased understanding of the importance of cultural context when evaluating difference, while intrapersonal gains involved self-reflection in discovering identity.

Taken together, this study contributes to the pre-existing knowledgebase surrounding study abroad programming and how promoting intercultural maturity might require a multifaceted approach when supporting sophomore students. Such findings may inform institutional policy and practice, serving as a model for designing innovative programs and solutions that promote intercultural maturity.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to international educators all over the world who are committed to fostering the development of their students through study abroad programming. Together, we aim to change the world.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I extend my deepest gratitude to the many people who have supported me along this incredible, life-changing journey. There have been both very high and very low points, and I could not have achieved my goal of completing this doctorate program without each and every one of these incredible people.

Chris: I would like to thank my soon-to-be husband for his endless love and understanding. There have been times where I could not put into words how overwhelmed I was, but somehow you understood exactly what I needed. There were days that I was gone for 18 hours writing, but when I got home you always greeted me with a hug, a smile, and a joke (of course!). I love you with all of my heart and I cannot wait to call myself Dr. Jessica Calhoun.

Fred, Lea, and Gary: Thank you for your intellectual guidance and for pushing me to be the best possible student and researcher that I could possibly be. Working with each of you throughout this process has been inspiring. Fred, thank you especially for being my advisor for these past five years. I knew I could always go to you for honest advice.

Kira: If there was one person who kept me level over the past five years, it was you. I can't count the number of times that I have thought to myself, "What would I have done without you?" The answer to that question—it would have been a much tougher experience! You have been my friend, mentor, and confidant as I tripped, and also my support system as I got up from each fall. And now . . . poof!

To the Luchesi family: Dad, Mom, Jen, Casey, and Brett . . . thank you for your understanding as I missed out on fun family events because of school work. I am so

pleased to tell you, “Those days are over!” Let the family fun begin! I am so lucky to have a family that is so close and loving. There are so many great things that are about to happen in our family and I cannot wait to see what the future holds for us. I also need to recognize my grandma Ruth, whose wisdom continues to inspire me to be a strong woman. I know you are looking down on me on my graduation day with love and pride.

My friends: Thank you for your patience and understanding. There were so many times where I have been absent because I was writing. That is about to change and I am so thrilled to reconnect with every one of you.

My Leadership Studies cohort: We did this together. I have never felt such a sense of camaraderie as I do with you and we have a connection that others simply cannot understand.

My colleagues: This includes my colleagues in the International Center and also across campus. I could not have made it without your support.

My soon-to-be family: Thank you Phil, Georgia, and Chase Calhoun for checking in on me, especially over the last month. Listening to Phil’s crazy dissertation stories helped keep me afloat. Georgia, thank you for making sure I was fed during this home stretch.

For those who I did not mention: There are so many people that supported me along this journey who may not have even known that they were doing so. Thanks to the friendly staff at Starbucks who kept tabs on my progress. Thank you to my neighbors for giving me a high five to celebrate my achievements. Thank you to strangers who would smile at me in passing—it is these little things that kept me going.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The majority of existing research on college student development focuses on understanding how college affects students and subsequently how institutions can create learning environments that foster this development at each stage of the educational process. Institutional programming, informed by mission statements and learning outcomes, scaffolds students with developmentally appropriate opportunities in an effort to support cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal growth, and prepare them for life after college. While administrators aim to pay equal institutional attention to each class through the implementation of targeted programming, such widespread intentional programs often do not come to fruition (Schaller, 2005, 2007).

Traditionally, faculty, staff, and administrators have focused on first-year students and seniors in an effort to ease the transition both into and out of college (Evenbeck, Boston, DuVivier, & Hallberg, 2000; Pascarella & Terenzini, 2005; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000; Schaller, 2005, 2007). More recently, however, the growing attrition rate of students in their second year has redirected the focus to sophomore students and the factors that lead to their institutional dissatisfaction (Mortenson, 2005; Schaller, 2005, 2010). Research shows that sophomore students receive the least attention of any class and have unique developmental needs that are often not supported by their institution (Berger & Lyon, 2005; Evenbeck et al., 2000; Gardner, Tobolowsky, & Hunter, 2010; Tetley, Tobolowsky & Chan, 2010). After students complete their freshman year, the support they anticipated receiving in their second year often ceases, creating a

misalignment between needs and the programmatic opportunities offered by the home university. This can leave sophomores in a state of uncertainty and confusion (Boivin, Fountain & Baylis, 2000; Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000; Schaller, 2010). When these developmental needs go unmet, sophomores may find themselves encountering challenges with little support or guidance from their institutions on how to overcome them. Such developmental challenges are associated with discovering autonomy related to decision-making, knowledge, defining the self, and relating to others (Schaller, 2005).

While new opportunities for exercising autonomy presented in the sophomore year can seem liberating, feelings of anxiety often arise because students may not have the experiential repertoire to effectively manage this responsibility nor do they receive institutional support to aid them. As students begin to realize and understand the demands of the sophomore year and recognize the void in institutional support that might help them meet these demands, feelings of overwhelming anxiety can arise. As a result, these students can experience what is called the *sophomore slump*, which is a term used to describe a state of ambivalence and confusion where students feel disconnected and dissatisfied with college and with self (Feldman & Newcomb, 1969; Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Schaller, 2007). Feelings of stress, confusion, lack of motivation, and overall disconnectedness cultivated by diminishing support systems contribute to the sophomore slump (Boivin et al., 2000; Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000; Schaller, 2010).

Sophomores undergo a transformation from authority dependence to a more self-authored way of making meaning, defining self, and relating to others. Throughout this process, they move from passively experiencing college to more fully engaging in intentional decision-making relating to their sense of knowledge, self, and community. Baxter Magolda and King (2004) define this movement as the *journey toward self-authorship*, which is defined as the “capacity to internally define a coherent belief system and identity that coordinates mutual relations with others” (p. 8). This journey is comprised of three stages, including: (a) following external formulas, (b) the crossroads, and (c) self-authorship. The sophomore year is often compared to the crossroads, which is considered a period of transition between external dependence and internal definition. During this period, assumptions about knowledge, identity, and relationships with others begin to unravel and students undergo self-exploration in order to develop their own vision (cognitive), craft their own identity (intrapersonal), and to express this identity in relationships with others (interpersonal).

As students interact in a more global society both during and after college, it is essential that they have the intercultural competence to effectively engage with others with diverse perspectives (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009; Deardorff, 2011; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). King and Baxter Magolda (2005) built on the concept of self-authorship to integrate intercultural ways of viewing and interpreting knowledge, self, and relationships to create what they call *intercultural maturity*. Intercultural maturity is defined as “multi-dimensional and consisting of a range of attributes, including understanding (the cognitive dimension), sensitivity to others (the interpersonal

dimension), and a sense of oneself that enables one to listen to and learn from others (the intrapersonal dimension)” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 574). As students *mature* in each of these domains, they become capable of complex learning and understanding.

Similar to self-authorship, the development of intercultural maturity occurs within the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains and progresses through three levels: (a) initial level, (b) intermediate level, and (c) mature level. Like the crossroads stage of self-authorship, the intermediate level of intercultural maturity can typically occur during the second. This level represents a pivotal stage where individuals develop an acceptance of knowledge uncertainty and multiple perspectives (cognitive domain), an awareness of the various dimensions of one’s identity (intrapersonal domain), and a willingness to interact with diverse others and refrain from judgment (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

As sophomore students progress along their journey toward self-authorship and ultimately, intercultural maturity, they start to understand that the externally based way of decision-making does not support the new insights they are gaining in college. Thus, they typically begin exploring their internal sense of self and learn how to “navigate knowledge about themselves and the world around them” (Schaller, 2007, p. 9). King and Baxter Magolda (2005) argue that the development of intercultural maturity helps students understand and integrate knowledge about diverse others and multicultural surroundings and makes them better equipped to approach and respond to situations in an increasingly complex world (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Taken together, self-authorship and ultimately, intercultural maturity, are highly desirable learning outcomes

and institutions bear the responsibility for designing learning environments to intentionally foster this development (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Unfortunately, such targeted programming is not yet widespread for sophomore students (Gardner et al., 2010; Schaller, 2010).

Increasing awareness of the unique aspects of the sophomore student experience coupled with the overall paucity of sophomore-directed programming has motivated institutions to respond with policy and practices to better support this population. As research around the sophomore year continues to grow, higher education administrators are becoming more informed about the types of programming that effectively responds to the needs of this often forgotten student group. Reoccurring recommendations on best practices made by researchers emphasize that student development and institutional learning outcomes should be central to sophomore-specific program design and corresponding implementation (Schaller, 2005, 2007, 2010). Such practices encourage exploration, foster community, incorporate guided reflection, and increased student-faculty, student-staff, and student-student interaction (Schaller, 2005; Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007).

Many researchers and practitioners alike suggest that study abroad can be an ideal environment for sophomore students to engage in this type of complex learning (Schaller, 2005, 2010; Sutton & Leslie, 2010). In their study measuring the impact of study abroad on global learning and development, Braskamp et al. (2009) found that the international setting “maximizes the opportunities to help students understand the necessity of multiple perspectives, reflect on how one’s own cultural background influences one’s sense of

self, and to form social relationships with others not like them” (p. 115). Inherent in many study abroad models is increased student-faculty and student-student interaction, and this interaction occurs within the context of an international environment where encountering differences is ubiquitous. As students encounter differences abroad, this can often times inspire a deep reflection that challenges their way of knowing, self-identity, and relationships with others and may reveal a new, informed self.

Research demonstrates that sophomore students have unique developmental needs that are often not supported by their institution through intentional programming. As colleges and universities formulate efforts directed at sophomores, their development should be at the center of program design. Because self-authorship and intercultural competence are common learning outcomes for higher education institutions, and study abroad is proven to be one mean to achieving these outcomes (Braskamp, Braskamp & Engberg, 2013; Schaller, 2005), it seems that study abroad programming might be a multifaceted approach that can foster sophomore student development while promoting the institutional learning outcomes of self-authorship and intercultural competence. This type of programming might be a useful tool for achieving institutional learning outcomes while supporting sophomore students and preparing them for life after college.

Problem Statement

Currently, there is extremely limited research on the effects that a study abroad experience has on sophomore students and the potential of such programs to foster the development of intercultural maturity in this population. Due to the heightened attention to the sophomore student experience and the programmatic void during the second year,

institutions are seeking initiatives that will better support these students as they encounter developmental challenges (Evenbeck et al., 2000; Pattengale & Schriener, 2000; Schaller, 2005, 2007; Tetley et al., 2010). As college sophomore students progress in their journey toward self-authorship and, ultimately, intercultural maturity, the institutional support they receive can provide the scaffolding necessary to successfully overcome these developmental challenges. The growing body of research surrounding the sophomore student experience reflects the institutional concern for this population and the drive to better understand this student group.

There is a vast body of research on the benefits of study abroad for students and the role that this experience can play in promoting intercultural competence. However, there is very little evidence about how study abroad programming might be intentionally designed and utilized to support sophomore students by promoting intercultural maturity. In order to understand whether study abroad programs really are an effective strategy for responding to developmental challenges of sophomores, the impact of such programs must be explored through systematic research.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between study abroad programming and its potential to support undergraduate sophomore students at a four-year residential university in the United States through the development of intercultural maturity. Specifically, the study focuses on the University of San Diego's (USD) Second Year Experience Abroad (SYEA) program and its efforts to support sophomore students by fostering the development of intercultural maturity in an international setting. This

particular study abroad program maintains a unique model and characteristics, which was the premise for selecting the SYEA program for this study. Such program components will be discussed in subsequent sections of this paper.

The University of San Diego's program takes place in various international locations that include Florence, Seville, Barcelona, and Hong Kong. This explanatory sequential mixed methods study consists of two parts. The first quantitative phase includes an analysis of data collected in a pre- and post-experience survey. The second qualitative phase focuses on the most recent year of the SYEA program, which includes study abroad experiences in Florence, Seville, and Hong Kong.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What impact, if any, did this program have on participants' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of student development as measured by a pre- and post-experience survey and how does this vary/differ across program year and location?
2. To what extent were the changes in these three constructs attributable to participants' demographics such as gender, academic major, ethnicity, grade point average, level of parental education, and previous study abroad experience?
3. What impact, if any, and in what ways, did this program influence the development of participants' intercultural maturity?

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews the literature related to study abroad and its potential to impact the development of intercultural maturity in sophomore students. The chapter is divided into three sections: (a) the development of self-authorship and intercultural maturity in college, (b) the sophomore student experience, and (c) study abroad programming. The chapter begins with a review of the theories of self-authorship and intercultural maturity and how these are fostered throughout the college experience. Second, a comprehensive overview of the sophomore student experience will outline the challenges and the development that takes place during the second year of college. Third, study abroad programming and its impacts will be explored. Finally, I argue that study abroad is a developmentally appropriate approach to foster intercultural maturity in sophomore students.

Development of Self-Authorship and Intercultural Maturity in College

In an evaluation of college learning outcomes, Baxter Magolda (2007) summarized that institutions of higher education aim to graduate students with the following skills: effective citizenship, critical thinking, complex problem solving, interdependent relations with diverse others, and mature decision-making. Movement toward these outcomes requires students to transform their views of knowledge, their identity, and their relations with others (Baxter Magolda, 2007). As this transformation takes place, students move from reliance on authorities to define their purposes, values, and beliefs to developing the internal capacity to define their own belief system, identity,

and relationships (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Kegan, 1994). Achieving college learning outcomes requires this capacity or *self-authorship* (Baxter Magolda, 2007). The next section details the theoretical concept of self-authorship through the work of Kegan (1994) and Baxter Magolda (2001, 2007).

Kegan's Theory of Self-Evolution

Robert Kegan (1982, 1994) laid the research foundation on self-authorship through his constructive theory of self-evolution. This theory describes how the process of meaning-making, which involves the intertwining of the cognitive, interpersonal, and intrapersonal domains of human development, evolves from infancy through adulthood. Kegan (1982, 1994) posits that the process of meaning-making evolves through five sequential stages or *orders of consciousness*. These orders of consciousness relate to the construction of an individual's understanding of reality and how the development of that construction becomes increasingly more complex over time. He identifies this evolution of consciousness as "the personal unfolding of ways of organizing experience that are not simply replaced as we grow but subsumed into more complex systems of mind" (Kegan, 1994, p. 9).

Each stage describes how one constructs meaning with respect to his or her relationship between the *subject* and the *object* (Kegan, 1982, 1994). Kegan (1994) writes that, "[w]e *have* object; we *are* subject" (p. 32; emphasis in original), where subjects are a part of the self and held internally and objects are distinct from the self and external. Subjects are the "elements of our knowing or organizing that we are identified with, tied to, fused with, or embedded in" (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). They are invisible to the

self, and thus “we cannot be responsible for, in control of, or reflect upon [them]” (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). On the other hand, objects in one’s life are “those elements of our knowing or organizing that we can reflect on, handle, look at, be responsible for, relate to each other, take control of, internalize, assimilate, or otherwise operate upon” (Kegan, 1994, p. 32). When things in an individual’s life are considered subject, they are unquestioned as truth about the world and are *embedded* in our meaning-making system, while those considered objects are separate or are *differentiated* from the self and can be observed and reflected upon (Kegan, 1994).

As individuals mature, their meaning-making system becomes more complex and what was once held as unconscious subjects become conscious objects (Kegan, 1994). This transition from subject to object, which is central to Kegan’s theory (1994), represents the ongoing formation of an “evolutionary truce,” where truth about the world moves from being embedded in an individual’s meaning-making system to being differentiated. As subjects of one’s life become objects of one’s life, worldviews become more complex because one can observe and reflect upon elements of one’s experience rather than assuming them as truth (Kegan, 1994). Each order of consciousness reflects changes in reasoning patterns, thus impacting how one views knowledge, the self, and relationships with others.

Love and Guthrie (1999) note that the most crucial changes in Kegan’s orders of consciousness for college students occur in the transition from the second to third order and the third to fourth order. When individuals move from the second order or an *instrumental mind*, to the third order or to a *socialized mind*, they begin to take others’

perspectives into account rather than solely their own and start to think more abstractly (Love & Guthrie, 1999). Individuals are able to see themselves as part of a community and understand how their point of view relates to that of others. At the third order, however, the “system by which individuals make meaning still resides outside the self” (Love & Guthrie, 1999, p. 71) and they are not fully able to reflect and act on their construction of reality. During the transition to the fourth order of consciousness or to a *self-authored mind*, individuals experience the principal transformation into adulthood (Love & Guthrie, 1999).

Transitioning into the fourth order of consciousness presents challenges to individuals as they negotiate a shift from using externally defined expectations to a more internally defined identity as the structure that underlies their meaning-making system (Kegan, 1994). The meaning-making capacity now resides outside the self and individuals’ values, beliefs, convictions, generalizations, ideals, abstractions, interpersonal loyalties are:

objects or elements of its system, rather than the system itself; it does not identify with them but views them as parts of a new whole. This new whole is an ideology, an internal identity, a *self-authorship* that can coordinate, integrate, act upon, or invent values, beliefs convictions, interpersonal loyalties, and intrapersonal states. It is no longer *authored by* them, it *authors them* and achieves a personal authority. (Kegan, 1994, p. 185; emphasis in original)

Self-authored individuals are able to write their own lives and use a self-governing system to make sense of their life experiences.

While Kegan (1982) suggests that the college environment is an ideal medium to foster the movement toward self-authorship, he notes that only “one-half to two-thirds of the adult population appears not to have fully reached the fourth order of consciousness”

(Kegan, 1994, p. 188) or self-authorship. Studies show that many college students remain in the third order, where the acceptance of others serves as the basis for their meaning-making strategies making it especially challenging for them to “take responsibility for their decisions while establishing an independent compass for their lives” (Lovette-Colyer, 2013, p. 44). Kegan (1994) argues that individuals need to be supported in reaching self-authorship, and if the college environment is an optimal environment for this to take place, then institutions of higher education need to be intentional of how this transition is fostered. Building on Kegan’s (1982, 1994) scholarship, Baxter Magolda’s (2001) research on the development of self-authorship in college-aged students further elaborated how this population arrives at this stage across the cognitive/epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of development. The stages of self-authorship defined by Baxter Magolda offer educators a conceptual framework on how to support students throughout this process.

Baxter Magolda’s Evolution of Self-Authorship

Marcia Baxter Magolda (2001, 2004) expanded on Kegan’s (1994) theory of self-authorship, defining this developmental stage as the ability to “construct knowledge in a contextual world, an ability to construct an internal identity separate from external influences, and an ability to engage in relationships without losing one’s internal identity” (Baxter Magolda, 1999, p. 2). Based on her 22-year longitudinal study on college student development, she describes self-authorship as a developmental journey that involves a gradual movement from relying on external forces in defining how one views and interprets knowledge, how one views oneself, and how one relates to others, to

a more internally based way of constructing meaning (Baxter Magolda, 2001). It involves maturation in the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of development, leading to an understanding that “knowledge is complex and socially constructed,” the “self is central to knowledge construction,” and that “expertise is shared mutually in knowledge construction” (Pizzolato, Nguyen, Johnston, & Wang, 2012, p. 56).

Along the journey toward self-authorship, young adults attempt to answer the following three key questions: (a) how do I know? (epistemological/cognitive); (b) who am I? (intrapersonal); and (c) how am I in relationships with others? (interpersonal). As they make progress toward self-authorship, their meaning-making system becomes guided by what Baxter Magolda (2009) calls an internal voice, where students negotiate external influences with managing their internal definition of knowledge, self, and relationships. Like Kegan’s (1994) framework, Baxter Magolda’s journey toward self-authorship is holistic in nature, which is represented by an intersection of epistemology, identity, and interpersonal development.

Baxter Magolda (2010) stresses that the evolution of self-authorship is not a straightforward journey where all developmental dimensions progress at the same rate. Rather, it is a journey that weaves back and forth as individuals may achieve growth in one dimension ahead of the others depending on their personal and contextual dynamics. From this longitudinal study, she found that young adults seemed to have a “default” or a “home” dimension that was “in the “forefront of how they constructed their lives” (Baxter Magolda, 2010, p. 41). For example, those who use the epistemological

dimension to analyze circumstances use the “how do I know?” question to construct meaning. Those who give privilege to the intrapersonal dimension or the “who am I?” question may be looking for their internal voice to bring forth in understanding experiences. Individuals who privilege the interpersonal dimension, or the “how am I in relationships with others?” question, focus on relationships because there is a reliance on “others’ perceptions for . . . self-worth” (Baxter Magolda, 2010, p. 41).

No matter which dimension is at the foreground, Baxter Magolda (2001, 2010) found that the epistemological dimension plays the most crucial role in the making-meaning process. Individuals seem to construct their convictions epistemologically before being able to integrate them into their identity (intrapersonal dimension) and into their relationships (interpersonal domain). “Even when crises emerged from the intrapersonal or interpersonal areas,” Baxter Magolda (2010) writes, “participants often initially dealt with them epistemologically” (p. 42). However, development in one dimension can help establish an internal foundation that can thus facilitate development among the other dimensions (Baxter Magolda, 2010).

One of Baxter Magolda’s (2001, 2010) major theoretical findings in the evolution of self-authorship was the interweaving nature of the epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of development and how they intersect to forge progression toward an internally based meaning-making system. She explained that as progress is made in one dimension, this created “tension” in another, thus provoking individuals to “actively work on the dimensions that were lagging behind” (Baxter Magolda, 2010, p. 42). Mezaros (2007) also offered insight into this interdependent development:

Participants shifted from “how you know” to “how I know” and in doing so began to choose their own beliefs. At the same time, “how I know” required determining who the “I” was. Intense self-reflection and interaction with others helped participants gain perspective on themselves and begin to choose their own values and identity. This emerging sense of self required renegotiation of existing relationships that had been built on external approval at the expense of personal needs and the creation of new mutual relationships consistent with the internal voice. (p. 11)

The interaction of the epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions helps individuals answer the following three *big* questions: (a) how do I know? (b) who am I? and (c) how am I in relationships with others? As answers become more complex, so does the meaning-making system, prompting a progression in the evolution of self-authorship.

Baxter Magolda (2004) identifies three sequential stages in the developmental journey toward self-authorship. These stages, grounded in her 22-year longitudinal study of young adult development and learning, are *following external formulas*, *the crossroads*, and *self-authorship*. Table 1 is a visual representation of the three stages.

Self-authorship, Baxter Magolda (2001, 2004) attests, cannot be achieved without progression in all developmental dimensions (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2009). For example, students who express “complex ways of knowing often struggled to use them until they developed complex ways of seeing themselves and relating with others” (Boes, Baxter Magolda, & Buckley, 2010, p. 10).

Following external formulas. The first stage, following external formulas, is embedded in Kegan’s (1994) third order of consciousness and represents where first year students often find themselves. Baxter Magolda (2009) uses this phrase to capture students’ approach to how they “decide what to believe, how to view themselves, and

Table 1

The Developmental Journey of Self-Authorship

Dimension	External Formulas	The Crossroads	Self-Authorship
Epistemological/ Cognitive	View knowledge as certain or partially certain, yielding reliance on authority as a source of knowledge; lack of internal basis for evaluating knowledge claims results in externally defined beliefs	Evolving awareness and acceptance of uncertainty and multiple perspectives; shift from accepting authority's knowledge claims to personal processes for adopting knowledge claims; recognize need to take responsibility for choosing beliefs	View knowledge as contextual; develop an internal belief system via constructing, evaluating, and interpreting judgments in light of available evidence and frames of reference
Intrapersonal	Lack of awareness of own values and social identity, lack of components of identity, and need for others' approval combine to yield an externally defined identity that is susceptible to changing external pressures	Evolving awareness of own values and sense of identity distinct from external others' perceptions; tension between emerging internal values and external pressures prompts self-exploration; recognize need to take responsibility for crafting own identity	Choose own values and identity in crafting an internally generated sense of self that regulates interpretation of experience and choices
Interpersonal	Dependent relations with similar others are source of identity and needed affirmation; frame participation in relationships as doing what will gain others' approval	Evolving awareness of limitations of dependent relationships; recognize need to bring own identity into constructing independent relationships; struggle to reconstruct or extract self from dependent relationships	Capacity to engage in authentic, interdependent relationships with diverse others in which self is not overshadowed by need for other' approval, mutually negotiating relational needs; genuinely taking others' perspectives into account without being consumed by them

Note. Adapted from *Learning Partnerships: Theory and Models of Practice to Educate for Self-Authorship* (pp. 12-13), by M. Baxter Magolda & P. M. King, 2004, Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. Copyright by Stylus Publishing, LLC.

how to construct relationships with others” (p. 628). As the name implies, students at this stage make meaning by relying on external influences, where knowledge is viewed as certain and there is heavy reliance on authorities to determine truth, the self is defined by others’ expectations of what is considered successful, and relationships are maintained by seeking approval from others (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2009, Boes et al., 2010). Such uncritical acceptance of external authority represents the embedded nature of the object in the meaning-making system (Kegan, 1994). In her research, Baxter Magolda (2001, 2004, 2009) found that following external formulas as the basis for the meaning-making system actually served college students well in terms of social integration and fitting in to collegiate life.

As students progress toward the later stage of following external formulas, they gain an awareness of multiple perspectives, which leads to a sense of uncertainty because there is a conflict between their own expectations and external expectations (Baxter Magolda, 2009). With this discomfort comes the realization that being the “audience” (Kegan, 1994, p. 132) to one’s experience is no longer adequate for creating meaning around knowledge, self, and relationships. Recognizing the shortcomings of operating under external influence is an important step to the next phase of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2009; Boes et al., 2010).

The crossroads. The crossroads is a pivotal stage in the journey toward self-authorship that usually occurs during the second year in college (Baxter Magolda, 1992). This is a transitional phase where assumptions about knowledge, identity, and relationships with others begin to unravel and individuals are “no longer able or willing

to depend on the unexamined trust in authority” (Baxter Magolda, 2009, p. 630). The crossroads is characterized by a realization of the dilemmas of externally defined ways and the recognition of the need to develop one’s own vision, define one’s own self, and to bring this self into relationships with others. In this shift, Abes and Jones (2004) identify that individuals “realize the limitations of stereotypes; feel frustrated by identity labels insufficient to describe how they made sense of who they were; and challenge other people’s expectations for whom they ought to or were allowed to be” (p. 621).

Pizzolato (2005) further elaborated on the crossroads and the importance of critical student experiences at this stage because they initiate the search for an internally defined self. Such critical experiences culminate into what Pizzolato (2005) calls a “provocative moment,” which represent a “jarring disequilibrium” in the individuals’ ways of knowing (p. 625). The basis for this moment builds on Baxter Magolda’s (2001) catalyzing experiences, which involve: (a) having to make a decision without the formula for success, or (b) the realization they were discontent in their present situations desiring to make changes, but “had to figure out what sorts of changes could be made and how to make them on their own” (as cited in Pizzolato, 2003, p. 798). Prior to experiencing this provocative moment, students may have been dissatisfied with following external formulas, but they did not have the capacity to act on this dissatisfaction to help them change their ways of knowing. It is the provocative moments, Pizzolato (2005) notes, which “led to commitment to, rather than only recognition of the need to turn inward in a search for self-definition” (p. 625).

Leading up to a provocative moment in the crossroads, individuals not only begin to listen to their own voice but they also begin to cultivate it based on their changing meaning-making system (Baxter Magolda, 2009; Pizzolato, 2005). Through this internal search for self-identification, individuals experienced discomfort because although the internal voice was emerging, it was not firmly rooted within them and thus was not strong enough for them to act upon (Baxter Magolda, 2009; Pizzolato, 2005). Moving out of the crossroads requires that this internal voice be brought to the foreground in order to mediate external influence and individualize meaning-making across a variety of circumstances (Baxter Magolda, 2009; Boes et al., 2010).

Self-authorship. As people move into authoring their lives, they begin to choose their own beliefs and values (epistemological), understand the self in context of external forces (intrapersonal), and mutually negotiate needs in relationships (interpersonal) (Baxter Magolda, 2001). While self-authored individuals define their own beliefs, identity, and relationships, they do so while critically evaluating and considering the perspectives of others (Baxter Magolda, 2008). This ongoing inner reflection provokes a grounded internal voice, which mediates how individuals make sense of their experiences and cultivates a self-authored system (Baxter Magolda, 2008).

An analysis of Baxter Magolda's (2008) study participant narratives revealed that building a self-authored system requires three key elements: (a) trusting the internal voice, (b) building an internal foundation, and (c) securing internal commitments. The first building block, *trusting the internal voice*, is characterized by the realization that there is a difference between reality and one's reaction to it, and that individuals take

ownership of how they react to external events (Baxter Magolda, 2008). When this distinction is made in the meaning-making system, individuals exercise flexibility and “move around—rather than try to change—obstacles they encountered” (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 279). As individuals reflect on the confusion, fear, and ambiguity brought forth by the search for their internal voice, they emerge with a “clearer vision of themselves and greater confidence in their ability to author their own lives” (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 280). With the newly established confidence in trusting their internal voice in relation to their epistemological, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions, and within various contexts, individuals are able to develop the next element of their self-authored system.

When individuals develop the next element, *building internal foundations*, they construct a personal philosophy or framework that informs how they now react to reality (Baxter Magolda, 2008). This construction often involves reflecting on beliefs, identity, and relationships and adjusting one’s life to ensure it is in agreement with their internal voice. Progress in building an internal foundation ebbs and flows, because as individuals establish a foundation, they may find their internal voice needs to be refined and is not yet stable enough to support a self-authored system. The cycle of reflecting on the internal voice strengthens the foundation upon which self-authored thinking can flourish. As individuals were building their internal foundation, “they perceived they were living their convictions”, but in fact these convictions were “in their heads rather than in their hearts” (Baxter Magolda, 2008, p. 80). It is at this stage, when individuals strive to move from merely admiring their convictions to actually living them that internal commitments need to be better secured.

Baxter Magolda (2008) identified the third element of building a self-authored system as *securing internal commitments*, which is defined as “crossing over” (p. 280) from admiring internal commitments to embodying them and establishing them as the “core of their being” (p. 281). At this point, living convictions was “as natural and as necessary as breathing” (p. 281) because personal authority was integrated into their understanding of reality. Securing trust in the internal foundation often liberates individuals because they are no longer “constrained by fear of things they could not control and trusted that they could make the most of what they could control” (p. 281). With such internal security, they tend to be more open to reconstructing and further developing their internal foundation, which reinforces the self-authored system.

The evolution of self-authorship substantiated by these three elements demonstrates that as individuals come to integrate internal commitments into their personhood, their meaning-making system becomes more complex. This increasing complexity related to the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains allows individuals to construct their internal system through analysis of multiple perspectives (Baxter Magolda, 2007, 2008). Understanding that such consideration of multiple perspectives is critical in today’s diverse society, King and Baxter Magolda (2005) further developed the evolution of self-authorship to create a new developmental model of intercultural maturity.

Development of Intercultural Maturity

While institutions strive to produce self-authored graduates, this is done so in the context of today’s interdependent national and international societies. Although there are

several theories that describe the process of gaining intercultural competence, one developmental model, intercultural maturity, is closely aligned with the journey toward self-authorship (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005; King, Baxter Magolda, & Masse, 2011). Building on the theory of self-authorship, King and Baxter Magolda (2005) established the three-dimensional trajectory of intercultural maturity to represent the developmental capacity to “[understand] and [act] in ways that are interculturally aware and appropriate” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 573). In other words, this model identifies the capacities that are necessary for demonstrating intercultural competence (Salisbury, 2011).

Using Kegan’s (1994) model of lifespan development as a foundation and expanding on the evolution of self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001, 2007), King and Baxter Magolda’s (2005) model intercultural maturity encompasses the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of human development as well as their interconnections. Intercultural maturity reflects

the developmental capacity that undergirds the ways learners come to make meaning, that is, the way they approach, understand, and act on their concerns. Thus, demonstrating one’s intercultural skills requires several types of expertise, including complex understanding of cultural differences (cognitive dimension), capacity to accept and not feel threatened by cultural differences (intrapersonal dimension), and capacity to function interdependently with diverse others (interpersonal dimension). (p. 574)

Achieving intercultural competence or intercultural maturity occurs in a series of three levels of development—initial, intermediate, and mature—and requires increasingly complex developmental capacities across all three dimensions.

Similar to the evolution of self-authorship, the developmental dimensions that guide progression along the trajectory of intercultural maturity are interrelated. King and Baxter Magolda (2005) describe this trajectory in a three-by-three matrix. Each row in the matrix represents a different dimension of development and the columns point out similarities in to meaning-making structures within the developmental level (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Those in the early level of intercultural maturity “accept authorities’ views (cognitive dimension), define themselves through others’ views and expectations (intrapersonal dimensions), and act in relationships to acquire approval (interpersonal dimension)” (p. 582). Table 2 displays this model in a three-by-three matrix. The middle stage represents a time of confusion and change, where there is an awareness of others’ perspectives, a sense of tension in terms of identity, and an exploration in interacting with diverse others. Interculturally mature individuals are able to use multiple cultural frames in understanding knowledge, their identity, and relationships with others (Baxter Magolda, 2005).

Initial level. Similar to Baxter Magolda’s (2001) following external formulas in the evolution of self-authorship, the initial level of development is characterized by a heavy reliance on external authorities to define how and what individuals know, how they view stage, one does not have the ability to effectively deal with difference. In fact, difference here is considered a threat and thus differing views are seen as wrong, there is a need for “affirmation from dependent relationships with others” (King & Baxter-Magolda, 2005, p. 583), and there is a lack of awareness of one’s values and social identity. Because approval is crucial to maintaining relationships, difference is avoided

Table 2

A Three-Dimensional Developmental Trajectory of Intercultural Maturity

Domain of Development and Related Theories	Initial Level of Development	Intermediate Level of Development	Mature Level of Development
<i>Cognitive</i> (Baxter Magolda, 1992, 2001; Belenky et al., 1986; M. Bennett, 1993; Fischer, 1980; Kegan, 1994; King & Kirchner, 1994, 2004; Perry, 1968)	Assumes knowledge is certain and categorizes knowledge claims as right or wrong; is naïve about different cultural practices and values; resists challenges to one's own beliefs and views different cultural perspectives as wrong	Evolving awareness and acceptance of uncertainty and multiple perspectives; ability to shift from accepting authority's knowledge claims to personal processes for adopting knowledge claims	Ability to consciously shift perspectives and behaviors into an alternative cultural worldview and to use cultural frames
<i>Intrapersonal</i> (Cass, 1984; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Cross, 1991; D'Augeli, 1994; Helms, 1995; Josselson, 1987, 1996; Kegan, 1994; Marcia, 1980; Parks, 2000; Phinney, 1990; Torres, 2003)	Lack of awareness of own values and intersection of social (racial, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation) identity; lack of understanding of other cultures; externally defined identity yields externally defined beliefs that regulate interpretation of experiences and guide choices; difference is viewed as a threat to identity	Evolving sense of identity as distinct from external others' perception; tension between external and internal definitions prompts self-exploration of values, racial identity, beliefs; immersion in own culture; recognizes legitimacy of other cultures	Capacity to create an internal self that openly engages challenges to one's views and beliefs and that considers social identities (race, class, gender, etc.) in a global and national context; integrates aspects of self into one's identity
<i>Interpersonal</i> (M. Bennett, 1993; Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Gilligan, 1982; Kegan, 1994; Kohlberg, 1984; Noddings, 1984)	Dependent relations with similar others is a primary source of identity and social affirmation; perspectives of different others are viewed as wrong; awareness of how social systems affect group norms and intergroup differences is lacking; view social problems egocentrically, no recognition of society as an organized entity	Willingness to interact with diverse others and refrain from judgment; relies on independent relations in which multiple perspectives exist (but are not coordinated); self is often overshadowed by need for others' approval. Begins to explore how social systems affect group norms and intergroup relations	Capacity to engage in meaningful, interdependent relationships with diverse others that are grounded in an understanding and appreciation for human differences; understanding of ways individual and community practices affect social systems; willing to work for the rights of others

Note. Adapted from "A developmental model of intercultural maturity," by P. M. King & M. B. Magolda, 2005, *Journal of College Student Development*, 46(6), 571-592. Retrieved from https://muse.jhu.edu/journals/journal_of_college_student_development/v046/46.6king.html

because it serves as a threat to those social bonds (Baxter Magolda, 2005). There is a lack of one's own culture as well as other cultures and often times individuals at the initial level have not yet examined their own ethnic identity, which then impacts how they make sense of those who are both similar to and different from them

Intermediate level. The intermediate level represents a time of transition that often occurs during the second year, where individuals endure the challenge of shifting away from the safety of relying on external authorities toward negotiating the uncertainties of changing awareness. Just as individuals experience in the crossroads (Baxter Magolda, 2004; King et al., 2011), those at the intermediate level of intercultural maturity experience a shift from external to internal self-definition. There is an evolving awareness and acceptance of knowledge uncertainty and multiple perspectives, helping individuals to be open to the multiple realities lived by diverse others. An exploration of one's perceptions allows for an acceptance of the legitimacy of other cultures and a "willingness to interact with others and refrain from judgment" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 576). As this self-exploration takes place, individuals also learn about their own ethnic and cultural identity and begin to steer away from identifying oneself through the eyes of others and turn inward for self-definition.

Mature level. The mature level articulates the developmental capacities necessary to demonstrate intercultural competence (Salisbury, 2011). King and Baxter Magolda (2005) define cognitive maturity as the ability to "consciously shift perspectives and behaviors into an alternative cultural worldview" and "use multiple cultural frames" (p. 587). Maturity in the intrapersonal dimension enables individuals to have the capacity

to create an internal self that “considers social identities (race, class, gender, etc.) in a global and national context” (p. 576) and integrates these aspects of self into their identity. Interpersonal maturity allows one to openly engage in challenges to one’s beliefs while having “interdependent relationships with diverse others that are grounded in an understanding and appreciation for difference” (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 576). Maturity across all three dimensions reflects intercultural understanding leads to interculturally aware action that will in turn help individuals succeed in college and beyond (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

Intercultural Maturity as Desired College Outcome

Learning outcomes for institutions today aim to prepare students for the realities of the 21st century (Association of American Colleges and Universities [AAC&U], 2007). In an effort to summarize key outcomes of liberal education, the AAC&U launched an initiative called Liberal Education and America’s Promise (LEAP)—Excellence for Everyone as a Nation Goes to College—to generate research on key outcomes of liberal education that every student should be afforded. Findings from more than a decade of data collection were published in their 2007 report titled *College Learning for the New Global Century*, where the LEAP National Leadership Council made recommendations on four essential learning outcomes that help guide institutions to meet the challenges of the new global century (AAC&U, 2007). Infused in almost all of the outcomes was the need to develop intercultural maturity at some level, which is necessary to navigate today’s increasingly complex and interdependent world and institutions are held accountable for creating an educational environment that fosters such

development (AAC&U, 2007; Baxter Magolda, 2007; Hodge, Baxter Magolda & Haynes, 2009).

Creating the Conditions to Promote Self-Authorship and Intercultural Maturity

At the conclusion of their article on intercultural maturity, King and Baxter Magolda (2005) raise an important yet practical question. They ask, “what educational practices promote growth toward self-authorship in all three dimensions simultaneously to support intercultural maturity?” (p. 589). Baxter Magolda (2001, 2009) and colleagues set out to answer questions such as this through their research on the development of self-authorship and intercultural maturity in young adults. Data from this 22-year longitudinal study identified institutional practices that foster self-authorship and ultimately, intercultural maturity, which laid the foundation for educational policy and practice in liberal arts colleges nation-wide (Baxter Magolda, 2001; Boes et al., 2010).

Findings revealed an important underlying educational principle: in order to maximize learning from engaging with difference, institutions must intentionally support students as they negotiate discomfort brought about by the disruption in their current beliefs and values (King et al., 2011). Inherent in the institutional support provided is guided reflection and the ongoing reframing of the meaning-making structure, which fosters awareness and understanding of diverse perspectives. The Wabash National Study (WNS), which makes up a portion of Baxter Magolda’s 22-year study, examined the educational practices and student experiences that promoted growth in self-authorship.

An analysis of the WNS data by King et al. (2011) revealed that while students experienced discomfort as a result of intergroup anxiety, it was their level of intercultural

maturity that influenced the nature of the discomfort and how students responded to it. The discomfort experienced by students at initial levels of intercultural maturity led them to feel “stuck” because they did not have the experience interacting with diverse others or sufficient institutional support to work through their anxiety (King et al., 2011, p. 479). While students acknowledged their dissonance, it did not spark forward movement toward maturity. Those at the intermediate level experienced discomfort when their beliefs were challenged, but this led to continued questioning about their own beliefs and the recognition of the legitimacy of other’s beliefs and values. This tension between internal and external forces left students “unsure of how to sort out . . . contradictory beliefs” (King et al., 2011, p. 479) and unsure of how to fully adjust their frame of reference. Students at the advanced level of intercultural maturity actually experienced the benefits of dissonance. Although interactions with diverse peers may have been uncomfortable, dissonance prompted deep reflection, helping individuals situate their experience in a larger multicultural context (King et al., 2011). As students experience dissonance, no matter their level of intercultural maturity, institutions need to provide the appropriate scaffolding and guidance so students can understand how to make sense of their discomfort and develop more complex interpretive lenses.

Another educational implication of Baxter Magolda’s long-term study was the recognition that there was a lack of attention to the dimension of self in higher education practice (Baxter Magolda, 2003). To help institutions shift the focus from passive knowledge construction, as evidenced in the following external formulas stage phase in the evolution of self-authorship, to advocating that students take a more active role in

reframing knowledge, Baxter Magolda developed the Learning Partnerships Model ([LPM]; Baxter Magolda, 2003, 2004). The LPM is a learning structure that supports the development of self-authorship through the application of the following three key principles: (a) validating learners' capacity as knowledge constructors; (b) situating learning in the learners' experience; and (c) defining learning as mutually constructing meaning (Baxter Magolda, 2004). Baxter Magolda (2003) argued that the traditional "bifurcation of the curriculum and co- curriculum" or the role separation of academic and student affairs, "separates students' minds and identities" (p. 232). She advocates for a partnership between student affairs and academic affairs to offer students a holistic educational experience both inside and outside the classroom. This model, from which intercultural maturity draws its underlying principles (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005), places the self at the core of meaning-making and interactions with others.

Building on the LPM, Pizzolato (2005) argues that institutions need to create a learning environment that promotes provocation accompanied by a support system at the crossroads, the most crucial stage of self-authorship. These *provocative moments* push students to "revisit their own goals and conceptions of self as well as consider multiple perspectives" (Pizzolato, 2005, p. 638). Provocative moments result when an individual's way of knowing is challenged, causing an inner disequilibrium induced by a tension between external pressures and one's desire to develop beliefs internally. Pizzolato (2005) suggests that merely recognizing provocative moments is an "insufficient condition for movement along the self-authorship trajectory" (p. 637). Students need help in extracting themselves from the moment so they are "able to reflect

on and take control of their discontent” (p. 637) as experienced while in the crossroads. By using the guiding principles of the LPM such as validating one’s capacity to know, institutions place students at the center of knowledge construction and can promote the reflection required to achieve self-authorship. Outside of the classroom, resident hall advisors, with their frequent contact with students in everyday life, can help them “process living experiences in ways that push them toward provocative moments” (pp. 638-639). Thus institutions, Pizzolato (2005) suggests, are well positioned to capitalize on the provocative moments that college life presents to students and implement interventions that can foster self-authorship development.

An educational practice that embodies the intentional promotion of self-authorship and intercultural maturity is Ortiz and Rhoads’ (2000) framework for multicultural education (Baxter Magolda, 2003; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). This framework actively engages students in “understanding the concept of culture and their own role in its creation” (Baxter Magolda, 2003, p. 238) in five sequential steps. Each step becomes more complex as individuals advance towards intercultural maturity. Step one, understanding culture, introduces students at the initial level of intercultural maturity to new ways of thinking about diversity using a low-risk approach. This includes observing culture and participating in group reflection and discussions on how one makes sense of culture. As students advance towards the intermediate level, steps two (learning about other cultures) and three (recognizing and deconstructing the White culture) encourage learners to move beyond a superficial exploration of cultural differences and engage in a deeper understanding of how a dominant culture can affect perceptions of

these differences (Baxter Magolda, 2003; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Individuals at the mature level of intercultural maturity have the capacity to reach step four, recognizing the legitimacy of multiple cultures, and finally developing a multicultural outlook. Each step of the multicultural framework situates the learner as central to the meaning-making process and in increasingly complex contexts.

Promoting studying abroad has also served as an institutional practice that can foster the development of self-authorship and intercultural maturity among students. Findings from the WNS indicated that engagement in high-impact activities such as study abroad helped further capacities related to a self-authored mind (Renn & Reason, 2013). As part of their three-tier framework for intentionally fostering student learning, Taylor and Haynes (2008) identified study abroad as a college experience that helps students achieve desirable developmental goals that span the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions. The three tiers mirror the three stages of self-authorship: following external formulas, the crossroads, and self-authorship. Study abroad is suggested as an educational experience to advance development in both tiers two, or the crossroads, and three, or self-authorship (Taylor & Haynes, 2008).

Culture shock, a sensation often experienced while studying abroad, can also play a role in the enhancement of self-authorship and intercultural competence. In a study exploring the impact of culture shock, Fernandez (as cited in King & Baxter Magolda, 2005) found that educational guides can provide the necessary support to help students make meaning of their experiences as they negotiate dissonance caused by culture shock. For some students, culture shock may serve as Pizzolato's (2005) provocative moment to

help them forge ahead on their journey toward a self-authored mind. Research on the benefits of study abroad will be presented in a later section of this literature review.

Creating learning environments that present learning opportunities for complex cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal developments is the responsibility of faculty, administrators, and student affairs professionals alike (Baxter Magolda, 2003, 2004, 2007). While institutions may put in place different practices to foster self-authorship and intercultural maturity, a commonality across these approaches is providing the appropriate structure to encourage students to interact across difference and engage them in reflection so they can reorganize their meaning-making systems in more complex ways (Baxter Magolda, 2003). Most often, this reflection and analysis take place amongst peers, which encourages students to consider and learn from diverse perspectives. This journey is not an easy one by any means, and Baxter Magolda (2001, 2004, 2007) urges that if we want students to achieve more complex levels of meaning-making, it is necessary to fully acknowledge the struggle and the developmental context that influences their path.

The particular developmental context of sophomore students is the focus of this study because it is said to be the most critical year in the development toward self-authorship and, thus, intercultural maturity (Schaller, 2005). Sophomores often find themselves moving from following external formulas to the crossroads in the development self-authorship and from initial to intermediate stages in the development of intercultural maturity. Inherent in this progression is a shift from relying on external forces to a desire for internal definition, which is the initial turning point in the journey

toward self-authorship and intercultural maturity. As sophomores encounter cultural difference that challenges their way of thinking, their view of self, and the way they relate to others, they negotiate a movement toward self-authorship and essentially, intercultural maturity. The next section details the experience of sophomore students and the challenges they face in this pivotal year.

Sophomore Student Experience

Research on the college sophomore student experience and the challenges this population faces has continued to grow. As institutions evaluate retention rates and overall student satisfaction, several may encounter the common trend that the second highest attrition rate occurs in the sophomore year (Gardner et al., 2010). While efforts to improve the first-year are well documented in literature and in institutional practice, the importance of the second year in college has only entered the spotlight within the last decade. With the motivation to better understand the complexities of the sophomore year, the University of South Carolina's National Resource Center (NRC) for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition expanded their mission to advocate for sophomore student success. The NRC has generated texts dedicated to providing institutions with ongoing research on how to support students who are struggling in their sophomore year. These include *Visible Solutions for Invisible Students: Helping Sophomores Succeed* (Schreiner & Patingale, 2000), *Shedding Light on Sophomores: Explorations into the Second College Year* (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007), and *Helping Sophomores Succeed: Understanding and Improving the Second-Year Experience* (Hunter et al., 2010).

In addition to publishing texts to increase awareness of the challenges of the sophomore year, the NRC has also begun to generate their series of Reports on College Transition, which are vehicles for reporting the current status of second-year initiatives on campuses nation-wide. The most recent report in 2008 included data from over 300 colleges and universities, including private and public as well as 2- and 4-year institutions (Keup, Gahagan, & Goodwin, 2010). Of the 115 institutions that reported having sophomore initiatives, 92.2% are 4-year institutions, indicating that sophomore programming at 2-year institutions is extremely low. The disparity is less pronounced between institutional affiliation where 59.6% of private institutions and 40.4% of public institutions have sophomore initiatives. Initiatives offered in public institutions typically include financial aid programs and learning communities while more selective private schools provide print publications, class events, online resources, and retreats. Information disseminated in this report is meant to provide higher education officials “insight into specific efforts, the administration of these efforts, related assessment data, and plans for future initiatives” (Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007, p. 13).

The fundamental literature around the sophomore year as well institutional data reporting speak to the rationale for turning attention to the second year experience in college. The sophomore year is unique and presents a host of challenges to students. Academically, students are under pressure to declare a major, which ultimately pushes them to determine possible career paths. Within the social realm, sophomores seek to develop more meaningful relationships with peers that extend beyond the superficial nature in which they were formed. Developmentally, sophomores move through a period

of self-exploration, where they examine their life purpose and attempt to understand how they fit into college life and into the world at large (Schaller, 2010).

Overall, the second year is a time of transition defined by what Mezirow terms as “disorienting dilemmas” (as cited in Lindholm, 2010, p. 205). These disorienting dilemmas include attempting to balance the academic, social, and developmental changes that sophomores undergo. As students navigate these changes, they are reflecting on the self and prior assumptions, which tend to trigger an internal crisis defined by some as the *sophomore slump* (Lindholm, 2010).

Sophomore Slump

The sophomore slump is considered to be a time of struggle for second year students. When students enter college, institutions offer extensive programming aimed to help them transition into college. This targeted programming, both academic and social in nature, initiates connections between the students and their university and can lead to increased retention rates (Hendel, 2007; Levitz, Noel, & Richter, 1999; Schaller, 2005; Trotter & Roberts, 2006). However, studies show that after students complete their freshman year, the support they anticipated receiving in their second year often ceases (Boivin et al., 2000; Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000; Schaller, 2010). As students begin to realize and understand the demands of the sophomore year and the void in institutional support that might help them meet these demands, feelings of overwhelming anxiety can paralyze them in academic and social endeavors.

The term sophomore slump was originally coined by Freedman (1956) to describe a time of academic disengagement and overall dissatisfaction with the college experience.

As students enter their second year, the newness of the university experience has worn off and students become aware of the fading institutional attention they are receiving. Feelings of stress, confusion, lack of motivation, and overall disconnectedness cultivated by diminishing support systems contribute to the sophomore slump (Boivin et al., 2000; Gahagan & Hunter, 2006; Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000; Schaller, 2010). In comparison with their freshman year, sophomores also notice they have fewer opportunities to engage with faculty and fewer leadership opportunities on campus (Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000). These students tend to feel let down by their institution, where expectations of college are not met by university offerings.

Sophomores are said to be “between in every respect” (Boivin et al., 2000, p. 2) because they have yet to establish strong connections to their university. Academically, these students may not have determined a path of study and as a result may not identify with a specific academic school, cohort, or faculty body. Delays in declaring a major postpone appropriate academic advising and the support they may receive in narrowing their career choices (Pattengale & Schreiner, 2000). In such a time where academic guidance and support is needed, sophomore students are often left to navigate an intensified academic landscape on their own (Boivin et al., 2000; Tobolowsky, 2008). Socially, sophomore students tend to feel dissatisfied with their relationships amongst peers and seek to develop ones that are deeper and more meaningful (Schaller, 2005; Tobolowsky, 2008). Lack of institutional programming to support sophomore students as they encounter challenges intensifies the academic, social, and developmental factors that contribute to the sophomore slump. These factors, each of which can be attributed to the

academic and social systems as well as the developmental dimension of the college experience can influence overall student satisfaction and departure decisions (Tinto, 1993).

Factors Affecting Sophomore Satisfaction

Research findings indicate that some of the factors influencing the sophomore slump and overall student satisfaction center on issues of student development and academic and social integration (Bean, 2005; Gardner, Pattengale, & Schreiner, 2000; Schaller 2005, 2010; Tinto, 1993). The more integrated students are within the academic and social systems of the university experience and the more supported they are developmentally, the greater the likelihood that they will experience institutional satisfaction and remain enrolled in a university (Schaller, 2005, 2010; Tinto, 1993). Thus, it is important to identify these factors and how they can either foster or impede overall engagement.

Academic factors. Sophomore students experience satisfaction with the intellectual environment of a university when certain conditions are present. Of the studies conducted on the sophomore experience, one salient theme that emerged is the importance of faculty interaction and advising as they negotiate the developmental stage of focused exploration (Garunke & Woosley, 2005; Juillierat, 2000; Schaller, 2005). In focused exploration, students investigate areas of study, career choices, and life goals (Schreiner, 2010). Faculty members are integral to supporting sophomores during this phase and their active participation in student life is critical.

In 2007, the National Resource Center for the First Year Experience and Students in Transition conducted a study on sophomores to identify factors that helped them thrive (Schaller, 2010). The frequency of student-faculty interaction, both inside and outside of the classroom, was found to be a “highly significant predictor of intent to enroll, intent to graduate, and of students’ perceiving their institution as a worthwhile investment” (Schreiner, 2010, p. 49). In another study, Garunke and Woosley (2005) found that “extent to which sophomores were satisfied with . . . opportunities to interact with faculty and the extent to which [they] felt . . . faculty were concerned with their academic success had an impact on . . . academic performance” (p. 270). When student-faculty relationships are created outside of the classrooms, they connect on a more personal level and faculty engage students in dialogue about more immediate plans such as identifying a major as well as future plans such as career choices (Schreiner, 2010).

Research has shown that the more opportunities students have to interact with faculty members both inside and outside the classroom, the higher the likelihood they will feel supported and therefore be satisfied with the academic system of a university (Gardner et al., 2000; Garunke & Woosley, 2006; Schaller, 2005; Schreiner, 2010; Tobolowsky, 2008). Developmentally, if students are in focused exploration, they need to be supported by faculty as they consider paths of study and the implications these choices have on future careers. Schaller (2005, 2007) notes that students in focused exploration have yet to develop their purpose for going to college, often leading to feelings of ambiguity toward their college experience. Faculty presence and guidance can help students find clarity as they explore these important decisions.

Social factors. Satisfaction within the social system, research suggests, is the strongest contributor to overall student satisfaction with the university experience (Schaller, 2010). As freshmen, students strive to establish friendships as a means to make social connections. Such relationships, particularly at residential universities, are often made out of convenience through freshman housing arrangements (Tinto, 1993). However, as students enter their sophomore year and the stage of focused exploration, they begin to re-evaluate friendships (Schaller, 2005). In seeking their purpose for going to college and finding their place within an institution, sophomores yearn to formulate deeper, more meaningful relationships. Establishing meaningful relationships can lead to feelings of fitting in, and of being part of the greater university community (Schaller, 2005; Tinto, 1993). High levels of integration within the social system are especially important in the second year. It is the relationships that stem from positive social interactions that tightly weave students into the fabric of their institution.

Developmental factors. The developmental factors that can affect sophomores and their satisfaction at a university are detailed in the next section.

Sophomore Student Development

Although there is extensive scholarship focused on college student development, there is only a relatively small body of research dedicated specifically to sophomore student development and the issues they face during this pivotal year. Baxter Magolda's (1999, 2001) longitudinal research on the development of self-authorship in college students has served as a critical foundation upon which sophomore-specific researchers, have built developmental theories (Schaller, 2005, 2007, 2010). Along Baxter Magolda's

evolution of self-authorship as discussed in the previous section, the developmental issues sophomore students tend to face situate them in the crossroads stage of self-authorship.

The sophomore year and the journey toward self-authorship. The crossroads stage in the journey toward self-authorship is considered, similar to the sophomore year, as a time of transition. It is a time where students feel frustrated with the dilemmas of their externally defined ways and begin to recognize the need to develop one's own vision, define one's own self, and to bring this self into relationships with others (Baxter Magolda, 2001). This stage tends to be characterized by discontent, where students are dissatisfied or frustrated with following external formulas and seek self-definition. As one's internal voice begins to emerge, so does a sense of tension as one attempts to root this voice within one's meaning-making system, identity, and relationships. The crossroads can be compared to what Schaller (2005) defines as focused exploration, which will be explained in the following section.

Schaller's stages of sophomore student development. One researcher, Molly Schaller (2005, 2007, 2010), has made considerable contributions to the betterment of understanding of this population. Her 2005 study on sophomore students has laid important groundwork upon which several researchers have begun to build. Schaller's research revealed that there are four stages in which sophomore students might move. These stages are: (a) random exploration, (b) focused exploration, (c) tentative choices, and (d) commitment. This process, based on developmental theories by Chickering and Reisser (1993) and Baxter Magolda (1992, 2001), is sequential in nature and takes into

account the psychosocial and cognitive changes that occur during the sophomore year (Schaller, 2007).

Random exploration. Students usually experience the first stage, random exploration, when they enter college or during the transition from the first year into the second year (Schaller 2005, 2007, 2010). During this stage, the new college environment causes students to begin experiencing their world in a new way. Random exploration is a time when “students go about the process of investigating what college has to offer, expressing their freedom and autonomy, and meeting new people” (Schaller, 2010, pp. 8-69). Students are aware of the future choices that have to be made in regards to declaring a major and selecting a career path, but they delay such decision making and tend to fall into decisions that are convenient (Schaller, 2005, 2007, 2010). However, their reliance on authorities to guide them in decision-making becomes challenged when “faculty members contradict one another or when students build relationships with others who are different and previously judged as unacceptable” (Schaller, 2010, p. 69). Students now need to “find ways to integrate these new experiences with their old way of seeing the world” (p. 69). As this integration takes place, students move from a non-directed to a more directed experience (Schaller, 2005, 2007).

Focused exploration. During focused exploration, the second stage and the phase in which second year students remain the longest, the pressures of the second year come into play and students begin to experience “frustration with their current relationships, with themselves, or with their academic experience” (Schaller, 2005, p. 18). This parallels the crossroads, where there is a desire for self-direction and self-definition.

Looming expectations to declare a major and narrow down future career paths brew feelings of anxiety because students recognize that they need to approach decision making with more intention than they previously did in random exploration. Some students have the life experiences that help them develop a purpose in college and realize these expectations. These individuals move through focused exploration more quickly (Schaller, 2005, 2007). However, those without such experiences struggle with these expectations because they have yet to develop their purpose in college. Schaller notes that these students who are still developing this key identity issue are at the greatest risk because the “structure of academia pushes decisions onto [them]” (Schaller, 2007, p. 9) when they are not developmentally ready to negotiate them.

The length of time that students remain in focused exploration increases anxiety and the pressure to make decisions (Schaller, 2005, 2007). As students reflect on past, present, and future choices and associations, they attempt to, similarly as in the crossroads, “resolve key issues regarding self-definition, selection of key relationships, and future direction” (Schaller, 2007, p. 9). Alternatively, Schaller (2005) found that remaining in this stage for longer periods of time was not necessarily harmful to their development. Reflecting on their place in the world and “how it relates to their life regarding their sense of self, their view of learning, and their future . . . requires that students stay in the search, engage in self-reflection, and fully explore their options for a life decision” (p. 10). Extensive consideration helps students arrive at more thoughtful, intentional options.

Tentative choices. While in the third stage, tentative choices, students tend to see their future more clearly and feel more responsible and mature (Schaller 2005, 2007). After spending time exploring options and reflecting on personal fit of such options, students begin to make decisions that guide them throughout their college careers. Although at this stage they may continue to modify decisions, they “gain a new knowledge about themselves and the world around them” (Schaller, 2007, p. 9) which can later help students arrive to a point of certainty in college.

Commitment. According to Schaller (2005, 2007, 2010), few students reach the final stage, commitment, in their sophomore year. Here, students are confident in their decisions and in their sense of self and are involved in activities that relate to their future path. Although students strive for commitment, if they arrive at this stage too quickly they may have missed an integral period of reflection. Choices may have been made to escape the tedious nature of exploration and to find relief in their search (Schaller, 2007). Schaller (2005) cautions that, in this fast progression, students may have ignored or denied themselves other alternatives. As a result, students may revisit these options at a later age.

Regardless of the stage that sophomore students are in, Schaller (2005) recommends that institutions design optimal learning environments that provide developmentally appropriate support to their students. She identifies focused exploration as a time when sophomores tend to feel most overwhelmed with the anxiety of decision-making. Thus, providing opportunities for exploration and structured reflection are crucial for promoting development (Schaller, 2005, 2007).

As institutions consider intentional initiatives aimed at sophomore students, the academic, social, and developmental needs of this population should be at the forefront of program design. Institutional efforts that do not incorporate needs in these three areas concurrently are criticized as ineffective measures; they are fragmented in nature, where the focus is on isolated factors that contribute to student departure instead of having a comprehensive focus on the various integrated issues that influence a student's decision to remain enrolled at a university (Seidman, 2005; Tinto, 1993; Tobolowsky, 2008). In response, researchers make recommendations on how integrated programs can address the several issues that sophomore students face.

Recommendations for Sophomore Initiatives

Increasing sophomore attrition has called attention to the absence of support institutions provide to these students. The void, however, is beginning to fill as institutions implement programs aimed to provide opportunities for academic and social integration. Programs geared toward academic integration tend to focus on career planning, major selection, and academic advising, while programs geared toward social integration tend to focus on areas of student engagement such as student government, service-learning, cultural events, and student mentoring (Evenbeck & Hamilton, 2010; Gordon, 2010; Gore & Hunter, 2010; Tobolowsky, 2008). Reoccurring recommendations touch on themes that foster community building, social engagement, student-faculty interaction, academic engagement, and leadership both inside and outside of the classroom (Evenbeck & Hamilton, 2010; Schaller, 2005; Schreiner, 2010; Tobolowsky, 2008). To take these recommendations a step further, Evenbeck and

Hamilton (2010) recommend that institutions provide opportunities for the “integration of experiences” (p. 116), where learning is connected to the real world. One of the recommendations they make is participating in a study abroad program.

Study abroad. Researchers recommend study abroad programming as another means of fusing the academic and social components into one comprehensive institutional approach (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Montrose, 2002; Young, 2008). Academically, study abroad programs enhance intellectual engagement. The experiential learning opportunities afforded by study abroad allow students to take what they learn in the classroom and immediately apply it to their international experience (Montrose, 2002). The daily out-of-class interactions students have with the host culture tends to push students out of their comfort zones, which often draws them closer to their peers on site. These unifying experiences can lead to the development of deeper, more meaningful social relationships amongst the peer group (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Montrose, 2002; Young, 2008). Particularly, faculty-led study abroad programs where small cohorts of students take a course together abroad provide the ideal structure that that is developmentally appropriate for sophomore students (Sutton & Leslie, 2010).

Study abroad as a holistic approach to support sophomores. The research affirming the benefits of study abroad programs is vast (Dhanatya, Furutu, Kheiltash, & Rust, 2008; Espiritu, 2009; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Montrose, 2002; Sutton & Leslie, 2010; Young, 2008). These benefits have been assessed and documented in both qualitative and quantitative studies and the effects of such programs have proven to be highly positive almost across the board (Espiritu, 2009). Effects can include “a

substantial increase in a student's interest in, understanding of, and sensitivity toward other cultures; a sense of increased independence; and overall enhanced personal development" (Espiritu, 2009, p. 35). Study abroad has also proven to promote self-authorship and intercultural maturity (Braskamp et al., 2009; Doyle, 2009), two essential learning outcomes that undergird the sophomore student experience.

Focused exploration, the developmental stage that sophomore students remain in for the longest period of time, is a time when students make a shift to a more intentional search for insight into relationships, the future, and self (Schaller, 2010). As students examine their developing self, they become more critical of the information that they have taken as truth and assess the influences that others have had on them. In this healthy critique, "they search for direction and begin the process of becoming open to multiple perspectives about the world" (Schaller, 2010, p. 70). These processes are signs that sophomores are moving away from an externally defined self (Schaller 2010) and are thus progressing toward self-authorship. In order to make these transitions, they need to be provided an environment that optimizes learning and incorporates ongoing structured exploration and reflection (Schaller, 2005). Because self-reflection is difficult and usually does not come naturally, institutions can incorporate it in both curricular and co-curricular activities.

Some researchers suggest that the international environment and context of study abroad programs can serve as an optimal environment for such exploration and reflection to take place (Evenbeck & Hamilton, 2010; Kehl & Morris, 2008; Schaller, 2005, 2010; Sutton & Leslie, 2010). Study abroad programs integrate in-class and out-of-class

experiences, which extend learning beyond the classroom walls and create a strong cohesion between the classroom and the real world experiences students have while abroad (Evenbeck & Hamilton, 2010; Sutton & Leslie, 2010). The structure of study abroad programs can facilitate high levels of meaningful interactions between students and faculty and also between students and their peers (Sutton & Leslie, 2010; Young, 2008). While abroad, faculty can provide extra support for students as they explore and reflect on academics, career choices, and issues of identity, purpose, and self-realization (Schaller, 2005). The second year is an ideal time for students to participate in study abroad programs because they encourage “the kinds of exploration, reflection, and engagement that many . . . feel are particularly critical to sophomore success” (Sutton & Leslie, 2010, p. 163). Thus, if study abroad programs can provide sophomore students with opportunities for self-reflection and critical thinking, these programs may be an effective way to help foster development and should be explored as a potential institutional response to the needs of this population.

Study Abroad Programming

Establishing study abroad as an integral component of undergraduate education in the United States has become a national priority as exposure to, and interaction with, diverse cultures fosters global competence and intercultural understanding (Braskamp et al., 2009; Kitsantas, 2004; NAFSA, 2007, 2012). Creating globally competent graduates is seen as so crucial that broad-based efforts have been enacted even at the federal level. In 2005, Congress created the Lincoln Commission, which established a nationwide goal that one million students would participate in a study abroad program by 2017 (NAFSA,

2005). One year later, Congress passed a resolution that designated the year 2006 as the “Year of Study Abroad” (*2006 The Year of Study Abroad*, 2006), which encouraged institutions to promote study abroad and expand the opportunities available for students. The Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act of 2007, the legislation that emerged from the Lincoln Commission, set out to help increase the number of students participating in study abroad programs as well as help diversify the types of opportunities available for students (H.R. 1469/S 991). More recently, President Barak Obama launched the 100,000 Strong in the Americas initiative (*100,000 strong in the Americas*, 2011) and the 100,000 Strong China initiative (*100,000 strong China*, 2013) in an effort to deepen Americans’ understanding of these regions through study abroad. The growing emphasis on study abroad as an essential part of the undergraduate college experience in the governmental sector has fueled an increase in international education participation (Salisbury, 2011).

Institutions of higher education have responded to the governmental call to increase study abroad enrollments by building study abroad into campus internationalization efforts (American Council on Education, 2012). As a result, there has been continuous growth in undergraduate participation in study abroad programs since the turn of the century (Institute of International Education, 2013; Redden, 2013). During the 2000-2001 academic year, 154,168 students went abroad on programs of varying length (Institute of International Education, 2012). In 2011-2012, those participating in a study abroad program grew to 283,332, representing an increase of 84% (Institute of International Education, 2013). Of these participants, over half went abroad

on a program lasting 8 weeks or less. While program length varies, there are also many different program types represented in these nationwide numbers.

Models of Study Abroad Programs

The variety of study abroad program models in existence today offer many different types of students the opportunity to participate in a study abroad program. In an effort to clarify the foci of these differing models, Engle and Engle (2003) developed a classification system for study abroad programs. This classification system has five levels, and includes study tours, short-term study, cross-cultural contact program, cross-cultural encounter program, and cross-cultural immersion program. Programs are classified based on seven variables, which include: (a) length of student sojourn, (b) entry target-language competence, (c) language used in course work, (d) context of academic course work, (e) types of student housing, (f) provisions for guided/structured cultural interactions and experiential learning, and (g) guided reflection on cultural experience. This system implies that lower levels are shorter in duration and have less intentional cultural interactions while higher levels are longer in duration and have cultural interactions built into the program.

The hierarchical classification system proposed by Engle and Engle (2003) can also suggest that programs that fall in the higher level may be more impactful than shorter programs characterized by levels one and two. However, in weighing the value of study abroad, it is important to consider the goals of the individual programs as cultural immersion may not be a desired outcome of the specified program. In fact, studies (Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Nam, 2011) have shown that students who participate in short-

term programs experiences similar benefits as those who participate in a semester-long program (Christie & Ragans, 1999); Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2005). Impact of program duration is discussed in more detail later in this section of the literature review.

Regardless of program length or type, studies show that study abroad participation can be impactful for students in terms of their development and the development of intercultural competence.

Impact of Study Abroad on Student Development

The impact of a study abroad experience has been studied at an increasing level. The growing participation in overseas study has resulted in a growing amount of institutional research. Overall, research reveals that the effects of participating in a study abroad program can be positive (Espiritu, 2009). These effects include an increase in intercultural competence or the development of a global perspective, as evidenced holistically in the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of development. (Braskamp et al., 2009; Cash, 1993; Du, 2007; Hadis, 2005; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2002).

Cognitive effects. Research has shown that participating in an education abroad program can have a positive influence on the cognitive domain of development by increasing awareness and understanding of international events (Braskamp et al., 2009; Doyle, 2009). The cognitive domain of development relates to the degree of complexity of one's views and taking into consideration multiple perspectives, giving way multicultural awareness and understanding (Braskamp et al., 2009). The GLOSSARI Project (Sutton & Rubin, 2004) is a noteworthy institutional initiative that compared the

achievement of learning outcomes of students who participated in a study abroad program to those who did not. The comparison was conducted at 16 public institutions within the Georgia university system. Findings from this system-wide study indicated that study abroad participants reported significantly higher levels of knowledge of cultural relativism and knowledge of global interdependence than those who did not study abroad.

Sutton and Rubin (2004) define knowledge of cultural relativism as the “cognitive realization that one ought not judge other cultures or respond to individuals from those cultures based on one’s own ethnocentric values and practices” (p. 78). This knowledge outcome focuses on students’ ability to reflect on their own limitations of relativism or “where they draw the line of the intolerable in others’ cultural practices” (p. 78). As students acquired international experience, their understanding of knowledge became more complex, giving way to a more complex view of cultural relativism. Gains in the knowledge of global interdependence outcome were demonstrated by increased political awareness (Sutton & Rubin, 2004), which was a result of international exposure.

Various studies using the Global Perspectives Inventory, an assessment tool that measures the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of global learning and development (Braskamp et al., 2009), also showed positive cognitive impacts as a result of a study abroad experience. In a 2009 study, Braskamp et al. sought to measure changes in study abroad participants’ global perspective. Students who studied abroad in a semester-long program across 10 different international sites completed the Global Perspectives Inventory and results revealed that the greatest gains were within the

cognitive domain, where students are learning factual information about the host country and how to analyze and understand differences amongst cultures. Doyle (2009) conducted a mixed methods study using the Global Perspectives Inventory and sought to understand the developmental impacts of a study abroad program in Austria. Students reported a great degree of accomplishment in terms of cognitive development, where their cultural immersion fostered a greater understanding of the Austrian host culture.

Other notable studies measuring the impact of a study abroad experience were that of Hadis (2005) and Ingraham & Peterson (2004). In a longitudinal study, Hadis (2005) measured changes in intellectual and personal development along 19 scales. In terms of intellectual or cognitive development, study abroad participants showed an increase in knowledge of political and economic information about their host countries as well as a heightened concern about international affairs. Ingraham and Peterson's (2004) study of 1,104 study abroad participants measured the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to succeed in today's global society. Areas measured included intellectual growth, personal growth, intercultural awareness, and professional development. Post-experience results exhibited moderate to high increases in intellectual growth as a result of a study abroad experience. Both students and on-site faculty leaders reported that the learning that takes place abroad is deeper and more profound. One faculty commented that everything the students experienced abroad "supported, subverted, questioned, challenged, added to, confirmed, altered, verified, and disputed what they had learned 'formally'" (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004).

Intrapersonal effects. Within the intrapersonal domain, individuals seek to answer the question, “who am I?” (Braskamp et al., 2013, p. 3). Intrapersonal development is centered on an increasing self-awareness and self-identity and the integration of personal strengths, values, and characteristics into one’s personhood. Advancement in this domain involves the ability to “incorporate different and often conflicting ideas about who one is from an increasingly multicultural world” (Braskamp et al., 2013, p. 3). Progression in this domain is accompanied by increasing levels of self-confidence (Braskamp, 2009; Doyle, 2009; Hadis, 2005; Kitsantas; 2004; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2002) and understanding of one’s own cultural identity (Braskamp, 2009; Doyle, 2009), thus impacting how one interacts with diverse cultures (Braskamp, 2009; Doyle, 2009).

Findings from the GLOSSARI Project (Sutton & Rubin, 2004) revealed that those who participated in a study abroad program exceeded those who did not along the functional knowledge learning outcome. This was the largest effect found in the GLOSSARI study. Functional knowledge, defined as “the knowledge needed for efficacy in navigating daily routines within a new environment” (p. 77), was gained in the unfamiliar environment of study abroad where participants had to learn to navigate new cultures and geographical areas. The abroad experience allotted extended periods of time where students had to fend for themselves, which forced them to test old knowledge and subsequently integrate new learnings into day-to-day interactions. Valuable byproducts of increases in functional knowledge were increases in self-efficacy and self-confidence.

Findings from Braskamp et al.'s (2009) and Doyle's (2009) studies using the Global Perspective Inventory showed very significant and positive impacts on intrapersonal development as well. Per Braskamp et al.'s (2009) study, students made dramatic progress on the affect scale within the intrapersonal domain. As a result of the international experience, students were more confident in how they viewed themselves, especially as unique individuals. In addition to the affect scale, Doyle (2009) also found that students increased within the identity scale, which examines students' sense of self from a global perspective. Post-experience interviews revealed that students became more aware of how their upbringing influenced the way they view themselves as well as how they view and interact with others. Increased self-confidence thus impacted their sense of independence and their ability to make decisions. Doyle (2009) summarized that a study abroad experience served as an empowering opportunity for students to "assess their lives personally" (p. 149) and understand how they have matured as a result of living in another country. Data from both studies showed increases in self-confidence and awareness of self and of one's cultural identity.

The impressionistic nature of the study abroad experience was also reflected in Hadis' (2005) and Ingraham and Peterson's (2004) studies. Hadis (2005) found that after returning to the home campus, students demonstrated higher levels of maturity and self-awareness. Students also gained a sense of independence, especially the younger students between the ages of 19-20. Students also reported that they felt more outgoing, self-assured, and friendly toward people from other countries. Respondents reported increased confidence in traveling to countries where English was not the spoken

language. On a personal level, Hadis (2005) found that students saw more clarity in terms of career plans after studying abroad. Post-experience interviews from Ingraham and Peterson's (2004) study pointed out that almost all students described increased confidence and self-reliance. Additionally, students demonstrated more flexibility, as they were able to better adapt to cultures other than their own. Similar to the studies by Braskamp et al. (2009) and Doyle (2009), Ingraham and Peterson (2004) noted that the study abroad experience helped facilitate a greater understanding of one's own cultural identity by comparing it to that of the host culture. Students were able to use a more critical lens and view their own culture from the outside.

Other examples demonstrating the impacts of study abroad on intrapersonal development are those of Cash (1993) and Kitsantas and Meyers (2002). Cash (1993) found, in his 10-year longitudinal research, that approximately 85% of respondents experienced growth in independence and maturity and over 80% grew in their level of self-awareness. Kitsantas and Meyers' (2002) research complemented Cash's findings on the impact that study abroad has on student maturation. In an analysis of the pre- and post-experience data using the Cross Cultural Adaptability Inventory assessment tool, Kitsantas and Meyers (2002) suggest that students who participate in a study abroad program scored higher in the scales related to emotional resilience, flexibility and openness, perceptual acuity, and personal autonomy.

Interpersonal effects. The interpersonal developmental domain centers on one's willingness and comfort level in interacting with culturally diverse others (Braskamp et al., 2013). This dimension also relates to acceptance of others, thus empowering learners

to seek out cross-cultural interactions in an effort to better understand the pluralistic nature of international settings. Braskamp et al. (2009) and Doyle (2009), using the Global Perspectives Inventory, both saw significant gains in the interpersonal domain, which is comprised of the social interaction scale and the social responsibility scale. The social interaction scale measures the “degree of engagement with others who are different from oneself and the degree of cultural sensitivity in living in pluralistic settings” (Braskamp et al., 2009, p. 106) while the social responsibility scale measures the level of interdependence and social concern for others.

Study abroad participants from both studies recorded a greater concern for others and expressed a stronger commitment to their well-being (Braskamp et al., 2009; Doyle, 2009). Students showed a desire to build community across cultural divides, solidifying their responsibility as global citizens to assist others in order to have a better life. Living in diverse settings also promoted positive changes in students’ level of sensitivity toward other cultures. As a result, students experienced changes in how they relate to those who are different, and learned the importance of interpersonal skills such as mutual respect and empathy (Doyle, 2009).

Impact of Study Abroad on Intercultural Competence

Promoting intercultural competence is arguably one of the most common goals of study abroad (NAFSA, 2007, 2012). The extensive research on the impact of study abroad shows that participating in a study abroad program has positive impacts on the development of intercultural competence or global mindedness (Braskamp et al., 2009; Cash, 1993; Doyle, 2009; Hadis, 2005; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004;

Kitsantas & Meyers, 2002; McCabe, 1994; Salisbury, 2011; Sutton & Rubin, 2004). The sum of the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal impacts, as covered in the previous section, lead to the development of cross-cultural skills and improve global understanding.

While the outcomes of many studies document the positive impact study abroad has on intercultural competence, some researchers caution against the generalizability of such findings (Salisbury, An, & Pascarella, 2013). Salisbury et al. (2013) argue that many existing studies on study abroad and intercultural competence have limitations because they (a) are constrained to small samples at a single institution, (b) do not measure change over time, and (c) account for few, if any, factors that might also contribute to increases. In an effort to address these methodological weaknesses, Salisbury et al. (2013) conducted a study that aimed to account for several variables, including institutional characteristics, within college experiences, an intercultural competence pre-test, and statistical strategies that adjust for selection bias. Findings revealed that, even controlling for student and institutional characteristics, study abroad participation did have a positive effect on intercultural competence. However, the significant increases were heavily weighted in only one (diversity of contact) of the three sub-scales of the intercultural competence measurement tool; impact on relativistic appreciation and comfort with difference was not significant. Salisbury et al. (2013) also found that in-college experiences, such as diversity experiences and integrative learning experiences, were significant in almost all intercultural competence subscales. Therefore, these findings suggest that having diversity experiences and integrative learning

experiences on campus may be more effective in developing intercultural competence than studying abroad.

Although Salisbury et al.'s (2013) study illuminates some of the challenges in measuring intercultural competence, this study, along with many others (Braskamp et al., 2009; Cash, 1993; Doyle, 2009; Hadis, 2005; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Kitsantas, 2004; Kitsantas & Meyers, 2002; McCabe, 1994; Salisbury, 2011; Sutton & Rubin, 2004), does identify study abroad as a beneficial educational experience for participants. Many also believe that living and learning in the international context can contribute to the overall preparedness of college students to succeed in today's multicultural world and promote international understanding (Kitsantas & Meyers, 2002).

Importance of Reflection in Study Abroad

While studying abroad is proven to be an impactful experience, research shows that mere exposure to other cultures is not sufficient in promoting intercultural competence. Research shows that intentional reflection as part of the study abroad experience helps students to fully reap the benefits of their time spent overseas (Deardorff, 2011; Hoff, 2005). Hoff (2005) conducted a study examining the impact of guided reflection during a study abroad program. In-depth interviews revealed that those whose study abroad experience was complemented with guided reflection were better able to articulate and explain their intercultural learning. These students were also able to apply these new skills and behaviors to their daily lives upon return to the home country.

Deardorff's (2011) extensive research on assessing the impact of study abroad also documents the importance of reflection. In assessing the development of

intercultural competence in students, Deardorff urges the use of critical reflection as a means to collect evidence on student learning. Through effective reflection, Deardorff (2011) asserts that students:

Engage in an examination of their personal opinions, attitudes, and positionalities; explore their relation to others and the work in which they are engaged; and bridge their day-to-day interactions with individuals to broader social and cultural issues. (p. 75)

Such guided reflection is a means of self-exploration and can lead to a better understanding of the role one plays in today's interconnected world.

Assessing the Impacts of Study Abroad

As participation in study abroad programs continues to grow, institutions themselves are held accountable for measuring and documenting the effects of these experiences. Ongoing research dedicated to exploring the concept of intercultural competence has given way to the development of comprehensive assessment tools designed to measure these capacities within an individual. The Intercultural Development Inventory ([IDI]; Hammer, Bennett, & Wiseman, 2003) was developed in an effort to measure one's orientation toward cultural differences. Based on Bennett's (1993) Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), the IDI measures intercultural competence based on the following dimensions: denial/defense, reversal, minimization, acceptance/adaptation, and cultural disengagement (Hammer, 2011; Hammer et al., 2003). As individuals gain cultural knowledge and appreciation for difference, they move from the denial/defense or ethnocentric to the ethnorelativistic or the cultural disengagement stage. Other notable assessment tools include: (a) Cross-Cultural Adaptability Inventory ([CCAI]; Meyers, 2007) which measures skills for cross-

cultural communication and interaction; (b) Beliefs, Events, and Values Inventory ([BEVI]; Shealy, 2010), which assesses learning accounting for pre-existing and environmental factors, and (c) Beyond Immediate Impact: Study Abroad for Global Engagement (SAGE) project, which measures the relationship between study abroad and subsequent global engagement (Paige & Fry, 2010). While the approach of each assessment tool varies, professionals in the field of international education use them to measure the impact of participating in a study abroad program.

The Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI), another leading assessment tool and the survey used in this study, measures holistic global learning and development along the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains. More than 36,000 undergraduate students have completed the GPI. Influenced largely by King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) theory of intercultural maturity which represents the developmental capacity to "[understand] and [act] in ways that are interculturally aware and appropriate" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 573), the GPI measures the developmental capacities, knowledge, skills, and behaviors that reflect intercultural awareness and understanding (Braskamp et al., 2013). The cognitive domain focuses on knowledge and understanding of what is true and important to know (Braskamp et al., 2013; Braskamp et al., 2009). The intrapersonal domain is centered on "an increasing awareness of one's own values and self-identity" (Braskamp & Engberg, 2011, p. 35). The interpersonal domain encompasses one's willingness to interact with diverse others. Each developmental domain is comprised of two distinct scales, and higher scores on these scales indicate more advanced levels of intercultural maturity.

Study Abroad and Development of Intercultural Maturity

Studies show that the context of the study abroad environment may serve as an ideal institutional practice that can promote the development of self-authorship (Du, 2007; Renn & Reason, 2013, Volden, 2011) and intercultural maturity (Braskamp et al., 2009). The ongoing encounter with what Pizzolato (2005) refers to as the provocative moment causes students to “revisit their own goals and conceptions of self as well as consider multiple perspectives” (Pizzolato, 2005, p. 38). In this state of disequilibrium, students are forced to reevaluate and reflect on their views of knowledge, self, and how this self relates to others. As a result of these types of experiences, students can progress in their journey towards self-authorship (Pizzolato, 2005).

Du (2007) and Volden (2011) both concluded that participating in a study abroad experience has positive impacts on the development of self-authorship. In a mixed methods study, Du (2007) observed that over 70% of participants reported progression toward self-authorship as a result of their study abroad experience. Growth, however, was not equal in all developmental domains. Students showed the most growth in the epistemological or cognitive domain, followed by the intrapersonal and interpersonal domains. While there were degrees of growth across the domains, overall the study abroad experience positively affected the development of self-authorship. In a study examining the impact of provocative experiences on self-authorship while studying abroad, Volden (2011) found that students demonstrated increased independence and autonomy and learned to better navigate complex situations. Through the process of self-

exploration, students expressed a better understanding of the self, developed new relationships and renegotiated existing ones, and experienced a shift in personal values.

Findings from Braskamp et al.'s (2009) study demonstrated the positive impacts an education abroad experience has on the development of intercultural maturity. While students reported growth across all domains, the most growth was achieved in the cognitive domain, especially in terms of their knowledge of international affairs and understanding of other cultures. Growth in the intrapersonal domain related to their level of respect, acceptance of cultural difference, and confidence living in complex situations. Students showed changes in the interpersonal domain, such as how they related to diverse others and their commitment to becoming global citizens, which is defined by an increased desire to help others to live a better quality of life. Braskamp et al. (2009) concluded that study abroad "may prove to be one of those defining experiences in the life of college students that advances them in their journey toward self-authorship within a context of living in a global community" (p. 112). Taken together, progression toward self-authorship within today's globally interconnected society equates to progression toward intercultural maturity, which is a central goal for today's graduates.

Impact of Study Abroad Duration

Although the above-stated findings demonstrate the positive impacts of study abroad, many argue that the program length is an important factor in determining the extent of the overall impact (Dwyer, 2004; Engle & Engle, 2003; Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Vande Berg, Balkcum, Scheid, & Whalen, 2004). Findings from these study attest that longer periods of exposure to an international environment translate into greater

impact. While institutions encourage students to go abroad for longer periods of time, the reality is that spending extensive time away from home and the home campus is not a good fit for all students.

Recent trends in study abroad show that the largest growth in study abroad participation over the last decade has been in short-term programs (Institute of International Education, 2012; Redden, 2011, 2013). Students on short-term programs, defined as programs of 8 weeks or less, make up approximately 58.1% of the total population of Americans studying abroad (Redden, 2011). In 2012-2013, only about 3% went abroad for an entire academic year (Redden, 2013). Short-term programs have become an alternative for students who are not able to spend significant time abroad.

Findings from a study measuring the impact of short-term study abroad revealed significant benefits for student participants (Nam, 2011). In agreement with previous studies (Donnelly-Smith, 2009), Nam (2011) documented participants' accords that short-term programs are more accessible than longer-term programs. Due to time constraints or lack of financial resources, students reported that they otherwise would have not have been able to participate in a study abroad program. Short-term programs were a way for students to ease into the idea of going abroad, serving as preparation for students to potentially study abroad for longer periods of time. For students who have never traveled abroad, short-term programs also alleviated any concerns that students and their families might have had. In summary, short-term programs can provide valuable opportunities for students who may be less inclined to participate in an education abroad program.

Predicting Participation in Study Abroad

Participation in education abroad programs is disproportionate. Historically, the majority of study abroad participants have been white and female. According to the most recent 2011-2012 Open Doors Report, 76.4% of all study abroad participants are white and 64.8% were female (Institute of International Education, 2013). The remaining participants were made up of Asian students (7.7%), Hispanic students (7.6%), African American students (5.3%), and multiracial students (2.5%). Large public institutions tend to send a lower percentage of students abroad than their smaller liberal arts counterparts (Salisbury, Umbach, Paulsen, & Pascarella, 2009). Salisbury et al. (2009) concluded that students from backgrounds of higher socioeconomic status are more likely to study abroad.

Another predictor of study abroad participation is in the area of academic study. Over 22% of participants study social sciences, approximately 20% have majors related to business or management, and fewer than 11% study the humanities. Underrepresented areas of study include the sciences, engineering, math, and education. A significant negative predictor of study abroad rates is the concern that students will not finish their major in time (Goldstein & Kim, 2006). Some researchers argue, however, that a study abroad experience can have positive impacts on college completion and overall student success.

Effect of Study Abroad on College Persistence and Success

Although students leave the home campus during a study abroad term, research findings have demonstrated that this *study away* experience can have positive impacts on

overall engagement (Kuh, Kinzie, Schuh, Whitt, & Associates, 2005; National Survey of Student Engagement [NSSE], 2007) and persistence and graduation rates (Hamir, 2011; Indiana University Bloomington, 2009; O’Rear, Sutton, & Rubin, 2011; Young, 2008). In 2007, the NSSE was administered to over 300,000 students attending 587 colleges and universities in the United States. Findings, outlined in the annual report, indicated that students who studied abroad “engaged more frequently in educationally purposeful activities upon returning to their home campus, and reported gaining more from college compared with their peers who have not had such an experience” (NSSE, 2007, p. 15). This report demonstrates that profound experiences abroad translated into increased on-campus engagement upon return.

Contrary to the common belief that participating in a study abroad program delays time to graduation, recent studies suggest that these experiences can contribute to timely college completion. In their examination of the effects of studying abroad on graduation rates, O’Rear et al. (2011) found that international experiences served as a catalyst for students to graduate within 4 or 5 years. After controlling for factors that may have predicted persistence such as achievement, O’Rear et al. concluded that study abroad participation was an independent contributor to timely graduation rates. Those who studied abroad were “10% more likely to graduate in four years and 25% more likely to graduate in five years, relative to domestic-only students” (O’Rear et al., 2011, p. 10). Strengthening the findings of this study was the large sample of over 14,000 participants across a variety of public institutions.

Other studies conducted at the University of Texas at Austin and Indiana University Bloomington found similar impacts on graduation rates. In a study involving over 7,800 undergraduate students at the University of Texas at Austin, Hamir (2011) examined the degree completion rates of three student groups: (a) students who participated in a study abroad program (participants); (b) students who applied to study abroad but did not participate (applicants); and (c) students who did not apply to study abroad did not participate. Results from this study indicated that students who studied abroad graduated at higher rates and had a shorter time-to-degree than applicants and non-participants. Additionally, participating in a study abroad program increased the probability of graduating in 5 years by 64%. In an institutional study, administrators at Indiana University Bloomington reported that, even after accounting for prior academic achievement and major, students who participate in one or more study abroad programs are more likely to graduate within four years than non-study abroad students (Indiana University Bloomington, 2009).

Young (2008) also evaluated the effects that study abroad participation had on persistence and found a statistically positive association between the two. Young's study focused on the University of Dallas' Rome program, and concluded that those who went on the program had higher persistence rates than those in the control group who did not go abroad. Of the 1,007 who went to Rome, 96% remained enrolled at the university for one semester after return compared to 80% in the control group and 91% remained enrolled for two semesters compared to 72% in the control group. In a comparison of graduation rates, 79% of those who went to Rome graduated within 4 years compared to

51% in the control group. Findings from this study showed a statistically positive association between study abroad participation and graduation rates. Overall, the above-stated studies provide compelling evidence that a study abroad experience does not essentially extend time to graduation and can positively contribute to university persistence and engagement.

Conclusion

This literature review documents the importance of developing self-authorship and intercultural maturity in college, the positive impacts of study abroad, and the uniqueness of the college sophomore experience. However, what it also points out is the lack of research surrounding the effects that a study abroad experience has on sophomore students and the potential of such programs to foster the development of intercultural maturity in this population. As institutions seek to implement developmentally appropriate programming directed at sophomore students, it seems that study abroad should be given due consideration, particularly since research suggests this type of programming may provide the optimal conditions for sophomores to that encourage self-exploration. In order to understand whether study abroad programs really are an effective strategy for responding to developmental challenges of sophomores, the impact of such programs must be explored through systematic empirical research.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

An explanatory sequential case study design guided this study. To begin, a case study design approach was chosen because it is an empirical inquiry that allows for in-depth investigation and aims to capture the complexity of a case by paying close attention to the real-life contextual factors that influence perspective (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009). Case studies “look for the detail of interaction within the context” (Stake, as cited in Glesne, 2006, p. 13), which helped me to direct my investigation into the participants’ unique point of view regarding their experiences while abroad. The SYEA program held at USD was the focus of this case study. This case study is considered an “instrumental case study” that, Stake argues, “provides insight into an issue” of interest (as cited in Glesne, 2006, p.13). The SYEA program is an institutional response to the developmental needs of college sophomores, where structured exploration and reflection are provided for the students in an international location. Conducting a case study on the SYEA program provides insight into how study abroad programming might be used as a tool to support sophomore students by fostering the development of intercultural maturity.

The rationale for selecting the explanatory sequential case study design was that it incorporated both quantitative and qualitative analysis in two distinct stages. Collection and subsequent analysis of quantitative data provided a general understanding of the research problem while the qualitative stage “refine[d] and explain[ed] those statistical results by exploring participants’ views in more depth” (Ivankova, Creswell, & Stick,

2006, p. 5). The first phase involved analyzing quantitative data that was gathered from a pre- and post- study abroad experience survey. All SYEA participants took the Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI), described later in this section, which revealed information relating to demographics and level of intercultural maturity. Analysis of the data led to the formulation of participant categories based on survey responses, which helped guide purposeful sampling for the second qualitative phase of the study (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). Further details regarding participant selection procedures are addressed in the next section of this chapter.

The qualitative stage of the study was connected to the quantitative stage. The data collected in the first stage quantitative stage provided a broad understanding of how intercultural maturity was affected across all programs and years while the second qualitative stage contributed to the understanding of the *ways* in which the development of intercultural maturity was influenced. Participants were selected for interviews based on their responses their responses on the GPI. A document analysis of participants' reflection papers written on their study abroad experiences provided some data to complement interviews. Since the aim of this study was to gain an in-depth perspective of how participating in this program affected the students' intercultural maturity, the qualitative phase provided useful information for capturing the complexities of each individual student's experience and the commonalities and differences across the group.

Research Sites and Participants

The study was conducted at USD, the home university that manages the SYEA program. This particular study abroad program was selected amongst others because it is

a unique, one-of-a-kind program that does not exist at any other university. Unique components include its large-scale participation amongst sophomore students, the intentional timeline and cycle, and the collaboration with and participation of student affairs professionals. A more detailed discussion of the above-stated program components is explained in the section below.

The Second Year Experience Abroad program is an innovative, comprehensive, and intensive early college study abroad experience designed specifically for sophomore students at USD. Each year, there are two or three parallel SYE Abroad program locations that include Florence, Seville, Barcelona, and Hong Kong, where students spend three weeks abroad in January of their sophomore year. While abroad, students take one three-unit academic course taught by USD faculty members who tailor the syllabi to incorporate the international site into the academic content. In 2013 for example, courses included ethics and Spanish in Seville, Catholic theology, art history, and chemistry in Florence, and world religions and marketing in Hong Kong.

In addition to taking an academic course, all students participate in the intercultural learning component of the SYEA program, which is led by student affairs professionals from USD who also accompany the students abroad. These student affairs professionals, referred to as Experiential Learning Professionals (ELP), lead small group discussions and reflections both prior to departure and while abroad with the aim of facilitating intercultural learning and fostering student development. In collaboration with the ELP, students compose a Host Culture Learning Plan (HCLP), which is a structured cultural analysis and reflection. This unique co-curricular component of the

SYE Abroad program is a partnership between academic and student affairs and was designed to support student learning both inside and outside of the classroom.

The timeline for the SYEA program creates early interest and aims to connect students back to the home campus after returning from the international experience. Student interest in the SYEA program begins before students start their freshman year. Marketing materials introduce students to the SYEA program the summer prior to their first semester at USD. Students apply for the program during the first semester of freshman year, committing students early and giving them something to look forward to in the following year at their university. In spring semester of their freshman year, students are confirmed in their courses and assigned to small groups based on course enrollment. The ELPs lead these small groups in meetings to engage the students in reflection about the upcoming international experience. These small group meetings as well as other small group planned social activities intend to create social bonds amongst the students and student affairs professionals. During the first semester of their sophomore year, students are continuously engaged in the SYEA program by participating in a series of pre-departure seminars. These seminars, led by USD faculty and student affairs staff, focus on intercultural competence, team building, reflection, and global citizenship.

While abroad, students participate in a variety of planned experiences both inside and outside of the classroom. As a large group, all students explore surrounding areas during day trip and overnight excursions. Each week, faculty members lead students on course-related activities such as site visits and guest speaker events while the ELPs lead

cultural activities. Apart from academic and cultural activities, ELPs continue to hold small group meetings and guide the students in individual and group reflections about their encounters and experiences abroad. These meetings aim to help encourage students to connect their experience and new perspectives back to USD after their return.

Upon return to the home campus, faculty and ELPs remain connected to their students through re-entry gatherings. The education abroad cycle of the SYEA program is very comprehensive since students begin meeting with faculty and ELPs several months prior to the international experience and maintain relationships after returning to the home campus.

Phase I: Quantitative

The first phase of this study was quantitative in nature and involved an analysis of data collected in a pre- and post-experience survey.

Data Source

As part of the SYEA program, all participants took a pre- and post-experience survey called the Global Perspectives Inventory. This data was collected by the study abroad office at USD. This was an existing database and the researcher was given permission to access this data for research purposes through Institutional Research Board approval.

The Global Perspectives Inventory (GPI; see Appendix A) is an assessment tool influenced by both human development and intercultural communication theories. The GPI measures the three domains of global learning and development, which include cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains (Braskamp et al., 2009; Braskamp &

Engberg, 2011). Influenced by King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) theory of intercultural maturity, the inventory "assumes the college years are a journey in which students acquire valuable experience, knowledge, and understanding related to the 'big questions': 1) How do I know?; 2) Who am I?; and 3) How do I relate to others?" (Doyle, 2009, p.145). As students learn and mature in college and are exposed to cultural differences, their understanding related to these questions moves from simplistic to more complex (Baxter Magolda & King, 2004; Braskamp & Engberg, 2011; Braskamp et al., 2013; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Along this journey, students increasingly take into account multiple perspectives, the sense of self becomes more internally derived, and interactions with others are informed by cultural understanding (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

The 40-item inventory uses a Likert scale to measure the degrees of agreement along the three domains related to these three big questions. Within each domain of development, there are two scales—one reflects development, which "involves qualitatively different and more complex mental and psychosocial processes" (Merrill, Braskamp, & Braskamp, 2012, p. 356) while the other reflects acquisition, which involves an "increasing quantitative collection of knowledge, attitudes, and skills/behaviors (p. 356). A higher score on the development scales indicates more advanced developmental capacities or *maturity* and a higher score on the acquisition scale indicates a gain in knowledge, attitudes, and skills/behaviors. Coupled, the development and acquisition scales represent a holistic representation of the developmental domains, with higher scores implying more mature levels of intercultural maturity. Reliability of

the survey scales was established through test-retest strategies and coefficient alphas were used to determine internal consistency (see Table 3). Two of the scales have a coefficient alpha of less than .70, which falls below the traditional threshold for acceptability. In the scientific sense, this impacts the validity of the quantitative findings for these two scales and this is noted as a study limitation in the Discussion section. Face validity, concurrent validity, and construct validity were also tested and addressed (Braskamp et al., 2013).

Table 3

Coefficient Alpha Reliabilities of the GPI Scales

Scale	Coefficient alpha
Cognitive—Knowing	.627
Cognitive—Knowledge	.748
Intrapersonal—Identity	.722
Intrapersonal—Affect	.650
Interpersonal—Social Responsibility	.699
Interpersonal—Social Interaction	.701

Note. Adapted from *Global Perspective Inventory (GPI): Its Purpose, Construction, Potential Uses, and Psychometric Characteristics* (p. 10), by L. A. Braskamp, D. C. Braskamp, & M. Engberg (2013), Chicago, IL: Global Perspective Institute Inc.

Cognitive domain. The cognitive domain is “centered on one’s knowledge and understanding of what is true and important to know” and includes “viewing knowledge and knowing with greater complexity and taking into account multiple perspectives” (Braskamp et al., 2009, p. 105). The scales include *knowing* and *knowledge*. The knowing scale, which contains five items, is defined as the “degree of complexity of one’s views of the importance of cultural context in judging what is important to know and value” (p. 105). The knowledge scale, composed of seven items, is the “degree of

understanding and awareness of various cultures and their impact on our global society and level of proficiency in more than one language” (p. 105).

Intrapersonal domain. Development within the intrapersonal domain is centered on an increasing awareness and integration of one’s values, life purpose, and identity into one’s person. The two scales are *identity* and *affect*. The six-item identity scale describes the “level of awareness of one’s unique identity and degree of acceptance of one’s ethnic, racial, and gender dimensions of one’s identity” (Braskamp et al., 2009, p. 105). The affect scale, composed of eight items, reflects the “level of respect for and acceptance of cultural perspectives different from one’s own and degree of emotional confidence when living in complex situations” (p. 105).

Interpersonal domain. The interpersonal domain speaks to one’s “willingness to interact with persons with different social norms and cultural backgrounds, acceptance of others, and being comfortable when relating to others” (Braskamp et al., 2009, pp. 105-106). A movement from dependence to independence to interdependence when relating to others is also taken into account in this domain. The two scales are *social interaction* and *social responsibility*. The social interactions scale, made up of five items, is the “degree of engagement with others who are different from oneself and degree of cultural sensitivity in living in pluralistic settings” and the seven-item social responsibility scale is the “level of interdependence and social concern for others” (p. 106).

Data Cleaning

Raw data was obtained in Microsoft Excel and was cleaned before importing into SPSS. In cleaning the data, the following rules were established and utilized: (a) remove

duplicate surveys completed by the same participant, and (b) ensure participants have both a pre- and post-experience survey. To resolve the issue of duplicate surveys, a rule was established to use the survey that was completed on the earliest date. Since the purpose of this study was to assess change, pre- and post-experience surveys were then matched to the participant. Surveys without matching pre- and post-versions were discarded and were not incorporated in this study.

The data was received in six different sets, which included: (a) 2011 pre-experience survey, including Florence and Barcelona; (b) 2011 post-experience, including Florence and Barcelona; (c) 2012 pre-experience, including Florence and Barcelona; (d) 2012 post-experience, including Florence and Barcelona; (e) 2013 pre-experience, including Florence, Seville, and Hong Kong; and (f) 2013 post-experience, including Florence, Seville, and Hong Kong. I began by importing each data set into SPSS version 19.0 and then merged the pre- and post-tests data sets by program location. Next, I merged all the 2011 data into one set and then data from 2012-2013 into another. I kept these data sets separate because there was important demographic information that was not collected in 2011, but was collected in both 2012 and 2013. This information includes level of parent education, grade point average, and previous study abroad experience.

Data Analysis

Quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS version 19.0. The statistical techniques used depended on the nature of the research question and are described below.

Research question one: Descriptive. Descriptive statistics were used to answer question one of this study. This question was: What impact, if any, did this program have on participants' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of student development as measured by a pre-and post-experience survey?

Descriptive statistics summarized the data as it detailed the distribution and the central tendencies within each of the scales and domains (Hinkle, Wiersma, & Jurs, 2003). This provided an overview of how the areas of development were impacted. First, the average scores of each of the constructs were calculated for all participants in both the pre-and post- experience survey. Then, the average change from pre- to post-experience was calculated. To look at each construct more in-depth, a table was generated for each construct and all questions in the relevant construct were included. The average pre-experience, post-experience, and change in scores were calculated. This gave the researcher insight on which individual questions generated the most change. These steps were performed for each program site and year. Details of these findings are detailed in the next chapter.

Research question two: Inferential. In order to address the second theoretical research question, inferential statistical strategies were used, which allowed me to draw conclusions about the characteristics of the population (Hinkle et al., 2003). Question two asks the following : To what extent were the changes in these three constructs attributable to participant demographics such as gender, academic major, ethnicity, grade point average, level of parental education, and previous study abroad experience?

Dependent variables. The dependent variables were the outcome measures of each of the scales of the GPI. These measures included the change in: (a) knowing, (b) knowledge, (c) identity, (d) affect, (e) social responsibility, and (f) social interaction. These constructs were established by the Global Perspectives Institute (Braskamp et al., 2013).

Independent variables. The independent variables in this study were the demographic information collected in the survey, which included: (a) gender, (b) academic major, (c) ethnicity, (d) grade point average, (e) level of parental education, and (f) previous study abroad experience. Associated with each of the independent variables was an implicit null hypothesis that assumed that the particular variable had no effect on the change in the relevant portion of the GPI.

Inferential statistical strategies were used to evaluate the null hypotheses and the significance of the change in means. First, for each individual, the change variable was calculated in each construct as well as the change within each of the question items that made up the constructs. Stepwise regression models were then run in order to help explain the variation in each dependent variable; the stepwise technique was used because there was no theoretical prior regarding which, if any, of the demographic variables might be important or significant. To evaluate the significance of the change of each construct and the corresponding question items, *t-tests* were run. These tests were used to determine if the change in means between the pre- and the post-test were significant at levels of $*p \leq .05$; $**p \leq .01$; $***p \leq .001$.

Data limitations. The GPI instrument that was administered to students who participated in the SYEA program in 2011 did not contain questions that requested demographic information related to the students' grade point average, level of parental education, and previous study abroad experience. Before deciding to eliminate the 2011 programs from this particular analysis, I ran regression models to see if grade point average, parental education, or previous study abroad experience emerged as significant variables that explained the change in the GPI scales. The resulting analysis confirmed that each of these variables explained the change in four different instances. Analysis that included 2011 programs would suffer from specification error, where I would be excluding variables that had proven to be significant in 2012 and 2013. Therefore, only programs run in 2012 and 2013 were used to help address my second research question. Details of the findings related to the explanatory power of demographic variables will be described in chapter four.

Phase II: Qualitative

The second phase was qualitative and complemented the statistical analysis and allowed for individuals to more fully articulate their experiences.

Participant Selection

Because the sample size was quite large at 369 participants and also spanned three distinct locations over a period of 3 years, purposeful sampling techniques were utilized to narrow the scope of study participants. Purposeful sampling involved the selection of "information-rich cases" from which one "can learn a great deal about issues of central

importance to the purpose of the research” (Patton, 2002, p. 46). The purposeful sampling for this study was carried out in the following two steps:

Selection of SYEA program year. The first step of purposeful sampling in this qualitative stage was to narrow the focus to the SYEA program locations that were run in 2013. This is the most recent year of the program, so this provided the most up-to-date insight on this program, which has now been in operation for 3 years. Thus, the locations that were part of this study were Florence, Seville, and Hong Kong.

Focusing on the three different locations in 2013 helped me exhibit what Patton (2002) calls “empathetic neutrality”¹ (p. 50). While I oversaw all locations as a coordinator and thus am knowledgeable on all programmatic aspects, I acted as the on-site director for the Florence site. Because I interacted closely with students in Florence and not in Seville or Hong Kong, this provided both the advantages and challenges of being both an *insider* and member of the participant population, and an *outsider* or non-member of the participant population (Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). Both levels of involvement and subsequent differing perspectives informed me in recognizing disconfirming evidence. Selecting the locations in 2013, where I served as the on-site director for only one of the three programs of the 3 years, provided a degree of separation and objectivity. Considering all three sites, as empathetic neutrality suggests, is the

¹ Patton (2002) suggests that absolute objectivity is naïve. Researchers should be aware of their subjectivity, especially in regards to their cognitive and emotional stance toward the subject of study. Empathetic neutrality implies that in conducting research, “the investigator’s commitment is to understand the world as it unfolds, be true to complexities and multiple perspectives as they emerge, and be balanced in reporting both confirmatory disconfirming evidence with regard to any conclusions offered” (p. 50).

“middle ground between becoming too involved, which can cloud judgment, and remaining too distant, which can reduce understanding” (Patton, 2002, p. 50).

Selection of participants. The second step in this purposeful sampling procedure used the participation selection model, as identified by Creswell & Plano Clark (2007), which is a variant of the mixed methods explanatory design. In this model, I used the quantitative data to purposefully select participants for a follow-up, in depth qualitative interviews (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). Selection of student participants was based on the results of a pre- and post-experience survey taken by all students participating in the SYEA program 2013. This instrument, the GPI, measured holistic learning and development across three different domains: (a) cognitive, (b) intrapersonal, and (c) interpersonal (Braskamp et al., 2013).

Based on the data collected in the quantitative phase of the study, maximum variation sampling was utilized to identify participants for the qualitative phase of this study. Because maximum variation sampling facilitates the identification of shared themes across a great deal of variation (Patton, 2002), students with overall mean scores, which included all three domains, at both extremes of the quantitative spectrum as well as those that fall in the middle, as produced by the GPI, were of interest of this study. For example, I selected those that showed the greatest increase, those who showed the greatest decrease, and those who showed little or no change in intercultural maturity. In the end, participants were categorized into three pools based on the change of the overall mean scores: (a) Category A (negative impact students): students whose post-experience survey showed a negative change intercultural maturity; (b) Category B (neutral impact

students): students who showed little or no change in intercultural maturity; and (c) Category C (high impact students): students who showed a positive change in intercultural maturity.

For each location, the previously stated selection procedures were utilized to identify students from each of the three categories. In each location, my aim was to interview (a) the two students whose overall mean scores showed the greatest decrease (category A—negative impact students); (b) the two students whose overall mean scores showed the smallest change or no change at all (category B—neutral impact students); and (c) the two students whose overall mean scores showed the largest increase (category C—high impact students). While this would have yielded a total of 18 interview participants across the three 2013 SYEA program locations (Florence, Hong Kong, and Seville), only a total of 11 students accepted my invitation to participate in the qualitative portion of the study.

The process for participant selection was a multi-step process. First, I calculated the change in overall mean scores for each student in each of the locations. Based on this change in mean score calculation, I then sorted the participants from lowest to highest. This calculation and sorting process helped me select the students I was going to contact for interviews. I decided to contact five students in each of the categories with the hope that at least two of the students would opt into the study. Those contacted for the low impact category (category A) consisted of the five students whose post-experience results showed the largest decrease and those contacted for high impact category (category C) had post-experience scores that showed the largest increase. In identifying the pool for

the neutral impact category (category B), I began by selecting the student whose post-experience score showed a zero change. From there, I chose the two students whose change in mean score was just below the zero change mark and the two students who fell directly above the zero change mark.

In May 2013, I sent an email (see Appendix B) to five students in each of the above-stated categories. In the Florence location, of the five students that I contacted who fell within the high impact category, only one responded. One student responded from the neutral impact category and one from the negative impact category. In the Seville location, zero students opted in from the negative impact category, one student opted in from the neutral impact category, and two students opted in from the high impact category. In the Hong Kong location, one student opted in from the negative impact category, zero opted in from the neutral impact category, and one opted in from the high impact category. One week later, all of the participants who did not respond to the initial inquiry were contacted again with a follow-up email (see Appendix C). However, this follow-up email did not yield any additional responses.

As a result, I expanded the range in change in mean score in each location. For both negative and high impact categories, this meant contacting the 10 students whose post-experience overall mean score increased the most and the 10 students whose post-test overall mean score decreased the most. For the neutral impact, this meant contacting the next five students who fell below the zero change mark and the next five who fell above the zero change mark. These additional inclusions yielded more response rates in some locations. For the Florence location, two additional students responded within the

neutral impact category. No additional students responded for the Seville location. For the Hong Kong location, one additional response was received from a student within the neutral impact category.

In the end, a total of 11 participants across the five locations opted in to this study. The breakdown was as follows: (a) five students from Florence, (b) three students from Seville, and (c) three students from Hong Kong. Table 4 presents these interview participants' overall mean scores. Additionally, an overview of the interview participants' demographics can be found in Appendix D.

In Florence, there was one student from the negative impact category, three students from the neutral impact category, and one student from the high impact category. In Seville, there were zero students from the negative impact category, one student from the neutral impact category, and two students from the high impact category. In Hong Kong, there was one student from the negative impact category, one student from the neutral impact category, and one student from the high impact category.

Table 4

GPI Mean Scores for Interview Participants

Participant	Location	Pre-experience mean	Post-experience mean	Mean change
Shannon	Florence	3.74	3.18	-0.56
Alexa	Florence	4.04	4.00	-0.04
Allison	Florence	3.79	3.80	+0.01
Lauren	Florence	4.23	4.38	+0.15
Davey	Florence	3.78	4.45	+0.67
Matt	Seville	3.96	4.00	+0.04
Rita	Seville	3.63	4.51	+0.88
Lorae	Seville	3.41	4.29	+0.88
Ailsa	Hong Kong	3.90	3.77	-0.13
Bobby	Hong Kong	3.33	3.69	+0.29
Christy	Hong Kong	3.28	3.88	+0.61

Before proceeding to the qualitative collection and analysis procedures, I first provide an overview of the interview participant profiles in an effort to construct a portrait of who these participants are and the context from which they entered the SYEA program.

Understanding Context: Overview of Interview Participant Profiles

Contextual awareness of each of the 11 interview participants is integral to understanding the background factors that may impacted their responses to their SYEA experiences. The following is an overview of the interview profiles, broken down by the three SYEA program locations, which include Florence, Barcelona, and Seville.

Florence. Of the 85 students who completed the pre- and post-experience GPI survey, 5 were selected for an interview. As indicated in the methodology section, purposeful selection techniques were used to carry out maximum variation sampling across the following three participant pools: (a) students whose overall mean scores increased most; (b) students whose overall mean scores showed the smallest change or no change at all; and(c) students whose overall mean scores showed the largest decrease. I was able to secure an interview with one student in category A, Davey, whose overall mean increase was the fifth highest of all students at 18%. Shannon, the student who demonstrated the largest decrease of -15% also opted into the study. Furthermore, I interviewed two students who showed very little change in their post-experience survey (-1% and .20%) as well as one student who showed moderate change (4%).

Shannon. This student represented the largest decrease in overall GPI mean of any student on the SYEA program in Florence and was a clear representative of category

C. In Florence, she took a Catholic theology course. A White female studying accounting at USD, Shannon was raised in a traditional Catholic family in the same city where she attends college. Her entire education has been spent at private, Catholic schools, including elementary school, an all-female high school, and now USD. She reported being very close to her mother and brother, especially since the recent loss of her father.

Going abroad to Italy was a challenge for Shannon for various reasons. First, since she grew up in the same city as USD, she had never been away from her family for an extended period of time and relied heavily on her mother in terms of decision-making. Her mother was against Shannon going abroad for an entire semester because she anticipated it would be too difficult, but Shannon was able to convince her that it would be beneficial for her. Shannon did not report any financial barriers to going abroad.

Although going abroad to Italy was her first time going out of the country, Shannon had exposure interacting with diversity in both middle school, which had a dominant Filipino population, and high school, which had a dominant Mexican population. Shannon befriended students in both groups and learned a lot about these cultures from spending time with her friends and their families. She expressed that she had had to make a lot of cultural adjustments since she “had been the minority a lot.” She continued, “I was always the silly white girl” and because of her interaction with these groups, she “never really saw skin color” (personal communication, August, 21, 2013). She referred to these experiences when asked about experiences that helped prepare her for interacting with diversity abroad.

Alexa. This female student's GPI posttest results showed a decrease in overall mean of 1%, which places her in category B where little or no change occurred in her responses to the survey. Alexa, a White student from Indiana was raised in an upper-class family and described her upbringing as "consistent" (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Both parents work full-time in high-paying occupations. Alexa had been an athlete her entire life and is on athletic scholarship at USD. She describes herself as having "thick skin" and attributes this resilience to years of competitive sports and tough criticism from coaches.

Alexa, a history major at USD, is a very independent person and she feels that she has always been ahead of her peers in terms of maturity. She explained, "I've always been very independent and have taken care of myself," which she thinks stems from "having three siblings and only two parents that have full-time jobs," thus requiring her to "watch out for [herself] to ensure that things got done" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). She joked that the "only thing that she needs from her [parents] is their wallet" because it "funds [her] life and her ideas and what she wants to do with them" (personal communication, May 8, 2013).

Although Alexa had no previous international travel experience, she had extensive experience interacting with people from other cultures. As a member of USD's women's volleyball team, she was assigned to live with and mentor one of her teammates who was an international student from Eastern Europe. When coming to USD, her roommate spoke very limited English and had difficulty navigating the culture of the United States and of USD. Alexa helped her every step of the way—from cultural

adaptation to social integration. She played the role of her “friend, advisor, and mother” (personal communication, May 8, 2013). Alexa attributes her flexibility and open-mindedness to her upbringing as well as to this experience.

Allison. This female student demonstrated a 0.2% increase in her overall mean GPI score, representing category B of the maximum variation sample. While in Florence, she took a course in Catholic Theology. Allison is a White student from a conservative Catholic family in Orange County, CA, where she attended a private Catholic high school. Allison, a business major, transferred to USD as a first-semester sophomore from a large public university in southern California because she preferred more personalized attention. As a transfer student, she was behind in credits and saw this January program as an opportunity to catch up on course requirements. In discussing the opportunity with her parents, they did not hesitate and “were 100% for it” (personal communication, May 13, 2013). She did not face any financial barriers in going abroad.

Allison traveled extensively with her family growing up, which exposed her to different cultures and lifestyles. This included two trips to Costa Rica, a cruise through the Mediterranean including Italy, and one trip to Africa. She described her adventures in Africa as particularly “eye-opening” (personal communication, May 13, 2013) because she was able to observe, firsthand, how different third world countries are from where she grew up. Traveling to Africa and seeing the realities of life in third world countries made her reflect on own quality of life.

Lauren. Impact as measured by the GPI for this female student was low to moderate at a growth of 4% in overall mean. While abroad she took an art history

course. Lauren is a White student studying business at USD. She was raised in an upper-class family in Washington, DC and attended private school through middle school until she demanded to be enrolled in public school at the beginning of high school in an effort to expose herself to a more diverse student body. Although Lauren had no experience traveling internationally prior to going to Italy, she had been exposed to a lot of diversity. To begin with, her parents are divorced and her mother is homosexual, which has made her understand and appreciate different types of lifestyles.

In approaching her parents about the SYEA opportunity, she “knew [they] would like that it was a program specifically for sophomores and that it was organized with a lot of [USD] staff on-site” (personal communication, May 26, 2013). She lamented that some of her friends could not afford to go on the program and she felt “fortunate . . . that [her] parents [could] afford to spend money on stuff like this” and that they were [in favor of [her] traveling because they know it would be good for [her]” (personal communication, May 26, 2013). From her perspective, this abroad experience was “exposure to a foreign country with a comfort zone” (personal communication, May 26, 2013), where she could safely experiment in preparation for her upcoming semester-long study abroad program.

Davey. Of the entire student group in Florence, this student demonstrated the fifth largest increase (18%) in overall GPI mean. Davey also took a course in Catholic Theology. She is an African American female studying behavioral neuroscience at USD. She was raised in an upper-class “close-knit” (personal communication, August 25, 2013) family and went to Christian schools for the majority of her education. Her parents were

very supportive of her going to Italy and there were no financial barriers to her participating in the program. She had limited travel within the United States, but no international travel experience prior to going abroad to Florence on the SYEA program.

As an African American student attending predominantly white schools and living in predominantly white communities while growing up, Davey has experience of what it is like to be different from those around her. She recalled that as a child, “[she] never really understood that [she] was different” (personal communication, August 25, 2013). “Eventually,” she explained, “as I got older it was something that became the norm to me—being the only one like me” (personal communication, August 25, 2013). In comparing her experience adjusting to Italian culture in Florence to her experience adjusting to “white culture” while growing up, she remarked, “Although blacks and whites have different cultures, you have to embrace the other culture, especially if you are the only one not like them” (personal communication, August 25, 2013). Her parents taught her to have an open mind, and it was her parents’ teachings coupled with experience growing up that she felt prepared her to interact well with diversity, especially while in Italy.

Seville. Three of the 39 participants who went on the SYEA program in Seville were selected for an interview. Although I attempted to interview students from categories A, B, and C, I was only able to secure interviews with students in categories A and B.

Lorae and Rita, the two students representative of category A and who represented the highest and second-highest increase of all Seville participants, both

demonstrated a growth in overall GPI mean of .88. Lora's post-experience mean showed an increase of 26%, while Rita's showed a 24% increase. The third student, Matt, was representative of category B as he only showed a gain in overall GPI mean of .04 or 1%.

Matt. This White male's post-experience GPI mean showed a growth of 1%. As a student studying international relations and Spanish at USD, Matt elected to participate in the SYEA program in Seville to practice his Spanish. While in Seville, he took a class in ethics. For Matt, going to Seville was his first time out of the country and he had to spend a lot of time convincing his dad that paying for the SYEA program was a good investment. After walking his dad through a "cost-benefit analysis" (personal communication, May 9, 2013) of participating in the program, his dad decided that it was a good program and that he would pay for it.

Matt was born and raised in New Orleans, a city with a diverse population. Although he went to a predominantly white private school, Matt spent a lot of time volunteering at an inner-city camp for teens, where he interacted with diverse others and learned the difficult realities of living that challenging lifestyle. He commented, "Even though I had seen diversity in the city and had seen other races unlike me, I never really interacted with any of them until I did the inter-city camp" (personal communication, May 9, 2013). Matt explained that this experience working in this camp opened his eyes to the need to be accepting of other cultures and he used this frame when interacting with diversity in Seville. This was also his answer about the experiences that helped him prepare to interact with diverse others.

Lorae. Significant growth was demonstrated by this female student's post-experience GPI mean score. Her overall mean increased .88 or 26%, which placed Lorae in category A of the stratified sample. Lorae is a White student raised in Portland, Oregon, who grew up attending private Jesuit schools that focused on teaching compassion, especially for those who are marginalized or discriminated against. These teachings are embedded in her thinking, which impacts the way she views diversity. She was taught that "our views can be shaped a lot by those we encounter in life" and in order to fully embrace difference, you need to avoid getting "caught up in your own world" (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Also embedded in her upbringing was the desire to give back to the community through service. She volunteered with an organization where she helped students who are English language learners with their homework. Lorae identified her service and exposure to the Spanish language as factors that helped prepare her for interacting with other cultures while in Seville.

Lorae, a behavioral neuroscience major and Spanish minor, had never traveled internationally before going to Seville. She selected the Seville location because she wanted to practice her Spanish conversation skills and also take the ethics class offered as it would fulfill a graduation requirement. She also thought that going to Seville would be a good way to expose her to international travel because she was confirmed to study abroad during the fall of her junior year for an entire semester on the Semester at Sea program. Since this program travels to so many countries, she thought that the SYEA program would give her valuable experience interacting with diversity. She commented, "I am so glad that I went on SYEA before going on Semester at Sea because now I have

this experience and this new-found ability so see things from different perspectives” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Loraë felt she had a new skill-set that would help her make the best of her semester abroad.

Rita. Like Loraë, this student demonstrated significant growth in overall mean GPI score. Her overall mean score increased by 0.88 or 24%, thus making her an ideal representative of category A. Rita, a White female, was raised in a predominantly white suburb Chicago. Although Rita had not traveled outside the United States prior to going to the SYEA program, she elected to go to Seville because she is a Spanish major and has taken Spanish history courses that piqued her interest. She expressed gratitude to her parents for being supportive, both emotionally and financially, of her desire to go abroad.

Prior to going to Seville, Rita had very limited exposure to diversity. She commented, “In high school, I didn’t have that much exposure to other ideas or cultures, so I think that made me change a lot in college” (personal communication, May 8, 2013). When she came to college, she was shocked to experience so many new things and remembered thinking to herself, “Wow! How did I miss all of this?” (personal communication, May 8, 2013). She identified the ethics course she took in Seville as particularly impactful because the theories she learned in class could be applied to her daily experiences. When having class discussions related to ethical theory, she thought, “I remember having so many epiphanies where I thought, ‘Oh wow! That really relates to what I am seeing out of class!’” (personal communication, May 8, 2013). In reflection of her time abroad, she attributed most of her learning to the academic experience and how this impacted the way she interpreted diversity.

Hong Kong. Of the 27 students who went on the SYEA program in Hong Kong, three were selected for a qualitative interview. Although I contacted students that represented categories A, B, and C, I was only able to secure interviews for students who fell in category A and C. Those who represented category A were Christy, who showed the second highest increase at 14%, and Bobby, who showed the fifth highest increase at 6%. Ailsa, who represents category C, demonstrated the fourth largest decrease of the entire group at -3%.

Ailsa. This female student's feedback on the post-experience GPI showed a decrease of .13 in overall mean score. Although Ailsa was born in the United States, her Mexican parents brought her to Tijuana where they raised her in a strong Catholic family. All of her schooling prior to USD was spent at all-female Catholic schools. USD was her first experience in a mixed-gender school. Ailsa, an introvert, is an engineering major at USD. She elected this area of study because the classes are structured and the concepts are clear-cut and with minimal subjective material.

Ailsa considers herself to be an independent young woman who discovered her desire to travel at a young age. She commented, "It wasn't really a family tradition to study abroad, but I'm the type of person who likes going outside the box and looking for opportunities to do different things" (personal communication, August, 8, 2013). In high school, she spent one year at a Catholic boarding school in Switzerland where she took classes alongside young women from Latin America and Europe. She attributes her early cultural sensitivity to her experience interacting with people from so many different countries. After Switzerland, she attended an all-female Catholic high school in Rhode

Island and was immersed in American culture. She took a marketing class in Hong Kong and wanted to go to Asia because she had minimal exposure to Asian cultures and wanted to learn more about them.

Bobby. This White male student, who falls into category A, showed an overall mean increase of .36. Bobby was raised in a predominantly white, Mormon community in Utah. He attended a public high school where almost all students were Mormon and because he did not practice this religion, he experienced ongoing pressure from classmates to convert. In describing how it felt to be a religious minority, he said, “Everyone knew I wasn’t [Mormon] so I wasn’t treated the same. I was not accepted and I got sick of my friends trying to convince me that I was wrong and they were right” (personal communication, August, 6, 2013). Out of frustration, he transferred to a private Catholic high school to experience a different approach to religion. Bobby’s parents did not raise him or his sister in the Church of Latter Day Saints because they wanted them to find their own spirituality.

Growing up in Utah, Bobby was not exposed to very much diversity. He described Utah as “boring” and “sheltered” from the real world, because “everyone is the same religion, everyone looks the same, and everyone does the same stuff” (personal communication, August 6, 2013). In high school he went abroad on a 6-week student ambassador program that traveled to four European countries, which sparked his desire to travel. His parents, both very open-minded, were very supportive of him going abroad to Hong Kong because they “always wanted [him] to get out and see the world” (personal communication, August 6, 2013). Bobby knew that he wanted to spend a semester

abroad in Spain the following year, so he chose the Hong Kong location because he was not sure if he would have the chance to go back to Asia. While in Hong Kong, Bobby took a world religions class, which opened his eyes to the religious diversity in Asia.

Christy. This White female student represented the highest growth of the three interviewees with a post-experience mean increase of .60. Christy is an only child from a suburb of San Francisco who transferred from another small, private college to USD at the beginning of her sophomore year. One of her intentions for going on the SYEA program was to meet new people because she had difficulties connecting with students as a transfer student. She chose the Hong Kong location particularly because, as a business major, she knew Asia was the best place to learn about international commerce. She also planned to go abroad to Spain for a semester in her junior year, so she thought going to Asia for a short period would give her good exposure beforehand.

Christy's parents were very supportive of her going abroad on this program. Her parents always pushed her to "experience everything possible in college, especially related to study abroad" (personal communication, May 14, 2013). Christy had the full support of her parents, both emotionally and financially, to go abroad for 3 weeks with the SYEA program as well as on a semester abroad in the future.

The interviewee profiles lay an important groundwork to holistically understand where they come from and how those experiences may have been at play in impacting how they responded to the SYEA program. With this understanding, I proceed to explain the interview and analysis process.

Qualitative Data Collection Procedures

Two types of data were be collected and analyzed in this qualitative phase of the study.

Interviews. Semi-structured interviews were central to this qualitative study as they allowed for an expansion of understanding on the impacts on each of the three domains of human development. These are cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains. While an analysis of the quantitative data provided information on changes in the scales that make up these three domains of development, information collected in the qualitative interviews explained the factors that contributed to these changes. For example, since the cognitive domain centers on “viewing knowledge and knowing with greater complexity and taking into account multiple cultural perspectives” (Braskamp et al., 2009, p. 105), participants were asked to recall a time where they felt their perspective was challenged and how these experiences may have affected the way they view *right* and *wrong*. Braskamp et al. (2009) describes the intrapersonal domain as focusing on “one becoming more aware of and integrating one’s personal values and self-identity into one’s personhood” (p. 105). Therefore, interview questions were related to changes in how participants viewed themselves as a result of this experience. Since the interpersonal domain includes one’s willingness to interact with those who are socially and culturally different from themselves, acceptance of others, and “being comfortable when relating to others (Braskamp et al., 2009, pp. 105-106), participants were asked to reflect on how their relationships may have changed as a result of this experience as well as how they relate to the larger global community. The interview guide helped maintain

consistency across all cases because all participants were asked to respond to similar questions focused around the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of development.

While the interview guide approach provided a degree of consistency across interviews, it also allowed for some flexibility so I could explore topics related to the student experience as they emerged. The interview guide used in this study can be found in the appendices section (see Appendix E). Participants were asked to participate in two sessions. The first session lasted approximately 1 hour. The second session consisted of member checking, where interview notes and case study narratives were shared with the interviewees to insure their ideas were accurately portrayed (Glesne, 2006). The member-checking sessions were approximately 30 minutes. As such, participation in this study required a total time commitment of 90 minutes. All sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed and conducted in the study abroad office on the USD campus.

Document analysis procedures. As part of the SYEA program, each student was required to compose a Host Culture Learning Plan (HCLP), which tracked an ongoing cultural analysis and reflection. The HCLP served as a platform for students to intentionally investigate concepts of culture related to a topic of their choice. Throughout the process of composing the HCLP, students were encouraged to record challenges as well as new insights that were generated as a result of cultural interactions. Additionally, students focused on what they learned during the SYEA program and how they might integrate these learnings into on-campus life upon return to USD. Although I requested these documents from all interview participants, only 9 of the 11 students submitted them

for analysis. These reflection papers were also coded, using the data analysis procedures presented in the next section.

Data Analysis

The analysis of the collected data was organized into sequential steps. First, the raw qualitative data collected in the interviews was transcribed and coded. Data was digested by using Polkinghorne's (1995) "analysis of the narrative" approach, where in-depth review of the narratives produced "paradigmatic typologies or categories" representative of the student experience (p. 5). These typologies were identified through first and second cycle coding techniques (Saldaña, 2009). First cycle coding included descriptive coding, which led to an "index of the data's content" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 72). Many of these codes were suggested by previous research and included: (a) sophomore slump, (b) sophomore needs and challenges, (c) cognitive development, (d) intrapersonal development, (e) interpersonal development, and (f) change in global perspective. These codes then provided a framework for second cycle coding. The second cycle coding method used was focused coding, where the most frequent descriptive codes were further developed into more detailed categories (Saldaña, 2009). Concept mapping also served as a useful tool in analyzing the data because it allowed for a visual representation of relationships among the data.

Categorical inconsistencies and contradictions across cases also occurred and were reported in the findings section because such instances assisted me in constructing a holistic explanation of the social phenomena (Mathison, 1988). Member checking was

employed in an effort to ensure student experiences are accurately portrayed. Notes and findings were shared with the participants in an effort to maintain validity.

The next step in the data analysis process was to synthesize and analyze the data collected in the individual cases in order to gain an overall understanding of how students responded to this experience. In this process, covariance along with divergence of themes across the cases was identified by placing the themes on a matrix. Each occurrence of a theme was tabulated on the matrix, showing how often themes were shared in the various students' experiences. The matrix grid also noted relationships among categories (Polkinghorne, 1995).

In-depth analysis of the quantitative and qualitative data of this explanatory sequential case study provided the framework for me to construct plausible explanations of how participating in this sophomores study abroad program affected participants. The quantitative data collected from the pre- and post-experience GPI helped me gain a general understanding of the program's impact on the three developmental domains of intercultural maturity across the program years and locations. These domains and their respective GPI measurement scales include cognitive (knowing and knowledge scales), intrapersonal (identity and affect scales), and interpersonal (social responsibility and social interaction scales). Analysis using multiple regression techniques then helped me better understand if changes in these GPI scales could be explained by demographic factors. Taken together, the quantitative data gave me a general understanding of the degree of impact that the SYEA program had on program participants as well as the demographic variables that explain such changes. The qualitative data collected in in-

depth interviews then further explained the ways in which intercultural maturity was impacted and the experiential factors that influenced these changes. Data collected from the surveys, participant interviews, and student reflection papers were triangulated (Mathison, 1988) in an effort to make sense of the social phenomenon of study abroad and the sophomore student experience.

After describing the methodological framework that guided this study, including the study design, participant selection and overview and the data collection and analysis procedures, I will now proceed to the present the findings. Findings are presented in two distinct chapters. Chapter four includes the findings to my three research questions while chapter five addresses other salient themes that suggest an intersection of sophomore development and study abroad.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPMENT OF INTERCULTURAL MATURITY IN SOPHOMORES

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between sophomore college student participation in study abroad programs and the impact made on the development of intercultural maturity. This chapter outlines the findings related to the three research questions that guided this study. These questions were: (a) What impact, if any, did this program have on participants' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of student development as measured by a pre-and post-experience survey? How does this vary/differ across program year and location? (b) To what extent were the changes in these three constructs attributable to demographic information such as gender, academic major, ethnicity, grade point average, level of parental education, as well as program characteristics such as location and year? and (c) What impact, if any and in what ways, did this program influence the development of participants' intercultural maturity?

This chapter presents the results of my data analysis in both the quantitative and qualitative phases of the study. In this explanatory sequential case study, I used data collected from 369 pre- and post-experience surveys as well as qualitative data collected from 11 student interviews. I begin by describing the sample and addressing my first research question related to the effects of the SYEA program on the three domains of development and how this varies across program year and location. This involved descriptive statistical analysis, where the mean differences are presented. Paired sample tests were used to determine the significance of the changes between the scales (or

dependent variables). Then, findings from the inferential statistical analysis are presented in order to answer my second research question regarding the extent to which the changes in each scale are attributable to the independent variables. Finally, findings collected in the qualitative portion of this study will describe, in detail, the ways in which participants' intercultural maturity was impacted as a result of the SYEA program.

Study Population

The study population consisted of 369 students who participated in the three-week SYEA program from 2011 to 2013. In 2011 and 2012, students had the opportunity to study in either Barcelona or Florence, and in 2013, they had the opportunity to study in Florence, Hong Kong, or Seville. Of the 369 students, 107 were male, representing 29% of the population and 262 were female, representing 71% of the population. This gender representation is comparable to the 2011-2012 nationwide numbers where 64.8% of all students who studied abroad from U.S. colleges and universities were female and 35.2% were male (Institute of International Education, 2013). Only a very small number of these students were international students (4.9%). Of the 356 students who reported their ethnicity on the survey, an overwhelming percentage were White (71.5%) with 8.9% Hispanic/Latino, 7.6% Asian/Pacific Islander, and 7.3% Multi-Ethnic. These distributions are not quite representative of the self-reported demographics of the undergraduate population at USD where 53.7% are White, 17.4% are Hispanic/Latino, 7.45 are Asian, 4.9% are Multi-Ethnic, .5% are Native American, and 3% are African American. A breakdown of ethnicities as well as nation-wide participation rates can be found in Table 5.

Table 5

Distribution of Ethnicity of Sample with Nationwide Comparison

	SYEA program		USD	Nationwide ^a
	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
White	271	71.5	53.7	76.4
Hispanic/Latino	33	8.9	17.4	7.6
Asian/Pacific Islander	28	7.6	7.4	7.7
Multiple Ethnicity	27	7.3	4.9	2.5
Native American	3	.8	.5	.5
African/African American	1	.3	3	2.5

Note. For ethnicity, $N = 356$ as 13 participants answered, "I prefer not to respond."

^aNationwide data from: Institute of International Education (2013). Profile of U.S. Study Abroad Students, 2001/02-2011/12, *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange*. Retrieved from <http://www.iie.org/opendoors>

While participants studied a variety of subjects, most declared a major in either business or law (40.7%), with the smallest percentage studying either agriculture or natural resources. A representation of the distribution of majors is shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Distribution of Majors

	Frequency	Percent
Business & Law	150	40.7
Social & Behavioral Science	46	12.5
Physical & Biological Science	38	10.3
Arts & Humanities	36	9.8
Communications & Journalism	30	8.1
Other	29	7.9
Health & Medicine	19	5.1
Engineering	14	3.8
Education & Social Work	5	1.4

The information about the level of parental education, grade point average, and previous study abroad experience was only collected in 2012 and 2013 as these questions

were not part of the GPI when it was administered to the students in 2011. Therefore, this information was only collected from 283 of the 369 participants. The majority of the students in the 2012 and 2013 cohorts come from families where at least one parent has a college degree. Respondents reported that 80.9% of their parents have a college degree or higher. Table 7 further describes the distribution of the level of parental education.

Table 7

Distribution of Level of Parental Education

	Frequency	Percent
Graduate degree	127	45.8
College degree	90	32.5
Some college	27	9.7
High school graduate	20	7.2
Some graduate school	7	2.5
Less than high school	6	2.2

Note: $N = 277$ and includes only 2012-2013.

Academically, 43% of 2012 and 2013 students estimated their cumulative GPA to be in the A range, 54.9% in the B range, and 2.2% in the C range. Additionally, approximately 89.2% of the 2012-2013 sample reported no previous study abroad experience, indicating that the SYEA program was their first international academic experience.

In surveying the demographic information, the sample was predominantly composed of White females coming from families where at least one parent holds a college degree, with 97.8% reporting an overall GPA within the A or B range. The SYEA program also served as the very first study abroad experience for almost all students.

Findings Related to Research Question #1

With my first research question, I sought to find out how this program impacted participants' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of development as measured by the GPI. I was particularly interested in learning how these changes varied across program year and location. Each of these three domains of development is comprised of two scales. In this section, I report the results of the impacts on these six scales. First, I calculated the change in mean score in each of the scales for each of the programs. Next, I conducted paired sample tests for each of the scales to test the null hypotheses that the pre- and post-experience surveys would be equal and to evaluate the significance of the change in means of the dependent variables. Results of these analyses are presented in the sections below.

Impact on Cognitive Domain

The following section describes the changes in the two scales that make up the cognitive domain of the GPI.

Cognitive-knowing scale. Analysis of the data showed that there was very little change, some of which was negative, in the cognitive-knowing scale. None of these changes were significant even at the $p \leq .05$ level. Therefore, I cannot reject the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between the pre- and post-experience score. Results are listed in Table 8.

Although there is some variance across the programs, the change in means was not significant. This implies that there was very little impact, positive or negative, on

participants' complexity in thinking or their ability to consider cultural context when evaluating knowledge claims.

Table 8

Change in Cognitive-Knowing Scale by Program

Year	Location	Pre-	Post-	Change	SD	t-statistic
2011	Florence	3.68	3.68	0.00	0.44	-0.03
2011	Barcelona	3.64	3.57	-0.07	0.30	-1.50
2012	Florence	3.74	3.66	-0.08	0.55	-1.20
2012	Barcelona	3.62	3.57	-0.05	0.65	-0.56
2013	Florence	3.70	3.77	0.07	0.42	1.59
2013	Hong Kong	3.72	3.73	0.01	0.42	0.13
2013	Seville	3.70	3.79	0.09	0.40	1.41

Cognitive-knowledge scale. There were statistically significant gains in all programs in the cognitive-knowledge scale. Table 9 displays the changes across all programs. All changes, except for Hong Kong 2013, were statistically significant at the level of $p \leq .01$, indicating that there is less than a 1% chance that these changes in means occurred by chance. Therefore, I can reject the null hypothesis that there would be no change in the cognitive-knowledge scale on the post-experience GPI. Results from this analysis show that the changes in the cognitive-knowledge scale were statistically significant in all programs in all years. On average, participants in all locations showed a statistically significant increase in their understanding of various cultures and their impact on the global society.

Table 9

Change in Cognitive-Knowledge Scale by Program

Year	Location	Pre-	Post-	Change	SD	t-statistic
2011	Florence	3.50	3.72	0.22	0.44	3.65***
2011	Barcelona	3.42	3.67	0.25	0.43	3.75***
2012	Florence	3.49	3.72	0.23	0.61	3.15**
2012	Barcelona	3.45	3.86	0.41	0.64	5.01***
2013	Florence	3.49	3.78	0.29	0.54	4.88***
2013	Hong Kong	3.55	3.80	0.25	0.55	2.41*
2013	Seville	3.55	3.99	0.44	0.60	4.60***

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Impact on Intrapersonal Domain

Findings related to the scales of the intrapersonal domain are described in the sections that follow.

Intrapersonal-identity scale. Overall, five of the seven programs had statistically significant gains in this scale. Most of this growth took place in the latter years of the SYEA program. Table 10 displays the results of the analysis.

Table 10

Change in Intrapersonal-Identity Scale by Program

Year	Location	Pre-	Post-	Change	SD	t-statistic
2011	Florence	3.96	4.11	0.15	0.44	2.49*
2011	Barcelona	3.92	4.01	0.09	0.36	1.66
2012	Florence	3.99	4.08	0.09	0.40	1.83
2012	Barcelona	3.84	4.10	0.26	0.52	3.88***
2013	Florence	3.99	4.18	0.19	0.46	3.88***
2013	Hong Kong	4.03	4.20	0.17	0.32	2.79**
2013	Seville	4.02	4.18	0.16	0.46	2.14*

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Changes in all programs in 2013 were statistically significant. Only the changes in Barcelona 2011 ($p = .105$) and Florence 2012 ($p = .07$) were not statistically

significant. It is interesting to note that only one program location in 2011 (Florence) and one program location in 2012 (Barcelona) had significant changes while all three locations in 2013 had statistical significance. These findings demonstrate that many of the students experienced statistically significant gains in awareness and acceptance of their identity.

Intrapersonal-affect scale. Only two of the programs had changes that were statistically significant at the $p \leq .05$ level. As displayed in Table 11, these significant changes fell only in the latest year of the SYEA program.

Table 11

Change in Intrapersonal-Affect Scale by Program

Year	Location	Pre-	Post-	Change	SD	t-statistic
2011	Florence	3.74	3.80	0.06	0.30	1.57
2011	Barcelona	3.80	3.76	-0.05	0.24	-1.28
2012	Florence	3.89	3.87	-0.02	0.38	0.40
2012	Barcelona	3.77	3.79	0.02	0.53	0.27
2013	Florence	3.83	3.92	0.09	0.37	2.26*
2013	Hong Kong	3.95	4.04	0.09	0.36	1.41
2013	Seville	3.82	3.99	0.17	0.42	2.54*

* $p \leq .05$.

Interestingly, the Hong Kong location was the only location in 2013 whose participants did not show a statistically significant change. These findings imply that of the seven programs, participants from only two programs (Florence 2013 and Seville 2013) reported significant changes in their level of respect for, and acceptance of, different cultural perspectives as well as their level of emotional confidence when living in complex situations.

Impact on Interpersonal Domain

This section describes the effects related to the scales that comprise the interpersonal domain.

Interpersonal-social responsibility scale. Only Florence 2011 ($p = .001$) and Barcelona 2012 ($p = .006$) had changes that were statistically significant in this scale. Three of the programs (Barcelona 2011, Florence 2012, Florence 2013) showed little or no change at all. Results from all programs are displayed in Table 12.

Table 12

Change in Interpersonal-Social Responsibility Scale by Program

Year	Location	Pre-	Post-	Change	SD	t-statistic
2011	Florence	3.70	3.84	0.15	0.31	3.40***
2011	Barcelona	3.61	3.63	0.02	0.36	0.36
2012	Florence	3.72	3.71	-0.01	0.33	-0.22
2012	Barcelona	3.54	3.73	0.19	0.53	2.85**
2013	Florence	3.66	3.67	0.01	0.45	0.19
2013	Hong Kong	3.95	4.04	0.07	0.33	1.11
2013	Seville	3.66	3.74	0.08	0.47	1.02

** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

Thus, only students who participated in the Florence 2011 and Barcelona 2012 program showed statistically significant changes in their level of engagement with diverse others. Participants from these two programs also experienced significant growth in their degree of cultural sensitivity after participating in the SYEA program.

Interpersonal-social interaction scale. In this scale, only Barcelona 2012 and Florence 2013 showed statically significant growth (see Table 13).

Post-experience GPI results indicate that only Barcelona 2011 showed a negative change but it was not significant ($p = .685$). None of the students, except those who

participated in the Barcelona 2012 and the Florence 2013 programs, experienced significant growth in their level of interdependence and social concern for others.

Table 13

Change in Interpersonal-Social Interaction Scale by Program

Year	Location	Pre-	Post-	Change	SD	t-statistic
2011	Florence	3.62	3.70	0.08	0.42	1.41
2011	Barcelona	3.63	3.61	-0.02	0.32	-0.41
2012	Florence	3.53	3.57	0.05	0.41	0.93
2012	Barcelona	3.46	3.61	0.15	0.52	2.31*
2013	Florence	3.51	3.68	0.18	0.40	4.08***
2013	Hong Kong	3.77	3.80	0.03	0.41	0.46
2013	Seville	3.48	3.58	0.10	0.38	1.57

* $p \leq .05$; *** $p \leq .001$

Summary of Findings Related to First Research Question

Analysis of the data revealed the scales were impacted to different degrees.

Within the cognitive domain, none of the programs showed statistically significant gains in the knowing scale. Conversely, all programs had statistically significant gains in the knowledge scale. In fact, the knowledge scale had the strongest gains of all the GPI scales. Within the intrapersonal domain, five of the seven programs showed statistically significant gains in the identity scale. Only Barcelona 2011 and Florence 2012 did not show statistical increases. Gains in the affect scale were only significant for Florence 2013 and Seville 2013. Within the interpersonal domain, which had the least statistically significant changes in its scales overall, only two programs (Florence 2011 and Barcelona 2012) in the social responsibility scale and two (Barcelona 2013 and Florence 2013) in the social interaction scale showed statistically significant gains.

Findings Related to Research Question #2

In this portion of the study, I sought to investigate the extent to which the changes in the six GPI scales could be explained by demographic variables or program characteristics. These independent variables include gender, ethnicity, major, grade point average, and level of parental education as well as program year and location. The dependent variables are the changes in mean score of each of the GPI scales, which include cognitive-knowing, cognitive-knowledge, intrapersonal-identity, intrapersonal-affect, interpersonal-social responsibility, and interpersonal-social interaction. To answer this research question, multiple regression analysis was conducted on the sample and the $p \leq .05$ level of significance was used for hypothesis testing.

Although I intended to run regression models for all of 369 participants across all program locations and years, there were data limitations that led to the decision to only use the data from programs that took place in 2012 and 2013. As discussed earlier in chapter three, the GPI instrument that was administered to 2011 participants did not contain questions that requested demographic information related to the students' grade point average, level of parental education, and previous study abroad experience. When running regression analysis on 2012-2013 programs, these variables were identified as explaining the change in some of the GPI scales. Including 2011 programs in my analysis would introduce specification error into the models because I would knowingly be excluding variables that had been statistically proven to be significant. Therefore, the findings related to my second research question only pertain to programs run in 2012 and

2013. I present findings by location to better understand the extent to which demographics explain variation across the three international sites.

Findings by Location

Results from the regression analysis revealed that there were various demographic characteristics that explain the changes in the GPI scales. These results are displayed, by scale, in Table 14.

Table 14

Significant Demographics by Scale

Scale	R ²	Variable	Co-efficient	t statistic
<u>Δ Cognitive-knowing</u>				
Florence	0.03	Abroad Experience	-0.26	-2.03*
Barcelona	0.25	Communications	-0.62	-2.55***
		Female	0.42	2.02**
Hong Kong	0.19	GPA B	0.39	2.34*
Seville	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
<u>Δ Cognitive-knowledge</u>				
Florence	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
Barcelona	0.45	Physics & Biology	0.89	4.25***
		Minority	-0.53	-3.10***
		Communications	-0.36	-2.03*
Hong Kong	0.16	Female	0.45	2.16*
Seville	0.14	Female	0.47	2.44*
<u>Δ Intrapersonal-identity</u>				
Florence	0.11	Hispanic	0.36	3.24***
		Communications	0.36	2.93***
Barcelona	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S

Table 14 cont.

Scale	R^2	Variable	Co-efficient	t statistic
Hong Kong	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
Seville	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
<u>Δ Intrapersonal-affect</u>				
Florence	0.07	Multiple Ethnicities	-0.24	-2.53**
		Health & Medicine	-0.23	-2.09*
Barcelona	0.23	Communications	-0.60	-3.29***
		Female	0.39	2.60**
Hong Kong	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
Seville	0.38	GPA B	-0.39	-3.61***
		Graduate Degree	-0.35	-3.25***
<u>Δ Interpersonal-social responsibility</u>				
Florence	0.03	Multiple Ethnicities	-0.23	-2.22*
Barcelona	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
Hong Kong	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
Seville	0.40	Asian	0.83	3.04***
		College Graduate	-0.37	-3.00**
<u>Δ Interpersonal-social interaction</u>				
Florence	0.05	Communications	0.26	2.18*
		Health & Medicine	0.25	2.04*
Barcelona	0.11	Physics & Biology	0.51	2.44*
Hong Kong	N/S	N/S	N/S	N/S
Seville	0.29	Female	0.45	3.61**
		Asian	0.60	2.33*

Note. Δ = change in the respective scale, N/S = Not significant.

* $p \leq .05$; ** $p \leq .01$; *** $p \leq .001$

To gain a better understanding of how these impacts varied across the program locations, I also present a visual representation of the regression findings by international site (see Table 15). In this table, the R^2 values are averaged by location and also by scale which gives an overview of the average percentage of the changes that can be attributed to demographic factors.

Table 15

Average R^2 by Scale and Location

Scale	Florence	Barcelona	Seville	Hong Kong	Average R^2
Δ Cognitive-knowing	0.03	0.25	0.00	0.19	0.12
Δ Cognitive-knowledge	0.00	0.45	0.14	0.16	0.19
Δ Intrapersonal-identity	0.11	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.03
Δ Intrapersonal-affect	0.07	0.23	0.38	0.00	0.17
Δ Interpersonal-social responsibility	0.03	0.00	0.40	0.00	0.11
Δ Interpersonal-social interaction	0.05	0.10	0.29	0.00	0.11
Average R^2	0.05	0.17	0.20	0.12	0.13

Note. Δ = change in the respective scale.

Overall, results indicated that the significant demographic variables explain between 0% and 40% of the change in GPI scales, with coefficients that range from -.62 to .89, respectively.

Florence. Florence had independent variables that explained changes in five of the six GPI scales. Regression analysis revealed that up to 11% of the change in GPI scales could be explained by demographic factors, with coefficients that range from -.26 to .36. These coefficients represent effect sizes between approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{3}$ point on a five-point Likert scale. Changes could be explained, to some degree, by demographic factors in all scales except the cognitive-knowledge scale.

Changes explained by previous study abroad experience. Not surprisingly, students who had previous study abroad experience before going on the SYEA program gained .26 less on the cognitive-knowing scale than students who had never studied abroad before. This model however, has an R^2 of .03, indicating that this variable only explained 3% of the change in cognitive-knowing.

Changes explained by ethnicity. On the intrapersonal-identity scale, students who self-identified as Hispanic gained 7.8% more on average than students of non-Hispanic ethnicities, which explains 11% of the overall change. On the other hand, students who identified as having Multiple Ethnicities gained about 5% less than others in intrapersonal-affect, $R^2 = .07$, $F(1, 149) = 4.12$, $p \leq .01$) and interpersonal-social responsibility, $R^2 = .03$, $F(1, 149) = 4.92$, $p \leq .05$).

Changes explained by major. Two academic majors helped explain changes in three scales. Students studying communications and health and medicine gained

significantly more on the interpersonal-social interaction scale than students studying other subjects. In this scale, both of these majors gained approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ point more than other majors, and together these gains explain 5% of the overall change in social interaction. Communication majors also had significant growth in the intrapersonal-identity scale, where they gained 7.8% more than other majors while health and medicine majors gained 5.2% more than others in the intrapersonal-affect scale.

Barcelona. Demographic factors that helped explain changes in the GPI scales in Barcelona include gender, ethnicity, and major while parental education and GPA had no effect. R^2 values range from .11 to .45, indicating that demographic variables can explain up to 45% of the change in the respective GPI scales.

Changes explained by gender. Female students gained more than their male counterparts on two scales. They gained 9.2% more on the cognitive-knowing scale, indicating that females showed greater changes in their ability to consider cultural context when evaluating cultural differences. They also gained 6.2% more on the intrapersonal-affect scale, revealing greater increases in their respect and acceptance of different cultural perspectives.

Changes explained by ethnicity. Ethnicity only explained the change in the cognitive-knowledge scale. Initially, all represented ethnicities were included in the regression model. Results of this analysis indicated that Hispanic students gained over one point more than non-Hispanic students on the cognitive-knowing scale. However, this was considered a small sample finding because only 2 of the 58 students identified as Hispanic, which represents only 3.4% of the sample. Although the regression analysis

showed Hispanic students gained 31.6% more than non-Hispanics, this finding had low explanatory power due to the small sample size. Therefore, I decided to create a new *minority* variable that included other ethnicities that had low representation in the sample (Asian, Hispanic, and Multiple Ethnicities). When running the regression on the cognitive knowing scale, all ethnicities dropped out of the model. However, regression conducted on the cognitive-knowledge scale showed that those within the minority variable gained over $\frac{1}{2}$ point less than non-minority students. This indicates, on average, that minority students showed less growth in their understanding and awareness of various cultures.

Changes explained by major. Regression analysis identified physics and biology as well as communications majors as having explanatory power in the changes across various scales. Students studying physics and biology tended to gain significantly more while those studying communications gained significantly less than students of other majors. On the cognitive-knowledge scale, physics and biology majors had significant gains of 21.7% over other majors and communications majors gained 7.8% less than others. Communication majors also gained 14% less on the cognitive-knowledge scale, indicating that these students, overall, gained less within the cognitive domain of development. This trend continued for communication majors in the intrapersonal-affect scale where gains were 13.6% less than those of other majors. Conversely, large gains by physics and biology majors also occurred in the interpersonal-social interaction scale where they gained approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ point more than other majors.

Seville. Of the six GPI scales, four can be partially explained by demographic factors. Specifically, regression analysis generated R^2 values that ranged from .14 to .40, indicating that up to 40% of the changes in these four scales could be explained by demographic variables. Coefficients also range from -.39 to .83, representing effect sizes between approximately $-\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{4}{5}$ point on a five-point Likert scale. On average, the Seville location showed the highest R^2 value of any of the locations.

Changes explained by gender. Females gained almost $\frac{1}{2}$ point more than males on two scales. Females gained 10.3% more on the cognitive-knowledge score, $R^2 = .14$, $F(1, 36 = 5.97, p \leq .05)$ and 9.9% more than males on the interpersonal-social interaction scale, $R^2 = .29$, $F(1, 36 = 7.19, p \leq .01)$. This demonstrates that, on average, female showed higher increases in their understanding and awareness of other cultures and their level of interaction with diverse others than males.

Changes explained by ethnicity. Students who self-identified as Asian gained significantly more than other students on the two scales that make up the interpersonal domain of the GPI. Asian students gained almost 20% more in social responsibility and 13.6% more in social interaction, representing an effect size of $\frac{3}{8}$ and $\frac{4}{5}$ point gain over non-Asian students. This implies that Asian students experienced increases in their willingness to interact with diverse others and developed an increased sense of social concern for others.

Changes explained by GPA. All Seville participants reported that their cumulative GPA was either in the A or B range. Students with a GPA in the B range gained $\frac{3}{8}$ point less on the intrapersonal-affect scale than students whose GPA was in the

A range. This indicates that students with an A-range GPA demonstrated higher gains in their level of respect and acceptance for perspectives different than their own.

Changes explained by level of parent education. The level of parental education helped explain the change in two scales. Specifically, students whose parents hold a graduate degree gained $\frac{1}{3}$ less of a point than students whose parents who do not hold a graduate degree. Similarly, those whose parents are college graduates gained approximately 8% less than students whose parents have lower levels of education or who hold a graduate degree.

Hong Kong. Demographic factors explained changes that occurred in the two scales that represent the cognitive domain of the GPI. This was the fewest of all locations (see Table 15). In Hong Kong, no changes were attributable to ethnicity, major, or level of parental education. Regression analysis revealed that only gender and GPA could help explain up to 19% of the changes in these cognitive scales.

Changes explained by gender. Females gained almost $\frac{1}{2}$ point more than males on the cognitive-knowledge scale, $R^2 = .16$, $F(1, 24) = 4.68$, $p \leq .05$, implying that they showed higher gains in their level of respect and acceptance for different cultural perspectives.

Changes explained by GPA. Similar to Seville, students in Hong Kong reported a GPA that fell either within the A or B range. That being said, students with a GPA in the B range gained 8.5% more on the cognitive-knowing scale than student with a GPA in the A range. This increase indicates that these students experienced higher increases in

their complexity of views and their ability to consider multiple perspectives when evaluating cultural differences.

Program Characteristics

Regression analysis revealed that the changes in the GPI scales were not explained by program characteristics such as year or location. This suggests that *where* or *when* students went abroad did not influence the degree to which they were impacted cognitively, intrapersonally, or interpersonally.

Summary of Findings Related to Second Research Question

In this portion of the study, I investigated the extent to which participant demographics and program characteristics could explain the changes in the GPI scales. Results from regression analysis indicate that program characteristics such as location and year did not influence the change in the GPI scales. More broadly, this suggests that the maturity of the SYEA program overall did not influence participants' cognitive, intrapersonal, or interpersonal development. While demographic factors did explain some changes, there was not a pattern across all locations that suggested that students with certain characteristics fared better or worse than others on the GPI scales. The most evident pattern was in gender as females demonstrated significantly higher gains than males in four of the six scales. Gender was not significant in explaining changes on the intrapersonal-identity or the interpersonal-social responsibility scale. Gender was also not significant in explaining any changes among the Florence students.

Other patterns were sparse and seemed to relate to the particular student group that went to each location. This was exemplified with student majors, where

communications majors had higher gains in Florence, while in Barcelona communications majors gained less than student studying other subjects. Overall, the lack of patterns across locations and scales as generated by regression analysis suggests that the explanatory power of these findings is rather low. Such inconsistencies beg the question: If demographics or program characteristics may not steadily help predict changes in the GPI scales, then what other aspects of the student experience can help us better understand how these scales are impacted? The qualitative portion of this study aims at just that by closely examining the accounts of participants' experience on the SYEA program.

Findings Related to Research Question #3

Analysis of the students' voice, captured in 11 interviews, helped me answer my third research question: In what ways, did this program influence the development of participants' intercultural maturity? Interviewees were selected from the most recent year of this study (2013) and studied abroad in three locations with five students from the Florence location, three from Hong Kong, and three from Seville.

Findings are presented in two sections. In the first section, I describe how students matured in each of the three developmental domains (cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal). Their progression was tracked using King and Baxter Magolda's (2005) developmental trajectory of intercultural maturity where development in each domain occurs in three levels: initial, intermediate, and mature (see Table 2). Taken together, I conclude with an overview of how students' overall intercultural maturity was influenced by their experiences abroad.

Cognitive Maturity

Findings related to cognitive maturity suggest that many participants experienced a shift from the initial level to the intermediate level as a result of their experience on the SYEA program. One student had such a profound experience that she even seemed to move from the initial level, through the intermediate level, and began to advance toward the mature level.

According to King and Baxter Magolda (2005), knowledge at the initial level is often adopted from authorities and is viewed as certain, therefore making knowledge claims more “readily judged as right or wrong” (p. 575). At the intermediate level, individuals begin to acknowledge the uncertainty associated with relying on authorities’ knowledge claims and begin to develop a more internally based process for making meaning. Those at the intermediate level are more open to differing perspectives and accept that others can hold different views for legitimate reasons. The mature level within the cognitive domain is “marked by the shift of knowledge as constructed and as grounded in context” where judgments are “derive[d] from personal experience, evidence from other sources, and others’ perspectives” (p. 576). As individuals gain cognitive complexity, they are better able to understand multiple cultural perspectives.

Several students made sense of their cognitive shift when discussing the concepts of *right* and *wrong*. What was once easy to determine as right or wrong became more difficult, making it more challenging for students to categorize knowledge in one of these two domains as they had previously been accustomed to doing. As participants told their stories, contemplation of the concept of right and wrong seemed to be provoked by the

academic course taken abroad, interactions with diverse others, and the small group reflections that were part of the intercultural learning component. I also identify one student whose experiences abroad had what I refer to as a *neutral influence* on cognitive maturity, where there did not seem to be explicitly stated impacts in this domain.

· **Provoked by academic course.** Many of the participants attribute these cognitive shifts to the course they took while abroad on the SYEA program. There were various courses offered in each location, including ethics and Spanish in Seville, Catholic theology, art history, and chemistry in Florence, and world religions and marketing in Hong Kong. Students identified the Catholic theology course, the world religions course, and the ethics course as particularly influential on their ability to evaluate difference with more complexity. These students commented that the course content and class discussions gave them an analytical lens through which they could critique what they previously held as true and encouraged them to consider cultural context when making judgments.

Some of the students who studied Catholic theology in Florence and world religions in Hong Kong noted that the professors, through the delivery of religious concepts, helped them understand and appreciate the plurality of religions that span the globe. Through this learning, some questioned their own religion, which forced them to critically evaluate why they believe what they do. As a result of this process, some expressed a stronger and more profound connection to their own faith. These findings parallel findings from Astin, Astin, and Lindholm's (2010) study on spirituality in higher education where they identified study abroad as a key college experience that contributed

to students' spiritual growth. Astin et al. (2010) found that the international context of study abroad exposed students to diverse people, cultures, and ideas, which helped them develop a better understanding and appreciation of multiple perspectives.

Three of the five interview participants who went to Florence on the SYEA program took a Catholic theology course. Of these three students, two commented that their view of Catholicism was challenged by the course, which caused them to reflect on their understanding of their own faith. These two students, whose accounts imply a possible shift from the initial level to the intermediate level of cognitive maturity, questioned what they had previously held as true in relation to their faith. Amanda, a devout Catholic, was surprised by the role that Catholicism played in Italian culture. She assumed that, because Rome is the center of the Catholic religion, Italians would follow a regimented religious schedule. When she understood that her own religious practices were more rule-oriented than those of Italians, she evaluated the different approaches:

It made me realize that [Catholicism] is not all about rules like I thought. [In Italy], I feel like they live their faith and it is not only about going to church. It made me realize there are a lot of ways to be Catholic which made me appreciate that aspect of their faith. Now I know why we make judgments—it's what we've been told to believe. But once you see a different way of life you can better understand it and make your own decisions about things. (personal communication, May 13, 2013)

This change in understanding, that Catholicism is not only about following rules but can include a variety of approaches, reflects that Amanda may have experienced a shift from an initial to intermediate level of cognitive maturity. As a result of this experience, Amanda seemed to appreciate how others practice Catholicism.

Diana, a strong Christian, also felt that the class challenged her intellectually and personally. Looking back, Diana realized that she was misled about other religions and was taught that her form of Christianity was the only way to serve God. She reflected, “I was always taught that I was a certain religion and that was the correct way” (personal communication, August 25, 2013). This suggests an initial level of cognitive maturity because she considered other approaches to serving God as wrong. After learning about the Catholic religion in class in Florence, she was able to understand and appreciate the different ways that people serve God. She commented, “There are so many different ways that you can view religion and it does not really mean that it is wrong, it’s just a different way of looking at it” (personal communication, August 25, 2013). Diana felt that this experience was “eye-opening” because she now understood “multiplicity and the truth in other religions that are different from [hers]” (personal communication, August 25, 2013). This new understanding of religion, where others can hold different views for legitimate reasons, suggests that Diana experienced a shift toward the intermediate level of cognitive maturity because she no longer seemed to view non-Christians as wrong. Rather, she saw it as a “different way of looking at it” (personal communication, August 25, 2013).

Brian, one of the two interviewees who went to Hong Kong and took a world religions course, also felt the course content impacted how he viewed the complexity of the concept of right and wrong. Growing up in Utah, Brian was the only non-Mormon amongst his friends, so he was considered an outsider. He became “sick of his friends trying to convert him” and felt that the religion was “wrong ” and his friends were

“brainwashed” (personal communication, August 6, 2013). He was not raised in a religiously affiliated household, so his exposure to the array of religions practiced throughout the world piqued his curiosity in evaluating the concepts of right and wrong in terms of religion. After studying various religions and seeing them at play in Asia, Brian became intrigued as to how and why ideas are considered right or wrong. He remarked:

The biggest impact that [the SYEA program] had on me was that it set off my interest in discovering right and wrong. Beforehand, I never really had such an interest in morals or values or the definitive line between right and wrong. Being in Hong Kong made me really start to question why we even need to make those decisions. (personal communication, August 6, 2013)

Brian learned a variety of approaches to faith and saw positive aspects in many of them, even mentioning that he “wanted to adopt ideas from some of them.” He later reflected on his comments about the *wrong* nature of Mormonism, disclosing that before he left for Hong Kong his sister had converted to Mormonism. He said, “The fact my sister wanted to become Mormon was really hard for me because I just didn’t agree with it and it affected our relationship.” It became clear that this changed over time when he said, “Although I would never become Mormon, my sister did for a reason so I am trying to respect that” (personal communication, August 6, 2013). When asked what prompted this shift, Brian said:

In Hong Kong I saw so many different religions and we talked a lot about them in class and how some people follow their own religion in their own way and that is okay in Hong Kong. There are just so many religions out there and there are a lot of good things about a lot of them and I can see that now . . . I am just more patient with my sister I guess because being Mormon is part of her and I need to accept that. (personal communication, August 6, 2013)

This concept of multiplicity resonated with him, which furthered his skepticism regarding the need to determine right and wrong. While Brian did not make it clear that he moved

from one level to another in terms of cognitive maturity, he expressed a deeper interest in contemplating knowledge certainty as a result of his study abroad experience, which suggests progression toward a more complex meaning-making system.

All three of the students who were interviewed from the Seville location took an ethics class. These three students, Rachel, Mike, and Laynie, attributed their new way of thinking about cultural difference to the study of ethical theories such as morality and relativism. The experiences related to this class seemed to impact the students' cognitive maturity to varying degrees. One example that some students mentioned was the examination of the Spanish cultural practice of bullfighting. The professor applied ethical theory to this practice and engaged students in conversations on whether bullfighting was right or wrong. Going into the study abroad experience, all three students considered the practice as wrong, suggesting a more initial level of cognitive maturity because "differing cultural perspectives that do not agree with one's view . . . are considered wrong rather than different" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 575). However as the students applied ethical theories, they realized their initial judgments do not take into consideration cultural relativism and this caused them to shift their views.

Prior to taking the ethics class in Seville, Rachel used to think of the concept of right and wrong as being "clear-cut" because she "thought [she] knew what was right and what was wrong, so [she] didn't really think about it" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). This statement suggests that Rachel came into the experience with an initial level of cognitive maturity. She recalled an in-class discussion about bullfighting that forced her to contemplate right and wrong while in Seville:

We visited a bullring [with the class] and that was interesting because I have always seen bullfighting as really inhumane, and I never really understood it. I always said that I would never go to a bullfight because it is just wrong. But, it was really interesting learning the full story, what happens to the bull before and after and how it's treated, and how it has become this cultural thing . . . I feel like I now understand Spaniards' cultural perspective and realize how important it is to them. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Rich in-class dialogue around this subject forced her to voice judgments in the context of relativism and morality and, in the end, she came out with a less clear opinion on the subject of bullfighting. She reflected on her overall experience taking this ethics class in an international environment:

I guess it has made me less . . . sure about the fact that I know what is right and what is wrong. Before, I thought that I knew what was right and what was wrong and I didn't think about it. I didn't have that type of mentality. I guess it has changed me . . . as a person because I used to be very closed off but this made me open to new ideas. I think that's part of the reason that I really like learning about new cultures . . . because it makes me feel less closed off. I think the class really challenged my beliefs of morality . . . and what I see as right and wrong as not being so clear-cut. I learned that morality is defined by culture and it was interesting to see how different Spain is from the US. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Rachel compared her "closed off" self, which parallels the initial level of cognitive maturity, to a more open self that is open to the uncertainty of knowledge. This presupposes a shift toward the intermediate level because she now seems to be aware of the complexity in making such judgments.

Unlike Rachel, Mike said that his understanding of right and wrong was "blurred" even prior to going to Seville as he had never seen himself as "the type of person to hold steadfastly one position" (personal communication, May 9, 2013). This suggests that he may have already progressed out of the initial level toward the intermediate level of cognitive maturity. While he did not clearly articulate a shift from seeing right and

wrong as easy to determine, he shared that the ethics class caused him to reflect on his inclinations to judge something as right or wrong. He recalled, "It's easy to see bullfighting as wrong and we talked about that a lot in my ethics class." He continued, "but when you really learn about the cultural value of it, especially when you are in Spain and you actually get to see the cultural background behind it, you really start to question all that you have learned about it before" (personal communication, May 9, 2013).

Taking the ethics class seemed to make him become more critical of his personal process of evaluating cultural differences and the importance of considering cultural context in this evaluative process. He clearly marked a realization that relying on authorities' knowledge is no longer valid for him, which implies his continued movement through the intermediate stage of cognitive maturity.

Of the three students who took the ethics course in Seville, Laynie's reflections about her experience indicate that her cognitive maturity perhaps was impacted to a greater degree than those of Rachel and Mike. When discussing the concept of right and wrong, she commented that she now saw this as a "gray area" (personal communication, May 10, 2013) that is influenced by many factors, which suggests a movement from the initial level to the intermediate level of cognitive maturity. She explained, "I learned that [one] can make arguments behind why something is right and wrong, but that is all perception and lots of things influence that perception, so you have to take that into consideration" (personal communication, May 10, 2013). She explained that the ethics class also made her more comfortable with this gray area because she "under[stood] that people come from different places, with different values, that are prioritized in different

ways.” Laynie’s profound learning experiences suggest a further progression toward cognitive maturity.

Laynie also described that her professor helped her understand the importance of cultural context when evaluating the concept of right and wrong. She elaborated, “As people,” she commented, “we put ourselves on a pedestal and think that our way is better, but what’s right for us is right is right for us because of our own culture and that’s how [our professor] explained it” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Laynie also recalled one of the SYEA pre-departure meetings where the concept of culture was compared to an iceberg. The analogy offered in that meeting emphasized that what one observes about culture is only what lies above the surface and what one does not observe are the cultural values and traditions that support what is observable in a culture. She noted that this comparison began to make sense to her when she started learning the ethical theories and applying them to her experience in Seville. She described how this experience helped her understand the complexity of culture:

What you first see in a culture is just the tip of the iceberg. Then, when you really . . . think things through, you realize that there are so many factors that weigh into what you view as right and wrong. You know, priorities that people have and the values that cultures place on things, there is more to the story than what you can see . . . so making a judgment immediately is not fair. You have to go deeper than that. (personal communication, May 10, 2013)

Such contextual thinking is yet another example of how Laynie’s complexity in thinking was influenced by the course taken while abroad. Laynie’s testimonials suggest that she transitioned to the intermediate level, where she understood the gray area around the concept of right and wrong, to a more cognitively mature level, where knowledge is grounded in context.

These accounts from students who took ethics, world religions, and Catholic theology while abroad demonstrate that students' cognitive maturity was impacted by experiences related to the course. Course concepts seemed to give students an analytical lens through which they could evaluate what they previously held as right or true, often times leading to a more complex understanding of knowledge. For many students, this involved a movement from initial to intermediate levels of cognitive maturity, where knowledge became uncertain and rather than relying on authorities' knowledge claims, they began to develop their own meaning-making system. I now proceed to describe other factors outside the academic class that seemed to foster cognitive maturity.

Provoked by small group reflections. Some of the interviewees also attributed to changes in how they understood the concepts of right and wrong to their experiences related to the small group reflections. In addition to the academic course load, students also completed an intercultural learning component. This component involved small group reflections that took place both before and during the abroad experience.

The small group meetings prior to departure aimed to prepare students for their experience on the SYEA program. Lindsay spoke about how her group discussed the importance of analyzing their own judgments when viewing others and understanding that others go through this same process when viewing them. She learned to, "instead of attacking the difference, try and understand it" (personal communication, May 26, 2013). She further explained how she applied this process while in Florence:

When you see how different things really are, you first think they are weird. You feel yourself getting frustrated. But then you remember to take a step back to understand that it's a different culture. Maybe it's not them who are doing something weird—maybe it's us perceiving it as weird or maybe they think we

are doing something weird also. One is not right or wrong or better or worse, just different. This resonated with me. (personal communication, May 26, 2013)

Lindsay thought these meetings were “a good aspect of the program” because they provided a “space to talk and reflect about [her] experiences that [she] otherwise wouldn’t have” (personal communication, May 26, 2013). When evaluating cultural differences, she became aware that right and wrong are based on perceptions, making her more open to other perspectives and understanding that others hold different views for legitimate reasons. These realizations are characteristic of the intermediate level of cognitive maturity (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). While Lindsay did not specifically indicate that she began in an initial level of cognitive maturity, her commentary suggests that as a result of her experience, she thinks more critically about evaluating difference.

Other students described the small group reflections abroad as helpful in analyzing how they interpret differences. For example, Alyssa indicated that talking through her experiences with her peers forced her to explain the rationale of her perspectives. She reflected on her experiences in the meetings:

I think that the idea behind the small groups is good because it is important to share your experience as it is happening. I think that’s something that should happen when you are abroad because with the culture shock you don’t have the opportunity to verbalize and share what’s going on. I actually learned a lot by sharing my perspectives with the group and explaining why I see certain things the way that I do. It motivated me to be more open and aware of other cultures and of my own judgments and I am really grateful for that. (personal communication, August 6, 2013)

In this process, she gained an awareness of other cultures and the judgments that came with her experience. Alyssa recalled another instance in the small group reflection where she became aware of her inclination to judge others who are culturally different from

herself. During a reflection, she caught herself judging one of her peers as he talked through his experience abroad:

I'm thinking particularly about something a student shared. The student was brought up really differently than myself. He was brought up in an all-White town, and he said that he couldn't tell a difference between a Mexican or a black person because he just was never exposed to it. I was shocked by that because I am Mexican! I actually thought he was going to be ignorant. However, I felt really enriched by seeing how open he was to the culture in Hong Kong. This guy, at least from what he shared, was not in a state of culture shock. He was embracing it and he was happy to be somewhere else, and I really respect that. If we hadn't had that conversation, and I knew about his upbringing before, I honestly would have just made assumptions and judged him based on that. (personal communication, August 6, 2013)

Alyssa, a Mexican citizen, became aware that she was assuming that she understood his experience, and at that moment judged it as ignorant. However, as she learned more about his perspective, she realized that she was judging him based on her assumptions and came out with an increased level of respect for the student. These two instances point out Alyssa's progression in her cognitive maturity, where she became aware of her judgments and the ability to suspend them, which suggests movement through the intermediate level of cognitive maturity.

Provoked by cultural interactions. Alyssa also referenced an increased complexity in assessing the concept of right and wrong by interacting with those who are different. When in Hong Kong, Alyssa met up with a friend from high school. This student, who was a native of Hong Kong, invited Alyssa over to meet her family. When Alyssa greeted their maid and the maid ignored her, she thought it was very strange. "In Mexico," she compared, "our maids are our confidants and we talk to them about everything and they are our friends. It's just the way Mexican culture is" (personal

communication, August 6, 2013). She thought that this treatment was “really wrong,” but her friend explained that it was part of her culture. Alyssa reflected on this and expressed how having this experience in an international environment impacted her understanding of right and wrong:

When we have these experiences internationally . . . it makes us think about our thinking more. You know, why something is right about our culture and wrong about theirs, but I now see that this is a really gray area. Having these experiences while abroad makes you be flexible. There is no certain way of doing things, you really have to adapt to culture . . . and so many other things. You learn that you have to be flexible in that way. (personal communication, August 6, 2013)

Interacting with diverse cultures while out of her comfort zone caused Alyssa to understand that right and wrong is not consistent across cultures, indicating another example of a possible advancement toward an intermediate level of cognitive maturity.

Neutral influence. One student, Abby, had a very different experience than these students. When asked to describe challenges she experienced while in Florence, she apologetically said, “I feel badly for saying this, but the trip was not challenging for me at all” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Abby explained her rationale for thinking this way:

I think sometimes what makes things challenging is that you think it’s going to be challenging. Or, you think that something is going to be a certain way and it’s not that way, so you rail against it because it’s not what you thought it was going to be. I didn’t come in with any of those ideas or presumptions. I came with an open mind and . . . didn’t really put up any . . . barriers . . . so it just wasn’t hard at all. (personal communication, May 19, 2013)

Abby described that going into the study abroad experience without expectations helped her be open-minded in approaching cultural differences. When asked to elaborate on her

process of how she evaluated cultural differences, she explained that it is important to understand that while there may be differences, there are also similarities:

I have only been to Italy, so I can't make a broad statement about other countries, but I am assuming that every country you go to will both have similarities and differences than what I know in the US. Let's talk about the differences. For example, I knew that Italy would have its own norms that are new to me and I know that they are a certain way because that's how that culture defines it. Then, there are underlying similarities. For example, when you go to the grocery store in Italy, they may not have the type of apples you know or the carrots will not come skinned and bagged in pre-washed bunches, but the underlying point is similar—you are still in the grocery store buying food that you are going to prepare and eat. I think it is not only finding the differences, but also finding the similarities between your life and the country you are visiting. (personal communication, May 10, 2013)

When reconciling differences, Abby mentioned that it is important to “not be offended when things are different than what you know and being able to understand that they are different because the culture is different” (personal communication, May 10, 2013).

Like the other students, Abby did mention the concept of right and wrong, but before going abroad she already had an understanding that right and wrong “can't be thought of in black and white terms because [people are] always going to have to alter the way [they] think about [what is right or wrong] based on what's around [them]” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Before participating in the program, Abby seemed to understand the importance of cultural context when evaluating difference. Her commentary suggests that she may have entered the program already beyond the intermediate level of cognitive maturity, which could explain why she felt the experience was not challenging in the same way as other students described.

Summary of impact on cognitive maturity. Findings indicate that this study abroad experience influenced students' development of cognitive maturity. For many of

the participants, this marked a shift from initial to intermediate levels of cognitive maturity, where students began to understand there was uncertainty associated with knowledge claims. Several made sense of this shift when describing the challenges in evaluating the concept of right and wrong. What was previously believed to be right or true was challenged by students' interactions with cultural difference abroad. In fact, as students expressed increasing acceptance of the uncertainty of knowledge, they became more open to considering perspectives that were different than their own. Along the way, some recognized that they evaluated their judgments as they were occurring, which led them to question their own assumptions and revealed a more open-minded approach to evaluating cultural difference. This was not the case for all students, however, as one student defined her experience as "not challenging" which could be a result of a mismatch between her more advanced cognitive maturity and the opportunities provided by this program.

In addition to shifts in the cognitive domain, many students also experienced changes related to how they view and interpret their identity as well as increases in self-confidence, which are encompassed by the intrapersonal domain of intercultural maturity.

Intrapersonal Maturity

Many of the students expressed profound intrapersonal changes as a result of their study abroad experience. Development within the intrapersonal domain of intercultural maturity is centered on an increasing awareness of one's dimensions of identity and an understanding of how these dimensions are integrated into one's view of oneself and the world (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). Such identity dimensions can include gender,

race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation. Those at the initial level lack awareness of their identity and allow themselves to be defined by others' expectations. This externally defined identity "yields externally defined beliefs that regulate interpretation of experiences and guide choices" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 578). The intermediate level is marked by a tension between a self that is externally based and the desire to establish an identity that is internally derived. During this stage individuals engage in "intentional self-exploration" that "allows for the simultaneous examination of [their] experiences in [their] own cultural contexts and an examination of that culture in broader social contexts" (p. 578). This also involves recognizing the legitimacy of different perspectives. The mature level is characterized by a sense of self where "aspects of one's identity are integrated in ways that provide a culturally-sensitive and well-considered basis for making decisions about intercultural interactions" (p. 579).

Analysis of the qualitative accounts indicate that many participants gained a better understanding of themselves and of their own culture, and as a result for some, an increased sense of self-confidence. These changes, marked by a shift from defining oneself through the eyes of others toward self-definition, suggest that these students found themselves progressing to the intermediate level on the intrapersonal maturity continuum. Similar to the cognitive domain, I also address the neutral influences on intrapersonal maturity experienced by one particular student.

Identity development. The study abroad experience, for many, was a space for self-exploration resulting in a better understanding of themselves and the dimensions of their identity. For Sarah, Lindsay, and Brian, this meant discovering their core principles.

Sarah spoke about how she became more connected with her religious affiliation as part of her social identity. Going abroad to Italy forced her to reflect on her faith and the role it played in her everyday life. She commented that the study abroad experience challenged her morals and devotion to the Catholic religion: “I think it really made me see who I am” (personal communication, August 21, 2013). While in Florence, other students made fun of her desire to maintain her strict mass schedule because “all they wanted to do was go out and party” (personal communication, August 21, 2013). She was proud that she withstood the pressure to compromise her beliefs. She reflected:

It made me realize that I am definitely stronger in my beliefs than I thought I was. [In Florence], my beliefs were being tested and I didn't cave in. In high school I only surrounded myself with my church friends and they never really pressured me to do anything. When I went to college, I knew that this was going to be my first test. Going to Italy was a big test for me because even though I wanted to fit in with others, my beliefs kept me strong and helped me stand my ground. It just made me understand that I am a religious person who likes to have fun but going out like the other girls is not for me. It made me more sure of who I am and my morals. (personal communication, August 21, 2013)

Being “sure of who I am” meant that she had developed a stronger connection with her faith. Sarah was more confident in her daily interactions with other students and with local Italians. The forces of peer pressure helped Sarah reflect on her Catholic faith, which she affirmed is a core aspect of her identity.

Lindsay offered another example of how being abroad in an international environment made her turn inward in discovering her identity. Lindsay enrolled in the SYEA program knowing several other students. Although she related to these students while at USD, it became apparent in Florence that she indeed was unique. After Florence, she was “much more in touch with [herself] and [her] identity” because she was

“forced to differentiate [herself] from others” (personal communication, May 26, 2013). Her experience in Italy made her “more aware of [her] personality and the type of person [she] is by comparing [herself] to her friends and to local Italians” (personal communication, May 26, 2103). Such self-discovery suggests that Lindsay moved into the intermediate level of intrapersonal maturity, where she turned inward to better define her identity.

Another common theme related to identity awareness across participants was an increased sense of understanding of their own culture. Many students mentioned a more developed sense of how the American culture is perceived abroad. Laynie shared, “It makes me more aware of what people define as being American—not really from an American perspective but from a global perspective” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Brian expressed embarrassment when he learned about how American culture was perceived in Asia, especially when the actions of his peers met the expectations of the “ugly American.” He learned that the American stereotype was “ignorant of the world and self-centered,” making him feel “less eager to identify with the culture” and “less proud of calling [himself] an American” (personal communication, August 8, 2013).

Learning about this perception in an international setting seemed to cause participants to critically evaluate their own culture. Although facing this while abroad was challenging, many of these students found this introspection beneficial, which led to a reflection on their American identity. For example, Brian’s frustration with being defined as an ugly American motivated him to “want to learn new ways of life that other cultures have, like their ideals, and adopt some of them so [he] can prove [himself]

different than the typical American.” Instead, he wanted to become “a person with a global mindset and a greater understanding of the whole world” (personal communication, August 8, 2013). Laynie articulated gaining a better understanding of personal and cultural identity:

The things that make me, me, do not fall in the same category of what makes Americans, Americans, and I think that is what I am trying to say. There are distinctions in who I am and my experiences as a person—of how I was brought up, my parenting, my siblings, friends, teachers—all of these experiences are not equivalent to being an American. Yes, you are part of a certain culture, but for your identity, there are distinctions that make you, you and I think that you need to dig beneath the surface to get at that. You need to go underneath the culture for every person you meet. (personal communication, May 10, 2013)

These examples demonstrate how this challenging situation prompted them to reflect on their identity and how they related to their own culture. Such intentional self-reflection on the aspects of their identity suggests these students progressed toward the intermediate level of intrapersonal maturity, where they began to turn inward to examine themselves, their own culture, and this culture in a broader social and global context. Another situation that challenged students, which served to be quite profound, was the acknowledgment of the inherent privilege associated with their culture.

Acknowledgment of one’s privilege. A common theme shared across several interviews of White students was an increased awareness and acknowledgment of privilege that they enjoy in their everyday lives in the United States. This realization is situated in the intermediate level of intrapersonal maturity because the students examined their experiences in their own cultural contexts as well as across broader social contexts (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). With this broader understanding of cultural identity, individuals develop the “ability to take a more candid look at the nature of one’s own

privilege” (p. 579). This realization appeared in two ways. In some cases, students became aware of their privilege because they were given preferential treatment in the host country. Conversely, other students became aware of their privilege after they felt marginalized while abroad and then paralleled that to the experiences that marginalized populations in the United States have on a regular basis. Many referenced this as being *on the other side* of marginalization, or in other words, on the other side of privilege, which raised awareness of their unconscious privilege in their home country.

Brian provided one example of when he was privileged in Hong Kong because of his American culture. This example related to experiences that occurred on a regular basis at nightclubs. When approaching nightclubs that were at maximum capacity, management removed local guests to make room for Brian and his American friends to enter. At first, he perceived this as a benefit. However, as he reflected on this experience, it began to feel “uncomfortable, weird, and wrong” (personal communication, August 6, 2013) that they were treated better than the locals of the host country. Brian described this increased understanding of differential treatment as “bittersweet.” He continued:

It makes you feel bad . . . it doesn't make you feel good that other people feel prejudiced against. But having that sense of awareness is refreshing. It's just so refreshing that I just want to keep getting more and more of it. It's not just refreshing, is just downright intriguing. That awareness . . . is what I desire to really gain, more than anything else. (personal communication, August 6, 2013)

Brian, a White male raised in a predominantly White community and now attending a predominantly White university, was not aware of such drastic differential treatment prior to going to Hong Kong. Although Brian enjoyed the preferential treatment at first, his

perspective changed when he reflected on how it must feel on the other side. This experience motivated him to develop a deeper understanding of this aspect of his cultural identity as well as an understanding of the experience of others.

Unlike Brian, other students felt they were marginalized because of their American culture, language limitations, or because of the way they looked. Although these students were aware marginalization existed, several of them had not personally experienced it until studying abroad. Students described themselves as ethnic or language minorities who struggled to fit in with the host country. At first, several students felt frustrated that they were judged by their culture or the way they looked.

Laynie, who grew up learning about the injustices of marginalization in her Jesuit private schools but had never experienced them herself, offered one example. She recalled:

Learning about marginalization in school and trying to put yourself in other people's shoes is one thing, but finally experiencing it and being on the other side of the fence is a lot different than you perceive it to be. And when I came back [to the US] . . . I was able to relate [to those who are marginalized], which was just a whole new feeling. That is what study abroad does, it changes the way you see things. Because of going abroad, my perception and my ability to recognize what it means to be different is completely open now. I am so much more aware of it because it happened to me, and now I can see it happening to others.
(personal communication, May 10, 2013)

Being treated differently while abroad helped Laynie develop sensitivity towards those who are marginalized. Mike also reflected, "I was marginalized. I felt like part of a minority [in Seville] because I was different . . . it showed me what that type of experience feels like and I can't imagine how that would feel everyday of your life" (personal communication, May 9, 2013). These examples demonstrate the impact the

study abroad experience had on developing an awareness of the unconscious privilege that some students have as well as respect for the perspectives of those who are marginalized in the host country and back in the U.S.

Cheryl presented a perspective that spanned the initial and intermediate levels of intrapersonal maturity. While in Hong Kong, she went on a side trip to mainland China where she was treated differently because of her American culture. She referred to her experience at a nightclub where she was not let in because she was an American. She expressed her frustration:

It's hard to see how people can just group everybody together. They see White and hear English and they think American and they don't want us. They don't know who I am, I don't know who they are. That kind of stuff doesn't happen [in the U.S.]. I feel like here, in the U.S., if we hear somebody speaking Spanish or Mandarin, we don't segregate. I have never seen anybody get denied from a club or anything like that because they spoke a different language or they had a different ethnicity. (personal communication, May 14, 2013)

Although Cheryl recognized that it was not right to treat people differently because of their culture, she also called out her ignorance when stating that this type of marginalization did not occur in the United States. She continued, "Being treated differently was terrible. It's like, if you are not going to accept me, then I am not going to accept you" (personal communication, May 14, 2013). After these statements, we discussed what she learned from this experience. After some reflection, Cheryl's tone became more sympathetic, commenting, "being part of it myself was really eye opening because it show[ed] me how it could feel" (personal communication, May 14, 2013). She related her experience to how minorities might feel in USD's predominantly White student body, noting that there is a "very small population of African American students,

so I guess they could feel singled out. I understand that now” (personal communication, May 14, 2013). Cheryl used this experience to gain awareness of perspectives of others in her own USD community.

Over the period of three weeks, some of these students began to recognize their privilege, and realized that marginalization occurs everywhere, even within their community at USD. Through the exploration of the aspects of their identity, typical of the intermediate level of intrapersonal maturity, some students also became more confident in expressing this identity to those around them.

Increased self-confidence provoked by identity exploration. As individuals became more in-tune with their identity while abroad, many also expressed an increase in self-confidence, which is also characteristic of the intermediate level of intercultural maturity. For the majority of the interview participants, the SYEA program was their first experience being out of the country without their parents, so they had the opportunity to develop and exercise autonomy. Diana described this as an “evolution of maturity” because she had to “take everything into [her] own hands” without the help or support of her parents. Although navigating the city and culture was stressful for Diana, she remarked that this was a big “take-away” for her because it “changed her as a person and made her more independent” (personal communication, August 25, 2013).

Three weeks in Hong Kong boosted Brian’s and Alyssa’s self-confidence and independence. Alyssa commented that the language barrier pushed her to take new risks:

It’s the first time that I’m in a culture where I totally stand out, or I think I totally stand out, and I don’t understand the language. This experience made me realize that I can handle living in a place like Asia. If a company hires me and wants to send me somewhere in Asia I will definitely do it because I know I can. I can

survive, and not only that, I can enjoy it! (personal communication, August 5, 2013)

As a multilingual person who had traveled to western European countries, Alyssa had always been able to understand the basics of the host language. Although she did not understand Cantonese, she had to “get creative and think outside the box” (personal communication, August 5, 2013) when interacting with locals. This made her feel confident that she could handle living in new places. Brian shared this sentiment, commenting, “Asia was so different from the U.S. and I feel like I can handle a lot more after going to Hong Kong . . . I’m definitely more independent because of it” (personal communication August 6, 2013). This experience pushed the students out of their comfort zone, forcing them to become more self-reliant.

Sarah seemed to demonstrate the most profound change in self-confidence and independence as a result of her study abroad experience. Not only was the SYEA program her first time traveling outside of the US, it was also her first time being outside of her home city for an extended period of time. Because USD is located in Sarah’s home city, her mother had always been very accessible and involved in her decision-making. Both her friends and her family doubted Sarah’s ability to successfully complete a three-week program abroad. She reflected, “This was definitely a confidence booster, especially because my friends from home were telling me that I couldn’t do it. I showed my mom that I could do it, too” (personal communication, August 21, 2013). She also attributed her recent success in completing an internship to this shift in confidence:

When I applied [to the internship], they told me I had to be a self-starter and work independently Being independent and going to Italy has really helped me be my own person in the work world too—I didn’t have to text my mom for help. It

made me be more confident in my decisions and made me feel like more of an adult. (personal communication, August 21, 2013)

The newfound independence that Sarah developed in Florence seemed to impact her personal and professional life. With this increased sense of self, these students expressed more self-confidence. For Sarah, moving toward internal definition seemed to give her the confidence to express her identity to friends, family, and employers. Although many students shared stories about shifts in identity development and self-confidence, Abby seemed to have a very different experience.

Neutral influence. Similar to her reflection on her experiences in the cognitive domain, Abby gave the impression that she was not challenged intrapersonally.

“Overall,” she explained, “I did not do any profound identity searching in Florence like some of the other students” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). When describing her rationale for feeling that way, she explained that she “already had self-definition before going,” which “made [her] self-confident.” Intrigued by the certainty of her responses, I asked Abby to reflect on how she developed her sense of self-confidence.

She explained:

I have been a confident, self-reliant person since junior year in high school. I just have never been attached to others because so many people seem to be so concerned about how they are viewed. Ever since I can remember, I have never really been concerned with what people think about me and I still feel that way today. (personal communication, May 10, 2013)

Abby paralleled this sentiment with her experience in Florence when she referred to the social interactions she had with other students. She explained that she spent a lot of time alone in Florence because she did not feel other students shared her same interest. “My dream is to sit outside at a coffee shop and read my book for hours,” she said, “but I don’t

think anyone else wanted to do that” (personal communication, May 10, 2013).

However, as an introvert, Abby indicated that she enjoyed this alone time.

Although Abby gave the impression that she did not engage in identity exploration because she already had a sense of self-definition prior to participating in the program, there may have been factors that inhibited her from allowing such intrapersonal development to occur. One of these factors may have been her lack of peer connections while on the program. In discussing this, Abby said, “It would have been nice to have someone to talk to about my experiences while in Florence. It would have been good to share the experience with someone” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). When asked how her experience would have differed if she had a close peer with her, she responded, “I think I would have done a lot more exploring in general” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). This suggests that sharing the experience with another student and establishing a sense of mutual trust may have motivated her to be more open to engaging in the experience in general.

Unlike many other students who discovered how the American culture was perceived abroad, Abby “was already aware of the negative enigma that Americans [had] internationally” before she went to Florence. She attributed this awareness to the several discussions she had with her Serbian roommate when Abby heard about the perceptions of Americans firsthand. She said, “My roommate and I would have a lot of conversations about how many people in [her country] feel about America” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). During these conversations, her roommate would share a perception of the American culture, and Abby would “respond to the stereotype” by explaining that

such perceptions are not representative of the entire American culture. In Italy, she recalled that “some students would complain that they were treated a certain way because they were American,” but such differential treatment “did not bother [her]” (personal communication, May 10, 2013) because she knew they were judging her based on a stereotype. From Abby’s perspective, she seemed to have a good sense of the facets of her identity prior to participating in the SYEA program, which likely impacted the extent to which she was affected within the intrapersonal domain.

Summary of impact on intrapersonal maturity. Many students, to some degree, matured intrapersonally as a result of this experience. As students found themselves in an unfamiliar environment without the comforts of home, they embarked on a journey of self-exploration to better understand and craft an identity that was unique from their peers. This involved introspection and an intentional examination of the self and how that self relates to their culture. Many became more aware of how Americans can be perceived internationally, which caused them to become more aware of these criticized cultural tendencies and project a more globally aware identity. Evident in several students’ responses was an evolving awareness of personal and cultural values, revealing a more internally defined self that was more removed from external influence. Those who became aware of their unconscious privilege as a result of preferential treatment or marginalization (albeit to a small degree) began to understand and accept that this was a facet of their everyday lives in the United States.

The intentional self-exploration that took place while abroad suggests that many of these students made progress within the intermediate level of intrapersonal maturity.

Typical of the intermediate level is an intentional self-exploration and a simultaneous reflection on one's own culture and its existence in a broader social context. As a result of their experience abroad, many participants indicated that they understand themselves better, have a better understanding of their own culture, and have an increased sense of self-confidence. Abby seemed to, once again, be an outlier. While abroad, she indicated that she did not engage in identity exploration because she felt she already had a strong sense of identity. However, there may have been other factors, such as her lack of peer relationships, that could have inhibited her from engaging in such exploration.

Lastly, in addition to advancements in maturity in the cognitive and intrapersonal domains, some students also experienced shifts in interpersonal maturity or their ability to interact respectfully with diverse others.

Interpersonal Maturity

The interpersonal domain of intercultural maturity relates to the ability to engage in interdependent relationships with diverse others that are informed by an understanding and appreciation for human difference (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). At the initial level, "social relations are grounded in one's primary social identity group" and individuals use "egocentric standards to judge cultural differences" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 580). At this stage, individuals are not aware of abstract concepts like social systems and societal norms. As individuals move into the intermediate level, curiosity about diverse others is piqued and there is an exploration of the nature of intergroup differences. This can lead to intercultural interactions that are less subject to judgment. Individuals also develop an understanding of social systems and the unspoken

social standards that guide behavior. Interpersonally mature individuals engage in intercultural interactions that are “independent, respectful, informed by cultural understanding, and mutually negotiated” (p. 580). Such interactions with diverse others tend to help individuals develop an understanding of their role as a member of society. As individuals mature interpersonally, relationships with diverse others shift from being defined by one’s own egocentric standards to being mutually understood and negotiated.

Qualitative analysis revealed examples that suggest participants’ interpersonal maturity was impacted to varying degrees. It is important to note, however, that students seemed to identify that these impacts set in upon return from abroad, not while they were in the host country, which could suggest that the students may not have intentionally interacted with natives of the host country while abroad on the SYEA program.

Shifts in how students interacted with diverse others upon return to the United State did so with two underlying motivations. Some students engaged in intercultural interactions that were motivated by cultural curiosity, which is characteristic of the intermediate level. Others students sought out intercultural interactions with the intention of creating a sense of mutual understanding between the groups, which suggest a surpassing of the intermediate level toward interpersonal maturity.

Interactions motivated by curiosity. For some students, interacting with diverse others was provoked by a sense of curiosity for discovering other cultures. Before transferring to USD, Cheryl attended a university with a large Asian population. Recalling her experience there, she did not interact with this particular student group. After spending time in Hong Kong and China, she became curious about the diversity of

cultures that exists within Asia. She reflected, “Now when I see an Asian person in the U.S., I feel compelled to talk to them. I have been to Asia and I just want to learn more about them and where they are from. I just have a different view on a lot of cultures” (personal communication, May 14, 2014). Cheryl also recalled a time after she returned when she came across a group of Hare Krishnas in Las Vegas. She described her interaction:

I went over and talked to them because I was interested and I knew about their religion from the class I took in Hong Kong. I just wanted to learn about their perspective. I would've never been able to do that before. I would've never have known what Hare Krishna even meant. I probably would've been intimidated by them. (personal communication, May 14, 2013)

Cheryl's cultural interest motivated her to interact with different types of people than she was accustomed to.

After going abroad, Sarah also felt more curious about diverse others and more comfortable asking questions about their culture. After the SYEA program, she did an internship and asked her multi-ethnic colleague about the challenges of managing a diverse set of cultures. She remembered asking, “How do you balance all of those cultures?” (personal communication, August 21, 2013). Her colleague looked at her strangely and replied, “No one has ever asked me that before. Don't worry though, it's a good thing—it's just that no one has asked me that type of question before” (personal communication, August 21, 2013). She felt comfortable discussing this topic because it was out of pure interest. She remembered, “Going abroad has made me look past stereotypes and just be more curious about culture” (personal communication, August 21,

2013). Both of these students' accounts demonstrate the potential of study abroad to motivate cross-cultural interaction upon return to the home country.

Interactions motivated by desire for mutual understanding. The students who intentionally sought out intercultural interactions upon return seemed to experience profound changes in the interpersonal domain. These students tended to initiate these interactions out of social concern for others in an effort to gain mutual understanding of their experience, suggesting more mature levels of interpersonal maturity. With an awareness of how marginalization affects people, they became intentional advocates for those who are treated differently because of their culture. Laynie recalled one of these interactions where she acted on her concerns:

My perception and my ability to recognize what it means to be different is completely open now. I am so much better at it and I can see as it happens, and when it does I can intervene and say that it is not right to marginalize people because of their culture. When I got back to campus, I remember hearing a girl get annoyed because one of the employees, who spoke Spanish, called her "mija." I had to say something, so I said, "You know that is part of their culture and it's an endearing term and it was not an insult." Then she asked me what it meant, and I said, "it means my child" and they said, "oh . . . I didn't know that," and then they shrunk away. I felt obligated to say something. I had just gotten back [from Seville] and I just wish that other people could have had that experience and be able to know what marginalization feels like. They would be able to think back to their own experience as being a minority and feel for other people. (personal communication, May 10, 2013)

Laynie was able to see an act of marginalization as it was happening within her own USD community and was confident enough to take a stand and express her concerns to her peers.

In addition to acting on her concerns, Laynie indicated that she treated people differently when she got back to the U.S. She commented, "The way I saw other people

who are different has changed—I understand how [being marginalized] can feel now, which made me act differently” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). She further explained this realization:

When I was treated differently abroad, I felt that my person, who I was, was almost relegated. It was eye-opening in the sense that when I came back and saw it happen to other people, I recognized that I interpreted it differently—I saw it happening and I would think, “I know how that feels,” and I don’t think you can learn that from a textbook. (personal communication, May 10, 2013)

This experience helped her better understand others’ experiences and empathize with challenges they may face. She spoke of a sense of compassion that she developed as well as a desire to be an advocate for victims of marginalization. To further this understanding at USD, she became more involved in service learning and ministry work. “Knowing how minorities are treated,” she said, “has changed the way I interact with people because I am interested in bridging the gap between us” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Laynie’s experience abroad motivated her to intentionally interact with diverse individuals by participating in service learning organizations.

Participating in the SYEA program helped Rachel discover her passion for working with international students. Upon returning to USD, Rachel was selected to serve as a resident assistant (RA). Her time abroad led her to want to work in a specialized residence hall that specifically served international students. She explained her rationale for making this request:

I think I can be empathetic of their experience and, I mean, I cannot completely understand where they’re coming from because I have not had the same experiences as them, but I think that my experiences abroad have made me realize that not everybody comes from the same place and everyone has environmental factors that make them who they are. That may present challenges or it may give them strength. I think I can help [international students] work through those

challenges and help them navigate the U.S. when at [USD]. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Rachel gained a sense of the support that is needed when away from home and wanted to serve in that type of support role for international students attending her home university.

Additionally, Rachel expressed her desire to become more involved in the communities surrounding USD. “I want to become more involved in [service learning] in order to better connect myself with the immigrant communities near school,” she explained. She elaborated on how her viewpoint changed as a result of her experience in Seville:

I was reluctant [to get involved with immigrants] in the past because I thought I would have little in common with people living in these communities. However, through my experiences abroad, I have learned that while cultures may disagree on certain values, there are still many shared experiences that can connect everyone to the rest of the world. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

When realizing that humans have commonalities that span differences, she felt more connected to diverse people and was more confident in interacting with them.

After going abroad to Florence, Abby also recognized a desire to develop a mutual understanding with diverse others. However, this was provoked by the *lack* of on-site intercultural interactions she had while in Florence. She said, “All the students with me were from the same university, with a similar backgrounds, and we stayed all together in the same hotel, so it just wasn’t set up to meet many local people” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). While she seemed to lament this lack of local interaction, it motivated her to want to study abroad again in a program that offered more immersion. She explained:

I would say that going to Florence was like “getting my feet wet” in terms of studying abroad. I got to see and learn about some really interesting things in Florence. But, I was around so many Americans all of the time and all program activities were together. For my semester abroad, I know now that I am looking for a certain type of experience that is different from SYEA. I want to go to Germany, attend a German university, study the German language, and live with a German family. With this experience, I could fully integrate myself in the culture and that is what I want out of study abroad. (personal communication, May 10, 2013)

Abby thought that being in such a large group of American students was “not beneficial to [her]” because she was surrounded by so many students who were similar to [her]” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). She looked forward to more of an immersion experience in Germany because she could have the “deeper conversations” about culture that she did not engage in while in Florence. Abby’s experience in Florence seemed to motivate her to be intentional in selecting a future study abroad program that would provide her with her desired level of interactions with diverse others. Abby’s story, along with those of the others presented in this section, provide examples of the extent to which students matured interpersonally.

Summary of impact on interpersonal maturity. Maturing in the interpersonal domain of development relates to an increasing ability to engage in relationships with diverse others that are interdependent and informed by an understanding and appreciation for human difference (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005). The experiences that some of these sophomores had while abroad influenced them to engage in interactions with diverse others upon return to the United States. For some students, these interactions were provoked by a sense of cultural curiosity that led to openness to different perspectives, which is characteristic of the intermediate level of interpersonal maturity.

Other students seemed to advance past the intermediate level to a more mature level of interpersonal maturity, where they intentionally sought out ways to interact with diverse populations with the aim of gaining a deeper understanding of the experience of others. For these particular students, such cross-cultural interactions seemed to build community across cultural divides and motivate them to act as advocates for social justice. Of the three domains of development, students reported the fewest impacts within the interpersonal domain.

Development of Intercultural Maturity in Sophomore Students

These student experiences provide a strong argument that participating in the SYEA program can influence the development of intercultural maturity to some degree. As students matured in the cognitive domain, their meaning-making system became more complex and what was once defined as right or true came into question. Many made sense of this shift when contemplating the concepts of right or wrong, especially when evaluating cultural differences. Such changes in thinking can be characterized by a progression from initial to intermediate levels of cognitive maturity. Students attributed changes in complexity in their cognitive processes specifically to the course taken abroad, the small group reflections, and cultural interactions.

Student experiences also marked maturation within the intrapersonal domain. Participants underwent intentional self-exploration, which helped them gain a better awareness and understanding of the dimensions of their identity and increased their self-confidence. For some White students, exploration came with the recognition of the

privilege that is an unconscious and often unrecognized facet of their identity. Such changes are typical of a progression to intermediate levels of intrapersonal maturity.

Participants also seemed to develop interpersonally as a result of their participation in the SYEA program. Such development seemed to materialize upon return to the United States, not while students were on-site. After program completion, these students engaged in intercultural interactions that were either motivated by cultural curiosity or by an intention to gain a deeper understanding of others' experiences. Those who engaged with diverse others out of curiosity are characterized by an intermediate level of interpersonal maturity while those who sought intercultural interactions to develop a mutual understanding of experience advanced toward a more mature level. Because students did not refer to interactions with natives of the host country as impactful to their interpersonal maturity, this may suggest that students had low levels of interactions with the local community members.

Taken together, advancement within cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains suggests that intercultural maturity can be fostered through participating in a program such as the SYEA program, albeit to varying degrees. As I addressed my three research questions, however, additional themes emerged that merit attention. These themes speak to the larger premise of this study, pointing to a possible connection between study abroad programming and its potential to meet the developmental needs of sophomore students.

CHAPTER FIVE

INTERSECTION OF STUDY ABROAD AND THE SOPHOMORE YEAR

Throughout the process of the data analysis, various themes emerged that suggested an intersection of study abroad and the developmental issues that students tend to face during the second year of college. In fact, this intersection seems to support some of the claims made in the literature that the context of study abroad can serve as an optimal environment for college sophomores to engage in the types of exploration and reflection that are paramount to their success (Schaller, 2005, 2007; Sutton & Leslie, 2010; Tobolowsky & Cox, 2007). While these themes do not address my primary research questions, which were directed at the influence of study abroad on the development of intercultural maturity in sophomores, they speak to the larger premise of this study, which focuses on the potential of study abroad in supporting sophomore students.

The pivotal nature of a college student's second year is characterized by transitions where individuals move from external reliance to internal definition. This stage is defined as the crossroads in the journey toward self-authorship and the intermediate level of intercultural maturity. Research focusing specifically on the sophomore year defines this stage as *focused exploration* (Schaller, 2005, 2010). Focused exploration tends to be a time of reflection on self, relationships, and the future (Schaller, 2005, 2010). Throughout this process, students seek to identify their purpose for going to college and yearn to find their place within the greater university community. This often involves identity formulation, identifying academic interests, exploring ways

to become more engaged in campus life, and a longing for deeper and more meaningful friendships. As students intentionally reflect on these issues in focused exploration, they tend to also discover an internal voice that can help them navigate the demands of their evolving sense of self-direction.

Some researchers suggest that the opportunities provided by study abroad can respond to some of the issues sophomores tend to encounter during this stage of reflection and discovery (Evenbeck & Hamilton, 2010; Kehl & Morris, 2008; Schaller, 2005, 2010; Sutton & Leslie, 2010). Exposure to different cultures in the study abroad context can invoke contemplation of identity and how one fits into the world (Sutton & Leslie, 2010). Study abroad can also help students develop purpose in college, including a reflection on academic majors and career goals (Dwyer & Peters, 2004). Interactions with the host culture tend to push students out of their comfort zones, which often draws them closer to their peers on site, leading to the development of deeper, more meaningful social relationships (Ingraham & Peterson, 2004; Montrose, 2002; Young, 2008).

Particularly with sophomores, study abroad programming should be grounded with an understanding of the challenges that this population faces and should be intentionally designed to support their development. Researchers (Sutton & Leslie, 2010), therefore, make recommendations to practitioners that sophomore study abroad should (a) have built-in sustained reflection and analysis, and (b) consider the developmental appropriateness of such programs for students who are at different stages in this trajectory.

In this chapter, I present findings related to the potential of study abroad during the second year in two steps. First, I identify points of intersection between sophomore issues and the opportunities afforded by the SYEA program. Second, I describe student reactions to the intercultural learning component, which was USD's approach to guided exploration and structured reflection, as well as reflect on the developmental appropriateness of the program.

Sophomore Issues in the Context of Study Abroad

Findings from this research illuminated four points of intersection between study abroad programming and the issues that sophomore students face. These include: (a) developing identity, (b) redefining relationships, (c) developing a purpose in college, and (d) the emergence of an internal voice. Since the issue of identity development was covered at length in the intrapersonal maturity section of chapter four, I will concentrate on the other issues that have not yet been discussed.

Redefining Relationships

Shared across many interviews was the impact of study abroad on students' peer relationships. As freshmen, students establish friendships as a means to make social connections at their new university. However, as sophomores seek to find their place within an institution, they tend to re-evaluate these friendships and seek deeper relationships that will help them feel like part of the greater university community (Schaller, 2005; Tinto, 1993). Research suggests that the structure of study abroad programs can facilitate high levels of meaningful interactions between students and their peers and can be an ideal environment to deepen existing relationships and cultivate new

ones (Sutton & Leslie, 2010; Young, 2008). The experiences of many interviewees supported this research as many returned to the USD campus with more meaningful relationships. However, this was not the case for all students. Some students who went abroad without any peer relationships experienced barriers to cultivating new friendships.

Formulation of deeper relationships. Many students indicated that sharing an international experience with their peers led to the formulation of deeper relationships than what they had formed previously on campus. This was the case for both Cheryl and Mike where casual relationships were transformed into meaningful friendships. As a transfer student at USD, Cheryl lamented that “meeting people was really hard” because “everyone already had their group of friends when [she] got [there]” (personal communication, May 14, 2013). Because she was a transfer student, she was placed in the freshmen living area, which made it “hard to meet other sophomores.” She commented that going to Hong Kong “definitely helped her socially” (personal communication, May 14, 2013). Cheryl explained how a relationship with an acquaintance known prior to going abroad evolved as a result of this program:

I knew [Sally] before because I had accounting with her, but we never really talked. I think the main reason why we got closer was because we were thrown into a situation where we couldn't talk to anyone else but each other, and we are doing everything together from morning to night. It was all having to do with connecting with each other. When you go out you have to rely on each other and not leave each other. It's all about sticking together. (personal communication, May 14, 2013).

Cheryl reflected on how the environment drew her and Sally closer. Before going to Hong Kong, Cheryl did not feel connected to USD. In discussing how this sentiment changed, she said, “I think going to Hong Kong was one of the main things that made me

want to stay [at USD]" (personal communication, May 14, 2013). This dialogue suggests that the friendships Cheryl made while on the SYEA program helped her better connect with her university, which solidified her decision to remain enrolled.

Unlike Cheryl, Mike went on the SYEA program knowing several other students. During the first few days in Seville, he found himself "always going out to night clubs in groups of 10 to 15 people" which made it "harder to blend in and explore the culture" (personal communication, May 9, 2013). Mike shared that he was very interested in exploring the culture in a smaller group, so he "found a certain group of people that wanted to do the same things as [him]." In describing how these relationships were different, he explained:

Me and my friends were really interested in looking at the world from a bird's eye view and comparing the Spanish culture to the American culture whenever we could. We had these conversations all the time and it was really cool. The situation we were put in made us friends and I think that is why I am still really good friends with them. (personal communication, May 9, 2013)

In sharing his experience in Seville, Mike seemed to realize that going out to nightclubs every night was not what he wanted to take away from this experience, so he established friendships with other students who shared his same interest in cultural exploration. Mike's experience abroad also seemed to help him develop deeper relationships and he commented that the relationships he made on the SYEA program were much stronger than those he made during his freshman year at USD. He reflected:

In terms of friendships . . . I think my freshman year was a lot tougher than [sophomore] year on me. I'm not sure how to explain it. My freshman year was like, you are in a dorm with 30 other people and you are forced to be friends with them. You don't really have a lot in common, so you are like de facto friends. (personal communication, May 9, 2013)

Mike explained that he had not maintained these friendships from his first year at USD. Overall, his experience in Seville seemed to have a positive impact on his relationships.

Diana signed up for the SYEA program in Florence with one of her very good friends. She also shared that the international context positively impacted this existing relationship:

I definitely think going abroad together affected our relationship. I think me and Helen became really close after being together for three weeks and experiencing the things we did together because it was totally new for both of us. It was fun and exciting to embark on this journey with someone else and grow together. I didn't have to do it alone and that was helpful. (personal communication, August 25, 2013)

Diana identified Helen as her partner in this experience because it was “helpful to be able to talk to someone [she] knew and trusted” (personal communication, August 25, 2013).

For Diana, studying abroad with one of her close friends seemed to make her more comfortable in engaging in cultural exploration.

For Lindsay, on the other hand, going on the SYEA program with a close group of friends caused her to reevaluate these relationships. She signed up for the SYEA program knowing several students who she considered her friends. However, after the first week of the program, she began to realize that she did not have much in common with them. After observing them going out every night, it became clear that she was not interested in associating herself with that group and reflected on her goals for her time in Florence. “I am happy that I took advantage of Italy,” she shared, “unlike a lot of my friends who went out every night and partied and probably don't remember much about the experience” (personal communication, May 26, 2013). She continued, “I now surround myself by people that have some of the same priorities as I do. I think that Italy

was a place where I was forced to realize that about myself.” In reflection, she said, “I’m still friends with those people but I definitely view them in a different way and maybe I will be friends with them again down the road” (personal communication, May 26, 2013). The international environment removed Lindsay from her daily routines at USD and served as a space for her to explore what she really wanted out of her relationships.

Barriers to relationship building. There were also students who enrolled in the SYEA program with the intent to cultivate new friendships but were not able to do so for various reasons. This was certainly the case for Rachel. After expressing that one of the reasons for signing up for a study abroad program with only sophomore students was to make new friends, Rachel lamented, “It surprised me because I thought I was going to make a lot friends on the trip. It was a disappointment.” She elaborated, “In general, it was really hard to meet people. There were a lot of girls in the same sorority so they would stick together and everyone would just separate off” (personal communication, May 8, 2013). In Rachel’s case, the existing social cliques made it difficult to meet new people.

Before going on the SYEA program, Abby felt very socially disconnected. Similar to Rachel, she signed up for the program with the hope of making friends and creating campus connections. She commented, “It was hard to form relationships with people because we just didn’t have the same interests” (personal communication, May 10, 2010). Abby preferred to have conversations around “world politics and literature,” but found that the other females she met “only wanted to gossip” or talk about “the perfect black blazer to complement their wardrobe” (personal communication, May 10,

2013). In fact, Abby came to terms with the idea that it would be difficult to establish a connection with any of the students, so she ended up spending a lot of time exploring on her own as she “was perfectly fine getting lost in the streets of Florence alone” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Abby experienced barriers to forming new relationships due to a lack of common interest, and the study abroad experience was not enough to overcome those differences.

Alyssa, who is from Mexico, was drawn to student groups in Hong Kong with whom she had similar heritage and ended up spending most of her time with them.

I met some people during orientation—they were more like acquaintances, but I liked them. It’s funny because in Hong Kong we would hang out all of the time. They were Mexican too, so it was easy to talk to them because we have similar backgrounds. But now that we are back we all went back to our old group of friends and I don’t really talk to them anymore. (personal communication, August 5, 2013)

To Alyssa, these relationships “were more out of need than anything else” because it was “comfortable” (personal communication, August 5, 2013). Staying within her social comfort zone may have served as a barrier to cultivating other relationships.

It is not quite clear why some students developed deeper relationships as a result of this program and some did not. Based on the student commentary, barriers to cultivating these relationships seemed to be based on (a) exclusivity of existing social groups, (b) lack of common interest, and (c) the willingness to step out of one’s comfort zone. It is also interesting to note that these three students all went to different locations when participating in the SYEA program, which could suggest that their experiences were not isolated to a location with a large enrollment (Florence) or to a locations with lower enrollments (Hong Kong and Seville).

Developing a Purpose in College

In addition to study abroad programs' impact on relationships, another possible area of intersection between sophomore issues and study abroad is an influence on the development of one's purpose in college. This development manifested as students connected to their academics and sought out opportunities for campus involvement.

Connecting to academics. Some of the students shared that participating in the SYEA program helped them clarify their academic purpose at USD. After participating in the SYEA program in Seville, Mike "started to realize what really matter[ed] to [him] and what [he] wanted to get out of college." He elaborated:

I have always been interested in international relations, but I had never been abroad before so I just did not feel comfortable with it. I had never been out of the country and I didn't know if I would be able to interact with different people and new things. But when I got [to Seville] I realized that I could do it. That solidified my decision to study international relations. (personal communication, May 9, 2013)

He was hesitant to declare a major in international relations because he was unsure of whether or not he would be successful interacting with diverse others. After going abroad, he proved to himself that international relations would be a good fit. Studying abroad in Seville helped Rachel further connect to her declared Spanish major. She commented:

I used to think that I wanted to major in Spanish just because I just wanted to learn the language and thought it would be useful. After going abroad [to Seville] I realized how much I enjoyed learning about the culture aspect too. Now instead of just learning the language and focusing on that, I want to actually learn about the culture that goes with it. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Since going to Seville was her first experience out of the country, she had very limited exposure to other cultures. Learning about Spanish culture while in Spain seemed to make her interest in the language more holistic.

Campus involvement. Another manifestation of developing purpose in college is an increased desire to become a more active member of the campus community. Only one student—Rachel—explicitly shared this desire for increased campus involvement. As detailed in the interpersonal maturity section of chapter four, Rachel described her experience as being very influential in her drive to better understand the experiences of diverse others. Upon her return from Seville, Rachel expressed her motivation to join on-campus service organizations in an effort to “better connect [herself] with the rest of the USD campus and the surrounding communities” (personal communication, May 8, 2013). This suggests that her experiences abroad may have influenced the way she defines herself as a member of the USD community.

Emergence of an Internal Voice

The final example of an intersection of sophomore issues and study abroad suggested by this study is the impact on students’ development of their internal voice. One of the key goals for focused exploration is for students to connect with their inner voice (Schaller, 2005). Baxter Magolda (2008) describes the new awareness of this internal voice as characteristic of the shift from following external formulas to the crossroads. In her longitudinal study, Baxter Magolda (2001) found that this internal voice emerged in students in their twenties as they attempted to resolve the conflict between external forces and the desire for internal definition.

As a result of their experience abroad, some students expressed that they did develop an internal voice that helped them understand and evaluate cultural difference. For these students, this internal voice resembled an internal dialogue that forced them to question their thoughts and assumptions as they were happening. These students, like Laynie, Brian, Diana, Sarah, and Mike, were able to recognize that this dialogue was occurring while they were abroad. Laynie, who expressed the most profound internal voice of all participants, said that this voice enabled her to “both define and understand where [her] assumptions come from.” She elaborated, “[with this voice] I could also go deeper and learn others’ truth and my truth instead of relying on my assumptions” (personal communication, May 10, 2013). Another example of this comes from Brian, who admitted that although his internal voice helped him better understand other cultures, it also made him realize how much he doesn’t know. He commented, “the more I think about it in my internal conversation, the less I know as well; or, that there is still so much to find out, so that just keeps fueling my fire to explore more” (personal communication, August 6, 2013). For these students, this voice reminded them of the challenges that exist when making assumptions about cultural difference. The development of an inner voice, marked by advancement to the crossroads or to the intermediate level in terms of intercultural maturity, served to be a valuable tool for these students while in an intercultural setting.

These experiences seem to support the argument that a possible parallel exists between the issues that sophomore students face and the opportunities afforded by study abroad programming. As these students engaged in what Schaller (2005) would call

focused exploration, they seemed to discover self-directed ways to define identity, relationships with others, and their purpose in college. For some, a byproduct of this intentional self-reflection seemed to be an emergence of an internal voice, which guided students in further self-discovery.

Having addressed the possible intersections between sophomore student issues and study abroad, I now move to discuss student perceptions of the SYEA programs' guided exploration and structured reflection component as well as reflect on the developmental appropriateness of the program for sophomore students.

The SYEA Program and Recommendations for Sophomore Study Abroad

A key component of the USD SYEA sophomore study abroad program is the built-in opportunities for guided exploration and structured reflection. In their research on sophomores and study abroad, Sutton and Leslie (2010) urge that students need to “record and reflect upon [their] experiences . . . and they need to be guided in doing this.” They also “must engage in group discussions and receive . . . feedback that draws out their learning” (p. 173). These two rationales are in-line with the aim of the intercultural learning component of the SYEA program. The intercultural learning component was composed of the host culture learning plan (guided exploration) and the small group reflection meetings (structured reflection). Because researchers identify these key experiences as essential to sophomore study abroad, it is important to evaluate student responses to these components in the SYEA program and how they may have influenced their learning.

Perception of Guided Exploration

As part of the SYEA program, all students composed a written host culture learning plan (HCLP), which was a cultural analysis aimed to enhance cultural awareness and understanding. Some students particularly saw the HCLP as a “burden” rather than a means to guide their intercultural learning. Brian shared, “At first no one took [the HCLP] seriously at all. It was just a requirement. No one put much effort into the first draft we turned in at the beginning of the program” (personal communication, August 6, 2013). He explained that having to write an HCLP in addition to required papers for the class was “unfortunate” because they had so many other program obligations including site visits for the course as well as planned cultural activities. Although he thought writing the HCLP was beneficial for him because he was deeply interested in his topic, overall, he and his friends were “pretty upset by how much writing [they] all had to do. It definitely made [them] less interested in doing it and turned into a chore rather than something [they] should have been interested in” (personal communication, August 6, 2013). In Brian’s opinion, three weeks in Hong Kong was too short to have to write the HCLP in addition to following through with the other program obligations.

Other students seemed to see value in the HCLP. Amanda shared how writing her HCLP, which focused on the role of Catholicism in Italy and America, helped support her learning and prepared her for the group excursion to Rome:

I think [the HCLP] made me actually think about what my expectations were and . . . to take time to actually evaluate things as they were happening. If I didn’t have to do the host culture learning plan then I think I wouldn’t really have tried to think about any cultural things. I would’ve just gone and seen the sights and not actually thought about it as much. It also made me do research about . . . Catholicism so I learned a lot more about it. Going to Rome with some

background information also made me appreciate the trip more. (personal communication, May 13, 2013)

The HCLP required the students to do academic and field research around their topic, which helped enhance Amanda's overall intercultural experience. Mike articulated that the HCLP gave him "a frame around the whole trip" (personal communication, May 9, 2013) and gave him an opportunity to look into something that was new to him. The topic of his HCLP was on graffiti, which piqued his interest so much that he took over 300 pictures of graffiti around the city of Seville. Rachel expressed that the HCLP "made [her] experience abroad much more valuable as a global citizen" (personal communication, May 8, 2013). She elaborated:

[The HCLP] made me think about the different cultural values of other societies and implications that accompanied them... Through my experiences abroad, I have learned that while cultures may disagree on certain values, there are still many shared experiences that can connect everyone to the rest of the world. The struggle of women for equality is definitely a challenge that applies to all people of the world and connects us all regardless of the culture in which we are living. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

Rachel connected her HCLP to the ethical theories that she was learning in class, which "gave her an analytical lens" through which to understand cultural differences. For these students, the HCLP seemed to be an intentional way to learn more about the local culture.

Document analysis of the HCLPs echoed some of this student commentary. As part of this study, I requested to review interview participants' HCLPs in an effort to triangulate data. Only 9 of the 11 participants provided me with this document. The HCLPs of both Mike and Rachel, who both took the ethics class in Seville, contained reflection about self, the host culture, and the home culture. Rachel reflected that the

HCLP helped her analyze other cultures and plans to use this writing strategy upon return to USD:

When I return to USD, I plan to use this new learning process to understand people of other cultures. Writing my HCLP about gender issues in Spain made me realize that women's struggle for equality is definitely a challenge that applies to all people of the world and connects us all regardless of the culture in which we are living. (personal communication, May 8, 2013)

The writing process seemed to be very useful for Rachel in understanding that gender inequality is a global issue and she plans to use the same strategy in more intentionally learning about other cultures. Mike described that writing about graffiti helped him become more aware of the "less visual countercultures" (personal communication, May 9, 2013) in Spain. Mike also shared that, upon return to the United States, he is now more aware that subcultures exist in San Diego and expressed an interest to learn more about those that exist in his own community.

Few of the other HCLPs, however, contained reflections related to cognitive, intrapersonal, or interpersonal development as defined by intercultural maturity, so they did not prove to be very helpful in analyzing how intercultural maturity was influenced. Therefore, my analysis of intercultural maturity as discussed previously was primarily based on the qualitative interviews.

Perceptions of Structured Reflection Sessions

As discussed previously in chapter three, the structured reflection sessions influenced the development of students' cognitive maturity. Lindsay attributed her ability to analyze her judgments to the small group reflections that took place prior to departure. In preparation for the experience abroad, her small group leader encouraged

students to try to understand rather than attack difference, which seemed to help Lindsay evaluate her judgments as they were happening and be more open to different perspectives. Alyssa also described the small group reflection sessions as helpful in analyzing how she interpreted difference. Having the opportunity to explain her viewpoints helped her become aware of her judgments about the culture. Listening to her peers' viewpoints also helped her appreciate the diversity of experience that existed even within her small group. These students seemed to be challenged by the small groups, causing them to turn inward to question how and why they make judgments of others.

Other students were critical of the structured reflection sessions that were led by the student affairs professionals. The intent of the small group reflection sessions was to provide a space for students to discuss challenges, cultural encounters, and to share their learning related to their HCLP. Two students commented that these meetings did not challenge them. Alyssa referenced the discussion format as one designed for "children" because it is "too structured," which did not allow for "organic discussions" (personal communication, August 5, 2013). When discussing the topics in the group reflections, Cheryl said that the questions were similar ones "you would have to answer in middle school." She went "back and forth on whether or not it was a good idea to have [the intercultural learning] component" because at times she viewed it as a "waste of time" (personal communication, May 14, 2013).

Other students also found the small group reflection sessions to be beneficial to their intercultural growth. One example is from Laynie:

I liked the small group meetings because it helped me talk through my experience in real-time. I think this was beneficial because these are the sort of things that

you wouldn't usually discuss with your friends. I just think that studying abroad isn't just sightseeing and partying—there are a lot of things that go on in people's minds that make them wonder. (personal communication, May 10, 2014)

She found that having a safe space to share challenges was necessary to scaffold intercultural learning. Various interview participants commented that the most impactful part of the small group reflections was learning about the diverse perspectives of their peers. For example, Rachel described these reflections as having a “cool dynamic because [she] could talk to her peers about [her] experience because [they] were all going through the same thing” (personal communication, May 8, 2013). Diana also added insight from her experience:

It was really cool to see experiences through other people's eyes and how they were perceiving their experiences. Sometimes there were things that I wouldn't have thought of, and I would not have thought of at all if I did not have the meetings. There were other times where I was just realizing that other people were making such good points. (personal communication, August 25, 2013)

Hearing other students' perspectives served as a springboard toward an increased openness to differing points of view.

There did seem to be mixed feedback on this component of the program amongst the interview participants. Mainly, the negative feedback seemed to stem from a logistical standpoint. However, most students found at least some of it as beneficial to their experience abroad. Whether insights into cultural perspectives were gained in writing through the HCLP or through discussions with their peers, many students reported that this component helped them be more attentive to different perspectives.

In addition to collecting the perspectives of students related to the intercultural learning component, I also spoke to one of the staff members who facilitated this

component on the SYEA program in 2013. I shared that student reactions were mixed, and that some of the students who seemed to react positively about the HCLP were those who connected it to their course material. This “did not surprise [him]” because he could “see the value of having the content in the classroom connect to the elements that [they] were trying to promote” (personal communication, April 17, 2014). He continued, “There is certainly more potential for growth by establishing an integrated experience—if [the intercultural learning component] is disconnected from the classroom, then we may be asking too much of [students].” This feedback complements commentary provided by Amanda and Rachel, who used the course concepts to frame their HCLP and also saw value in writing the HCLP. This suggests the importance of connecting this out-of-class experience to what students are learning in class. Implications of this commentary will be further discussed in the next chapter.

Developmental Appropriateness of the SYEA Program

Researchers (Sutton & Leslie, 2010) remind practitioners that study abroad programming should not be a “one size fits all” approach because “different strategies are needed for students at different points on this trajectory” (p. 172). For many of the interview participants, the experiences they had on the SYEA program seemed to foster their development to some extent. In terms of cognitive development, some students critiqued their process of evaluating the concept of right and wrong in the face of cultural difference. Within the intrapersonal domain, they reflected on their identity and became more aware and accepting of the facets that make up this identity. Interpersonally, which was the domain that seemed to be influenced the least, some students intentionally

engaged in intercultural interactions with diverse others as a result of their experience. To this avail, the program seems developmentally appropriate for sophomore students who found themselves in the crossroads, at the intermediate level of intercultural maturity, or engaging in focused exploration.

It is important, however, to consider the cases of students like Abby, who may have not felt challenged by their experiences on the SYEA program. Overall, Abby seemed to have a very different experience than the other interview participants. The qualitative data suggests that she expressed less of an impact on her development of interpersonal maturity than others. It is important to consider that she may have had a different experience if she took a different class or if she established relationships where she felt more comfortable making herself vulnerable to the experience. Whether Abby really was *not* affected by this experience or she had not *recognized* these impacts, it does call attention to the range of experiences that students can have on these study abroad programs. If students are not able to recognize how study abroad impacts them, then there is likely something more institutions can do to help students make themselves more vulnerable to allow such impacts to occur. While the SYEA program seemed to be developmentally appropriate for most of the interview participants, students like Abby may require a different approach to enable more intentional intercultural exploration.

Impact of Intentional Design of Second Year Experience Abroad

The SYEA program was intentionally designed to support sophomore student development in an international context. The role of the student affairs professionals, which is a unique component of the SYEA program, was to assist students as they

encountered developmental challenges while abroad. Student affairs professionals led the intercultural learning component, which involved guided exploration through the composition of the HCLP and structured reflection. Findings in this chapter indicate that many students found writing the HCLP as helpful in analyzing the host culture. However, the small group reflections seemed to benefit more students in terms of development. Many students referred to the small group reflection sessions as a safe space for them to share their experiences and also to learn about the experiences of their peers. Many times, students were challenged by what others offered in these meetings, which caused them to reflect on how they define something as right or wrong. This was also discussed in chapter four. The cognitive development that tends to occur during the second year involves a transition from viewing knowledge in terms of right and wrong to the acceptance of knowledge uncertainty. The structured reflections facilitated by the student affairs professionals helped students navigate this cognitive challenge. While the findings from this study also identify areas for improvement, which will be discussed in chapter six, overall, the intercultural learning component of the SYEA program seemed to help scaffold sophomore students as they faced some of the challenges particular to the second year.

Summary of Findings

Findings from this section support the literature, which aligns the outcomes of study abroad with some of the challenges typically experienced during the second year of college. These findings suggest that the opportunities afforded in study abroad programming can help foster development related to the very issues that sophomores

face. Areas of intersection between study abroad and sophomore development revealed by this study include: (a) developing identity, (b) redefining relationships, (c) developing a purpose in college, and (d) the emergence of an internal voice. If the opportunities afforded by study abroad foster development related to the issues that sophomores face, then study abroad programming may be a valid institutional approach to support this often struggling population and more research is needed to understand the variation across student experiences.

I also reflected on the intercultural learning component of the program, which seems to parallel a key recommendation for sophomore study abroad. This recommendation urges that, because many find themselves in focused exploration, sophomores need opportunities for guided exploration and structured reflection that can help scaffold their development. While there seemed to be mixed feedback on this component, many students felt these opportunities added value to their experience abroad and contributed to their learning.

Lastly, in this chapter I evaluated the developmental appropriateness of this program for sophomore students. In this process I discovered that, overall, this program seemed developmentally appropriate for students who were engaging in focused exploration because they had the opportunities to explore their identity and their relationships with others.

While these areas discussed do not address my primary research questions, they connect to the larger premise of this study, where I evaluated the potential of study abroad in supporting sophomore students. Having addressed my three research questions

as well as detailed other salient themes related to the intersection of sophomore issues and study abroad, I now proceed to the final chapter where I reflect on the findings in chapters four and five and discuss implications for practice and future directions.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION

The aim of this study was to investigate one institution's attempt to support sophomore student development through study abroad programming. This study evaluated the Second Year Experience Abroad program at the University of San Diego as a multifaceted approach to foster sophomore student development while promoting the institutional learning outcomes of intercultural maturity. In attempting to answer the question: Why is the development of intercultural maturity important for sophomore students, it is necessary to revisit the connections between sophomore student development and intercultural maturity's foundational theory of self-authorship as previously discussed in chapter two.

The sophomore year is considered a time of transition where students experience challenges related to their externally based ways of making meaning (cognitive domain), how they define the self (intrapersonal domain), and how they relate to others (interpersonal domain). New insights gained during the second year challenge such externally defined ways and students seek to develop their beliefs internally.

This desire for internal definition is characteristic of the second stage of self-authorship called the crossroads, which typically occurs during the second year of college (Baxter Magolda, 1992). Self-authorship is comprised of three stages that span the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of development and includes: (a) following external formulas, (b) the crossroads, and (c) self-authorship (Baxter Magolda, 2001). During the crossroads, a pivotal stage of self-authorship, assumptions

about knowledge, identity, and relationships with others begin to unravel and students undergo self-exploration in order to develop their own vision (cognitive), craft their own identity (intrapersonal), and to express this identity in relationship with others (interpersonal).

King and Baxter Magolda (2005) further developed self-authorship to encompass the intercultural capacities to interact in today's global society. This developmental trajectory, called intercultural maturity, represents the developmental capacity to "[understand] and [act] in ways that are interculturally aware and appropriate" (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005, p. 573) and occurs in three stages. These stages, which occur within the cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains, include: (a) initial level, (b) intermediate level, and (c) mature level. Just as experienced in the crossroads (Baxter Magolda, 2001; King et al., 2011), individuals at the intermediate level of intercultural maturity undergo self-exploration and experience a shift from external to internal self-definition. There is an evolving understanding of knowledge uncertainty and multiple perspectives (cognitive domain), an awareness of the various dimensions of one's identity (intrapersonal domain), and a willingness to interact with diverse others and refrain from judgment (King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

Study abroad serves to be an institutional practice that can foster the development of self-authorship (Du, 2007; Renn & Reason, 2013; Volden, 2011) and intercultural maturity (Braskamp et al., 2009; Doyle, 2009) among students. The international setting of study abroad "maximizes the opportunities to help students understand the necessity of multiple perspectives, reflect on how one's own cultural background influences one's

sense of self, and form social relationships with others not like them” (Braskamp et al., 2009, p. 115).

Taken together, the crossroads in the evolution of self-authorship and the intermediate level of intercultural maturity seem to reflect the developmental challenges that sophomores tend to face in college. Therefore, fostering intercultural maturity in sophomores may be a means for institutions to help support these students as they encounter developmental challenges related to shifts in meaning-making, identity, and interactions with others.

Since study abroad has been shown to promote intercultural maturity amongst participants and the challenges that sophomores face are situated in this developmental trajectory, then it deserves due consideration as an institutional approach to support sophomore student development.

Summary of Findings

As presented in chapter four of this study, findings of this research indicate that the SYEA program impacted participants’ development of intercultural maturity to varying degrees. In answering my first research question on how this program affected participants’ cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal growth, the mean score differences were compared through paired-sample hypothesis testing. I found the strongest gains in the cognitive knowledge scale followed by the intrapersonal-identity scale. Less profound impacts were in the interpersonal-social responsibility, interpersonal-social interaction and intrapersonal-affect scales. There were no significant changes in the cognitive-knowing scale.

When answering my second research question—if the changes could be explained by demographics or program characteristics—I discovered that although there was more significant growth in some developmental domains than others, these changes were not predicted by program location or year and were often not predicted by demographic characteristics such as ethnicity, major, level of parental education, or GPA. The only pattern that spanned various GPI scales and program locations was gender, where female students demonstrated higher gains on the cognitive-knowing, cognitive-knowledge, intrapersonal-affect, and interpersonal-social interaction scales. Florence was the only location where gender did not explain the change in any of the scales. Ethnicity, major, grade point average, level of parental education, and previous study abroad experience, did appear to explain some of the changes in the GPI scales. While I was able to identify trends in some of these demographic characteristics, these seemed to be contained within a particular program and not across location or year. There were no repeating patterns that would more broadly indicate that students with certain demographic characteristics were more or less impacted than others. Additionally, This suggests that the program affected many of the students from different years in different ways without strong ties to their demographic characteristics or to the program characteristics.

Findings related to my final research question were drawn from the data collected in the qualitative phase of this study. In this portion, I sought to find out how, and in what ways, students' intercultural maturity was affected by participating in the SYEA program. Qualitative accounts indicated that this program did seem to impact the development of intercultural maturity in almost all interview participants. Students

showed the most growth in the cognitive and intrapersonal domains of development. Cognitively, studying abroad seemed to prompt an internal process of evaluating how the concept of right and wrong is determined when evaluating cultural differences. Several recognized that what was once clear and easy to categorize as right or wrong had become more difficult. As students learned about the host culture, they also tended to develop an understanding that cultural context is an important factor when evaluating difference.

This program also provoked self-reflection, which helped students undergo a process of intrapersonal self-discovery. Discoveries that emerged included a better understanding of the dimensions of identity. For some, this involved the realization of privilege, an unconscious aspect of their White identity. The interpersonal domain, or the way students interacted with diverse others, also seemed to be influenced by experiences students had abroad. Some of these intercultural interactions were motivated by cultural curiosity, while others, which seemed more deeply grounded, were motivated by a desire to create a sense of mutual understanding around cultural difference. Taken together, progression across the three domains suggests that participating in this program offered the potential to influence the development of intercultural maturity in participants.

In addition to answering my research questions, I also noted four areas that suggest an intersection of study abroad and sophomore student development. These points of intersection include: (a) identity development, (b) impact on relationships, (c) developing a purpose in college, and (d) the emergence of an internal voice. In some ways for some students, the international context of study abroad seemed to be an optimal environment for them to mitigate these issues typical of the second year in

college. In examining the intercultural learning component of the SYEA program, I found that the small group meetings, which were led by student affairs professionals, facilitated meaningful reflection and many of the students found this to enhance their learning. Many students felt it added value to their time abroad. Lastly, I evaluated the developmental appropriateness of the SYEA program for sophomore students. Analysis of the qualitative data led me to conclude that this program was appropriate for most students because the types of changes that the study abroad environment can ignite in students mimic the changes that sophomores tend to experience in college.

In summary, I found the following: (a) most participants had significant growth in the cognitive knowledge and the intrapersonal-identity scales; (b) females gained significantly more than males in almost all scales; (c) students expressed that their experiences abroad influenced the development of intercultural maturity mostly in the cognitive and intrapersonal domains with less widespread impact in the interpersonal domain; (d) the opportunities afforded by the SYEA program paralleled the issues that sophomore students typically face in college; (e) the structured reflection component of the program was beneficial to many students; and (f) the SYEA program seemed to be developmentally appropriate for most sophomore participants. I now proceed with a discussion of these findings as well as implications on practice and directions for future investigation.

Discussion of Findings

In this section, I discuss my findings related to both the quantitative and qualitative sections of this study.

Quantitative Findings

The first two research questions related to program impact were answered using the Global Perspectives Inventory. Quantitative findings were quite similar to the national comparison of study abroad students who took the GPI.

Findings in the broader higher education landscape. To gain an understanding of how these findings situate USD in the larger picture of higher education, I offer a discussion on how these results compare to other students who took the GPI nationwide (Braskamp et al., 2009). Similar to other students, those who participated in the SYEA program experienced the most gains in the cognitive and intrapersonal domains. Growth in the cognitive domain was only significant in the knowledge scale—measuring what students “know and understand about cultural difference”—and not in knowing scale, which measures “how students come to learn and understand what is true and important to discern and the development of critical thinking” (Braskamp et al., 2009, p. 111). Increases in the cognitive-knowledge scale indicate that participants became more aware of the host culture and its impact on the global society, which is not surprising because being exposed to another culture for three weeks may lend itself to increased awareness of cultural differences. Braskamp et al. (2009) made sense of the difference in impact between the knowing and knowledge scales, critiquing that instruction in study abroad programs may be “focused on what [students] learned rather than how they think” and that “thinking critically may not be stressed in comparison to knowledge acquisition” (p. 111). Quantitative findings in this study would suggest the same explanation. The qualitative findings described in the next section, however, offer conflicting evidence.

Quantitative data on the SYEA participants showed the next largest gains within the intrapersonal domain of development, just as was demonstrated by Braskamp et al.'s (2009) study. For SYEA participants, the second highest gains occurred in the intrapersonal-identity scale while the nationwide population experienced gains in the intrapersonal-affect scale. While explaining causes of the discrepancy between findings of this study and those of Braskamp et al. may not be possible, the data does indicate that these two groups were impacted differently within the intrapersonal domain of development. Differences may be attributed to the samples. Braskamp et al.'s study measured impact on students who spent a semester abroad at various times during their undergraduate studies. Those who participated in the SYEA program were only sophomores and only abroad for three weeks, which are potential explanations for the difference in findings.

Quantitative data on the SYEA participants' gains in the interpersonal identity—awareness and acceptance of the dimensions of one's identity (Braskamp et al., 2013)—may be attributed to their stage of intrapersonal development as sophomore students. During the sophomore year, students tend to undergo self-exploration to work towards creating an internally grounded identity. This phase is characterized as *the crossroads* in Baxter Magolda's (1992, 1999) journey toward self-authorship and *focused exploration* in Schaller's (2005) stages of sophomore development. The second year of college is considered a pivotal year in identity formation (Baxter Magolda, 1992), which may help explain why these sophomore students demonstrated significant growth on the identity scale.

Disproportional representation in study abroad. Analysis of the quantitative data also illuminated the disproportional representation in study abroad, which continues to be an issue in higher education today. Most evident in this study is the gap in participation related to gender and ethnicity.

Gender differences and study abroad. Females demonstrated higher gains in almost all scales than their male counterparts. These findings are comparable to GPI results collected by Braskamp and Engberg (2011) nationwide from over 5,000 students between 2009 and 2010. In this study, females had higher average scores on four GPI scales, with the largest differences demonstrated in interpersonal-social responsibility, followed by cognitive-knowing, interpersonal-social interaction, and intrapersonal-affect. While this GPI data was collected on many students—not only those who participated in a study abroad program—it does provide evidence that females gain more than males in the majority of the GPI scales just as they did in the SYEA program.

Not only does this study call attention to the gender differences related to impact, it also highlights the disparity in participation within these groups. Only 29% of the students who participated in the SYEA program were male, which is quite far removed from the male to female ratio at USD (45% male, 55% female). This is also less than the 35.2% nationwide male participation rate in all study abroad programs (Institute of International Education, 2013). This raises the question: Where are all the males in study abroad? Researchers like Lucas (2009) sought to answer this very question, and discovered, like many demographic influences, the factors influencing participation are complex and interweaving. While Lucas' study has made progress in understanding the

factors that influence male participation, the continued underrepresentation of males in study abroad programs calls for further investigation around this student group.

Underrepresented ethnicities and study abroad. At first glance, the proportion of White students participating in the SYEA program (71.5%) is overwhelming. However, in examining nationwide trends of Whites studying abroad, the disparity is even more drastic at 76.4% (Institute of International Education, 2013). In comparing this distribution to the undergraduate population at USD, 35% of students self-identified as a minority, indicating that the institution still has a lot of work to do to reach this population in making study abroad accessible.

The SYEA program seems to be yet another exemplary case reflecting the disproportionate participation in study abroad programs. In terms of gender, the nationwide reality looks rather grim—in the 2001-2002 academic year, 64.9% of all students studying abroad were female and in 2011-2012 this remained almost exactly the same (64.8%). Participation by ethnicity, on the other hand, began to shift, going from an 82.9% White participation rate to 76.4% 10 years later. Since 2011, Asian participation has grown from 5.8 to 7.7%, Hispanic/Latino from 5.4 to 7.6%, and African American from 3.5 to 5.3% (Institute of International Education, 2013). While numbers do seem to be shifting in the preferred direction, the disparity is still vast.

The quantitative portion of this study seemed to raise various questions. Such questions include: (a) Why do males participate in study abroad at lower rates than females? and (b) What has led to the overall stagnant representation of ethnic groups in study abroad? While researchers (Lucas, 2009; Salisbury, 2011) have made strides in

understanding the factors that influence students' decisions to participate in a study abroad program, participation rates remain unchanged. This might suggest that any institutional strategies in place, if they are in place at all, need to utilize different approaches to reach these student groups.

Qualitative Findings

The qualitative findings of this study also bring up important points of discussion. These points include areas of convergence and divergence of quantitative and qualitative findings, the importance of academic classes offered abroad, and the importance of understanding one's privilege.

Convergence and divergence of quantitative and qualitative findings. When comparing the quantitative and qualitative findings, divergence and convergence of the data was discovered. The qualitative findings supported the quantitative data in terms of identity development. According to findings from the GPI, the intrapersonal-identity was one of the scales where participants experienced the most significant gains. Findings from this scale were complemented by the qualitative findings, where many participants expressed that the international context served as an ideal environment for identity exploration.

Within the cognitive domain, however, there seemed to be a strong divergence between the quantitative and qualitative findings. In the quantitative findings, the cognitive-knowing scale, which measures complexity of views and the ability to consider multiple perspectives when evaluating what is true and important to know, showed the least change of any scale. This suggests that students did not experience changes in their

complexity of thinking. Qualitative accounts, almost across the board, indicated otherwise. Almost all students explicitly expressed that their experiences abroad led them to more complex meaning-making structures and a shift in how they evaluate difference. One explanation for the discrepancy could be related to the timing of when students took the post-experience GPI and when the interviews took place. The post-experience GPI was taken immediately upon return to the United States while the qualitative interviews were conducted approximately four months after return. The four months that passed after returning home may have given students the opportunity to re-integrate into their home culture and apply what they learned while abroad. At the time they took the post-experience GPI, students may not have had the opportunity to establish a contrast between what they learned abroad and their daily cultural practices in the United States.

Importance of courses offered in study abroad programs. Another important point that merits discussion is the impact that the courses had on students' development of intercultural maturity. In the 2013 year, a range of classes were offered across the three locations, including art history, Catholic theology, and chemistry in Florence, ethics and Spanish in Seville, and world religions and marketing in Hong Kong. Students who seemed to be most impacted were those who took classes that had comparative aspects inherent in the course content.

According to participants, the classes that seemed to have a more profound effect on development of intercultural maturity were the ethics class offered in Seville, the world religions course offered in Hong Kong, and the Catholic theology course in

Florence. The effects of these courses were detailed in chapter four. Through the application of ethical theories such as ethno-relativism, students who took ethics were prompted to reflect on the importance of cultural contexts when evaluating difference. Those who took the world religions and the Catholic theology courses learned about multiplicity in religions, which challenged some students' previous notions of a *correct* or *right* way to serve God.

The art history, chemistry, and marketing classes were not explicitly referred to as influencing interview participants' intercultural maturity so the impact of these courses was not clear. Additionally, I was not able to interview anyone who took the Spanish class, so I am not able to comment on the influence of that particular course.

Awareness of one's privilege. Many of the White students who were interviewed came to realize their unconscious privilege as a result of their experience abroad. King and Baxter Magolda (2005) characterize this new awareness as occurring at the intermediate level of intercultural maturity. Some became aware of their privilege when they were given preferential treatment in the home country while others became aware of their privilege when they felt marginalized because of their culture. While this realization is uncomfortable, diversity researchers (Ortiz & Rhoads, 2000) emphasize the pivotal role that deconstructing Whiteness plays in developing a multicultural perspective (Baxter Magolda, 2003).

It is important to note, however, that these students experienced marginalization only to a very small degree. They labeled these experiences as making them "feel bad" (Brian, personal communication, August 6, 2013) and made them "more aware of

[marginalization] because it happened to [them]” (Laynie, personal communication, May 10, 2013). Yet these experiences just skimmed the surface of what true marginalization might feel like on a daily basis.

Experiences like these suggest that while some students may have become more aware of marginalization, they may not have fully internalized their racial identity and the unconscious privilege that is part of that identity. McIntosh (1989) developed an explanation of why privilege is not part of the equation of marginalization. McIntosh writes that Whites are taught to see “racism as something which puts others at a disadvantage, but . . . not . . . taught to see the corollary aspects, white privilege, which puts [them] at an advantage” (1989, p. 12). While the study abroad experience has the potential to initiate this shift in White students, it should be accompanied, as Ortiz and Rhoads argue (2000), with an intentional framework to truly enhance appreciation of diversity.

Having discussed these important themes suggested by the quantitative and qualitative findings, I now present the implications of the study findings.

Implications for Further Research

The first implication for research is that additional study of the development of intercultural maturity for sophomore students at USD is called for. However, if the Global Perspectives Inventory is part of this continued study, then the timing of when it is administered after the experience should be changed. I make this recommendation based on the discrepancy between the quantitative and qualitative findings of this study. While some of the quantitative findings indicate that participants did not experience any

significant gains (such as the cognitive-knowing domain), qualitative data suggests otherwise. I attribute this discrepancy to the timing of when the quantitative and qualitative data collection took place. The post-experience GPI was administered immediately after return from abroad, which may not have allowed students adequate time to reflect on their experience and apply what they learned to their everyday lives. Additionally, should qualitative data be part of this study, I would recommend that this collection take place around the same time as the post-experience GPI to reduce discrepancies between the data.

Another recommendation I would make involves more frequent data collection from participants. In this study, quantitative data was collected prior to departure and then again immediately upon return to the United States and qualitative data was collected four months after program completion. However, it would be very useful to conduct student interviews at the same time the pre-experience survey was taken as this would provide researchers with a holistic understanding of the student experience prior to going abroad. Additionally, I would recommend conducting interviews or focus groups while abroad to gain an understanding of how perspectives are changing. By collecting this information *in the moment*, researchers would be able to have a dialogue about how elements of the SYEA program may be influencing changes in intercultural maturity.

Collecting data from other sources would also strengthen findings of this study. Both faculty and student affairs professionals play a crucial role in scaffolding the development of sophomores on this program. Therefore, it would be useful to hold focus groups with these constituencies in order to understand if and how they intentionally

supported student growth. Faculty can provide insight related to the course while student affairs professionals can provide insight the intercultural learning component. Taken together, this feedback will contribute to an overall understanding of the influence that the SYEA program can have on students' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal development.

Qualitative findings from this study called attention to the variation across student experience in the SYEA program. Some students seemed to be more or less influenced in some developmental domains than others, so more research is called for in order to better understand the factors that either foster or hinder such changes. How does the students' level of engagement in the SYEA program relate to their level of engagement at USD? Does their level of engagement have anything to do with personal characteristics such as personality type? Investigating the answers to these questions can inform program administrators on how to develop strategies to promote student engagement of all students.

Another recommendation I would make for a continuation of this study at USD would be to incorporate sophomores who did not participate in the SYEA program. This new group would serve as a control or comparison group, providing the opportunity to ask the following additional questions about these non-participants: (a) Why did these students choose not to participate in the SYEA program? (b) How does their development of intercultural maturity differ from those who participate in the SYEA program? and (c) What on-campus experiences influence their development of intercultural maturity? Asking these questions may also lead to deeper understandings of the barriers to study

abroad participation on the USD campus and more generally, to the issues that challenge sophomores. Including non-participants would add explanatory power to the study and provide a more holistic understanding of the development of intercultural maturity in sophomore students.

I would also recommend collecting additional demographic information that was not captured by the GPI. This might include information related to financial need and whether the participants are first generation college students. This information will add depth to the study because there would be a better understanding of the sample as a whole and also a better understanding of the factors that may influence changes in the GPI.

Because this study took place at only one university, extending a similar study to other institutions with both similar and differing characteristics than USD would provide an array of perspectives of students with different college experiences. This would include other Catholic universities, other religiously affiliated colleges, as well as larger public institutions. Of course, a program similar to the SYEA program would need to be in place at these institutions in order to extend this study, so this may limit the types of institutions that may be able to do a similar investigation. However, this study could be augmented to investigate on-campus factors that might influence the development of intercultural maturity among sophomore students.

Another implication for future research would be to continue this study with the SYEA 2013 cohort through graduation from USD. This might include administering the GPI at the conclusion of the junior and senior years, supplemented by qualitative

interviews to gain an understanding of the factors that may have influenced their development of intercultural maturity.

Since the course offered in the study abroad program also seemed to be influential in the development of intercultural maturity, it would be worthy to do a more in-depth investigation on the types of courses that might best lend themselves to the types of learning that promote intercultural maturity. Additionally, an interesting direction would be to compare similar courses that are taken on-campus and in an international context to evaluate the difference, if any, on the impact on intercultural maturity in students. Ideally, such courses would be taught by the same faculty to control for differences in teaching style and pedagogy.

Lastly, more research is needed to better understand the disproportionate representation in gender and ethnicity in study abroad programming. One important starting point may be to conduct research on the types of study abroad programs that are populated by minority students. Understanding these students' motivations may help institutions gain a better understanding of how to meet their needs in study abroad programming. While organizations such as Diversity Abroad are making strides to educate institutions on the barriers to study abroad and provide support to underrepresented groups, the percentage of such populations in education abroad programs remains largely unchanged. If a goal of higher education is to have the study abroad student profile mirror that of the nationwide undergraduate population, then collectively, institutions still have a lot of work to do to make study abroad accessible to a broader, more diverse population.

Implications for Practice

This study has various implications for practice at USD. First, findings from this study can inform the administration on future directions of the SYEA program. These future directions include strategic selection of course offerings and faculty, refining and enhancing the intercultural learning component, as well as creating strategies to intentionally attract more diverse participants.

Findings from this study called attention to the impact of the courses that students take abroad. Since the most influential factors in the development of cognitive maturity for many students were the academic courses and the faculty, then it makes sense for USD to strategically select courses and faculty that will most likely impact the type of cognitive challenges appropriate for sophomore students. For example, during the second year, students' ways of knowing tend to be challenged, causing an inner disequilibrium induced by a tension between external pressures and one's desire to develop beliefs internally. Therefore, offering courses that provoke challenges to students' meaning-making structures lend themselves to fostering cognitive maturity. One example from this study was the ethics course, where the application of ethical theory to the intercultural environment led to fruitful discussions about cultural differences and the value placed on cultural practice. Additionally, selecting faculty who are willing to actively engage with sophomores as they develop their own system for evaluating knowledge is also an integral aspect for supporting cognitive maturity.

This study also has implications for the intercultural learning component of the SYEA program. The intercultural learning component is an aspect of the SYEA program

that makes it unique from many study abroad programs. This component is led by USD student affairs professionals and involves guided exploration, where students compose a host culture learning plan or written cultural analysis, as well as structured reflection sessions. Findings from this study suggest that the intercultural learning component had positive impacts on student development for many participants. However, salient themes from this study also highlight areas to enhance this component to better engage students in intentional and thoughtful exploration.

One recommendation for the intercultural learning component is that it should be more closely connected to the academic course students take abroad. One student described the host culture learning plan, in particular, as burdensome because he saw it as an additional assignment above and beyond the requirements for his academic course. Therefore, if the HCLP is integrated into the class, students may see it as complementing what they are learning in class rather than competing with their in-class requirements. Additionally, the topics of the small group guided reflections should be connected to the concepts that students learn in class. These reflection sessions can then be a space for the group to have a dialogue about general course content and how this relates to their daily experiences abroad. By integrating the intercultural learning component to the class, students may view it as an extension of the academic experience.

However, intentionally building the intercultural learning component into the class will require early collaboration between program administrators, faculty, and student affairs professionals. Program administrators will first need to establish a structure for such advanced collaboration to take place. Before doing so, it would

behoove program administrators to hold meetings with faculty and student affairs professionals who previously participated in the SYEA program to gain a better understanding of what successful collaboration might look like. From there, the program administrators can establish clear expectations of faculty and student affairs professionals in regards to the intercultural learning component. Therefore, when faculty and student affairs professionals apply to participate in the program, they will be doing so with a clear understanding of the goals of the intercultural learning component.

After faculty and student affairs professionals are selected to participate, program administrators should establish the structure to facilitate successful collaboration. This would involve having open and ongoing dialogue on roles, shared responsibilities and the division of duties. It would also require that faculty review course concepts with the student affairs professionals so they are aware of what students are learning in class. Together, the faculty and student affairs professionals can develop writing prompts for the host cultural learning plan as well as discussion prompts for the small group reflection sessions. This early collaboration can give both faculty and student affairs professionals ownership of the program and will motivate both groups to carry out the outcomes that they created together.

Program administrators should also require that faculty and student affairs staff participate in various training sessions together prior to departure. Since the aim of the SYEA program is to support sophomore student development and intercultural learning, both faculty and student affairs professionals should understand the common issues that second year students face as well as how to engage students in discussions about culture.

These areas may not be the specialty of these constituencies, so providing guidance would prepare them to work with students in this unique capacity. One starting point for these trainings would be to share the findings of this study.

Another recommendation is that the intercultural learning component includes topics related to identity development. More specifically, this study highlights the need for more education around the concept of White identity among participants. Qualitative data collected in this study suggested that some White participants, through experiences they described as marginalization, gained awareness that differential treatment as a result of race, ethnicity, or culture is an issue that occurs in the United States and on the USD campus. Many of them showed an increased sensitivity to populations that experience this on a daily basis. However, many of them did not seem to gain a deeper understanding of the privilege that is an unconscious facet of their White identity.

Therefore, embedding this type of education in the intercultural learning component, similar to Ortiz and Rhoads' (2000) framework for multicultural education, may help students deconstruct Whiteness and influence their racial identity development. Ortiz and Rhoads' framework engages students in understanding culture and the role they play in its construction in five sequential steps. Steps two (learning about other cultures) and three (recognizing and deconstructing the White culture) can be particularly impactful for sophomore students in the intermediate level of intercultural maturity. This type of learning encourages learners to move beyond a superficial exploration of cultural differences and engage in a deeper understanding of how a dominant culture can affect perceptions of these differences (Baxter Magolda, 2003; King & Baxter Magolda, 2005).

Strategies for deconstructing Whiteness may be particularly beneficial in general to study abroad students because approximately 70% of those who participate in these opportunities are White (Institute for International Education, 2013).

I would also recommend that topics related to spirituality be included in the intercultural learning component. Findings from this study parallel those from Astin et al.'s (2010) study on spirituality in higher education, where study abroad was identified as a key college experience that contributes to students' spiritual growth. Many of the SYEA participants who took Catholic theology or world religions seemed to undergo reflection about their spirituality and religion, and some returned to campus with a better understanding and a deeper connection to their faith. Astin et al.'s (2010) study showed that students' exposure to diverse people and cultures in the context of study abroad helped them connect to their inner selves and enhanced their spiritual development. While these SYEA program participants took courses abroad that fostered such spiritual reflection, findings from Astin et al.'s (2010) study provide evidence that all students can benefit from this type of self-exploration. Additionally, since USD is a Catholic university, spiritual reflection within the intercultural learning component would support the overall religious mission of the institution.

A final recommendation for the intercultural learning component is that the concept of diversity should be more intentionally addressed. Findings from this study suggest that some students had a rather narrow understanding of diversity—many seemed to be aware of between-group diversity, but not very attuned to diversity that exists *within* their student groups. For example, one student discussed her sensitivity to cultural

differences when interacting with locals of the host culture. However, when interacting with students in her small group reflection sessions, she did not seem to appreciate differences that existed amongst the student group. This suggests that she may have viewed diversity in terms of culture and not in broader terms that incorporates differences that are less visible. Therefore, the intercultural learning component should have built-in discussions on the concept of diversity and the many different forms in which it is manifested. These discussions may help students translate their appreciation for cultural diversity to an appreciation of diversity that exists on the USD campus.

Findings from this study also have implications for the design of the SYEA program. In the qualitative portion of this study, three of the 11 students indicated that they were not able to connect with other students on the program. Each of these three students went abroad to different locations, which suggests that this is a challenge students face in all of the SYEA programs, not just those with large enrollments like Florence or those with smaller enrollments like Hong Kong or Seville. The current program structure may not be providing sufficient opportunities to foster close peer relationships. Therefore, program administrators should design more opportunities for intentional social interaction to take place. This may include informal social gatherings prior to departure, incorporating group-related tasks in the small group reflection sessions while abroad, and various re-entry programs.

The University of San Diego should also bolster the SYEA re-entry aspect of the program. Currently, the only re-entry programming that takes place is done through informal social gatherings. The divergence of findings in this study related to cognitive

maturity suggests that this study abroad experience continues to influence student development even upon return to the host campus. To continue this development, re-entry programming should include continued reflection sessions on how to integrate what was learned abroad into everyday life at USD. Additionally, intentional programming to promote interactions with diverse students on campus would help foster a better understanding of the USD student body and the diversity that exists on campus.

Another implication for practice that this study highlights is the need to attract more diverse students to the SYEA program. Over the course of three years, participants in the SYEA program have mostly been White and female. Almost all students reported having a GPA of at least a 3.0 and the majority had at least one parent with a college degree. This rather uniform student profile suggests that there are a lot of students who chose not to participate in the SYEA program for one reason or another. Through targeted outreach and direct engagement with diverse students, USD can develop strategies on how to make this program accessible to many different types of students. This includes, but is not limited to, males, minority students, students with lower GPAs, and first generation students. The University of San Diego can also be more proactive to form partnerships across campus with offices such as diversity and inclusion, wellness services, and financial aid to learn more about the needs of various student groups and implement practices that can open doors to study abroad.

Findings from this study also call attention to the importance of selecting study abroad programs that are developmentally appropriate for students. Different program models and foci are needed for students who are at different stages in their developmental

trajectory. As suggested by Abby's experience, misalignment between student needs and the opportunities afforded by a study abroad program may prevent students from fully engaging in the international experience. One size does certainly not fit all and study abroad programs should meet students where they are developmentally. This also has implications for study abroad practitioners, who play an instrumental role in assisting students when selecting a study abroad program. The developmental readiness should be at the forefront of the advising process so students can make thoughtful decisions about program model, duration, and focus that best meet their needs.

More broadly, findings from this study can also provide USD administrators with valuable insight on how study abroad programs can be crafted to produce outcomes beyond academic and intercultural competence goals. The goals of the SYEA program were not only to provide students with an education abroad program; rather, the aim was to also support sophomore students as they navigated challenges during the second year. Therefore, this may open doors to other types of creative programming that are possible at USD and lessons learned could give administrators guidance on the types of strategies needed to create such programs.

Findings from this study may have implications for various other constituents outside of USD. Other universities that also have goals to create specialized study abroad programs for sophomore students can learn from USD's experience with the SYEA program if they share the priority of fostering student development of a targeted population in the global context. Lessons learned from SYEA may help institutions implement a similar program on their campus, although institutional characteristics will

vary. Such institutional characteristics as well as the unique needs of the student body should be central to program design. Independent study abroad program providers may also find this study interesting since universities often contract their services for study abroad programming assistance.

Limitations of the Study

One limitation of this study is that of generalizability. This study investigates a unique study abroad program, likely the first of its kind, which was implemented at only one university. Therefore, this study does not claim to be representative of all sophomore students at all universities. Additionally, the SYEA program is a relatively small program, where only a small percentage of the USD sophomore population participated in the program each year. As a result, this sample may not be representative of all sophomores at USD. Of the 369 students who participated in the program between 2011 and 2013 in the three locations, only those who participated in the SYEA program in 2013 were included in the qualitative portion of this study. Of the 151 students who went on the program in 2013, only 11 were interviewed, so findings from the qualitative portion of this study were based on the experiences of these 11 students.

In terms of demographics, this sample was also rather uniform, composed of mostly White females who have at least one parent with a college degree. Low representation in other demographics may have limited the ability to identify significant differences between student groups. Participants were also academically sound, with 97.8% reporting an overall GPA within the A or B range. Additionally, none of the 11 interview participants made any indication of barriers of any kind to participating in this

program. This suggests that these students may also come from families with the resources that make participating in a study abroad program accessible. This overall lack of diversity serves as a limitation because this distribution is not representative of the USD population or the general undergraduate population nationwide. Therefore, making broad generalizations about the impact of this program is not possible.

Also, the program was initiated and implemented by a university with characteristics that are not shared across all universities. For example, USD is a small, private, Catholic institution with an annual tuition that exceeds \$40,000. High tuition costs may suggest a more affluent student body that may afford many the opportunity to participate in study abroad programs. USD also has a very well established culture of study abroad that has been institutionalized through campus-wide internationalization efforts. Therefore, the results from this study will not generalize, in the traditional scientific sense, to other study abroad programs at other universities of varying size and of varying resources.

There were also data limitations in this study. Although I intended to explore the extent to which demographics could explain the change in the GPI scales for all program years (2011-2013), there were data limitations that prohibited me from conducting this comprehensive analysis. The 2011 version of the GPI did not contain questions that requested demographic information related to the students' grade point average, level of parental education, and previous study abroad experience. Therefore, this data was not available to include in the analysis. Since regression analysis identified some of these variables as helping to explain the change in some of the GPI scales, I decided to exclude

the 2011 data from my analysis to avoid specification error. As a result, the findings related to my second research question only pertain to programs run in 2012 and 2013, which represents only a partial picture of the SYEA program. Additionally, two of the GPI scales (cognitive-knowing and intrapersonal-affect) have a coefficient alpha of less than .70, which falls below the traditional threshold for acceptability. This poses a statistical limitation as these two scales do not meet the generally accepted level of internal consistency, suggesting that some findings in this study should be interpreted with caution.

Another data limitation is that I did not include other relevant data that would have added depth to this study. This includes factors such as financial need and whether participants were first generation college students. This information would have given me a more holistic understanding of the study population as well as the factors that may have influenced changes in the pre- and post-experience surveys.

The self-reporting nature of the survey may also pose limitations related to validity. Self-reported data tends to be “personal and idiosyncratic and thus may bear little relationship to ‘reality’ as seen by others” (Barker, Pistrang, Elliott, 2002, p. 2). As people self-report, they may not be truthful because they present themselves as they *wish* to see themselves rather than how they actually do. Finally, the research participants “may not be able to provide the level of detail, or use the concepts, that the researcher is interested in” (Barker et al., 2002, p. 2), which can cause a misalignment between the data and the research questions.

The issue of researcher subjectivity and positionality is also recognized as a possible limitation to this study. As a member of the administration in the USD study abroad office, I oversee the development and implementation of the SYEA program as a whole. Professionally, I strive for the SYEA program to succeed and I recognized my positionality. Therefore, it was essential that I monitored my subjectivity throughout the research process by keeping a researcher's journal. Peshkin (1988) notes that when a researcher conducts this formal monitoring of the self, awareness of "where self and subject are intertwined" (p. 20) is illuminated, thus enabling the researcher to better manage subjectivity. As a result, the collection, analysis, and writing up of the data lessened the burden brought about by my unconscious biases.

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to the pre-existing knowledgebase surrounding study abroad programming and how it might be a multifaceted approach to supporting a specific student population by promoting intercultural maturity. Although literature surrounding study abroad, intercultural maturity, and sophomore student development has been investigated, a link between the three is yet to be established through empirical research. There is little evidence about how study abroad programming might be intentionally designed and utilized to meet the developmental needs of sophomore students by fostering intercultural maturity. This study evaluates study abroad as an institutional strategy to respond to the challenges of the sophomore year. As a result, findings may have a future impact on higher education policy and practice.

The University of San Diego intentionally designed the SYEA program to support sophomore student development in an international context. Findings from this study demonstrate that USD is certainly on the right track for following through on such intended outcomes. Although this study identifies areas for improvement of the SYEA program, it also identifies areas of success, which show that study abroad programs can be intentionally designed to make impacts beyond academic achievement and intercultural competence. The University of San Diego has made great strides in the creative uses of study abroad programming and it has paved the way for other institutions to follow suit.

Some might argue that the transferability of this study might only be useful to institutions with similar characteristics as USD. However, Lincoln and Guba (1985) conceptualize transferability in more psychological terms, where the applicability of findings to different contexts is negotiated by the consumer of the study. It is the researcher's responsibility to provide the consumer with adequate information since the "[researcher] cannot know all the contexts to which someone may wish to transfer working hypotheses" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 124). This study provides in-depth and well-organized information so the consumer of the research can decide whether or not it is appropriate to apply the findings of this study to their organization. Other institutions may want to use this study as a formative evaluation because it sheds light on solving the sophomore problem through the use of study abroad programming.

The goal of this study was not to weigh the successes or failures of the SYEA program, but rather to make sense of the social phenomena of the sophomore student

experience and construct a plausible explanation of how participation in a study abroad experience may affect that experience. This study, as Donmoyer (1990) writes, “may help . . . in the forming of questions rather than in the finding of answers” (p. 182). As a result, this is a point of departure that opens doors to answering the questions generated by this study and makes progress toward a better understanding of how to support sophomore students.

Reflections

Findings from this study suggest that study abroad can bring about changes in sophomore students. My passion for this research is rooted in my own personal journey and the life-changing impact that study abroad had on me as a college sophomore.

Before studying abroad as a sophomore student, I did not yet have a definition of what I wanted out of college. I lacked academic direction and did not have strong connections to the campus community, which led me to contemplate leaving the university.

Participating in a study abroad program in Mexico as a sophomore student resulted in a dramatic change.

The cultural interactions I had abroad intrigued me immensely. Growing up in a predominantly White community and attending predominantly White schools in southern California, I did not have much experience interacting with diverse others. While in Mexico, I developed a love for the culture, which piqued my interest to better understand the perspectives of this cultural group and was drawn to other students who shared this same interest. Upon return to my university, I decided to pursue majors in Spanish and Latin American Studies where I found a larger community of students with a common

academic focus. This study abroad experience was instrumental in helping me find my “place” within my institution, which increased my overall satisfaction with my college experience.

In reflection, I understand how my development while abroad paralleled the development of intercultural maturity of students in this study. My perspectives were challenged which made me more open-minded towards difference, I gained a better understanding of my identity, and I intentionally engaged in intercultural interactions upon return. Seeing some of these same developmental issues reflected in the sophomore students in this study reminds me, as the literature suggests, of the intersection of study abroad programming and sophomore student development. This study illuminates the potential of study abroad in shaping the lives of sophomore students.

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Appendix A

Global Perspectives Inventory



Global Perspective Inventory General Student Form 2011 - 2012

You have been invited to respond to the Global Perspective Inventory. You should be able to complete the survey in 15-20 minutes.

Participation is voluntary. There are no foreseeable risks involved in responding to this survey beyond those experienced in everyday life. By completing the GPI, you are agreeing to participate in research. You are free to stop responding at any time. Confidentiality will be maintained to the degree permitted by the technology used and to the extent allowed by law. No absolute guarantees can be made regarding the confidentiality of electronic data. You will not be identified in anything written about this study.

If you have questions about this survey, please contact us through our website address, gpi.central.edu. If you have questions about your rights as a participant, please contact Central College, Institutional Review Board, Dr. Keith Jones, Campus Mailbox 0109, 812 University, Pella, IA 50219; phone: (641)628-5182.

Please enter the four-digit Access Code provided to you ____ ____ ____ ____ (If applicable)

INSTRUCTIONS: There is no time limit, but try to respond to each statement as quickly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers, only responses that are right for you. You must complete every item for your responses to count. Thank you for your cooperation.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. When I notice cultural differences, my culture tends to have the better approach.	SA	A	N	D	SD
2. I have a definite purpose in my life.	SA	A	N	D	SD
3. I can explain my personal values to people who are different from me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
4. Most of my friends are from my own ethnic background.	SA	A	N	D	SD
5. I think of my life in terms of giving back to society.	SA	A	N	D	SD
6. Some people have a culture and others do not.	SA	A	N	D	SD
7. In different settings what is right and wrong is simple to determine.	SA	A	N	D	SD
8. I am informed of current issues that impact international relations.	SA	A	N	D	SD
9. I know who I am as a person.	SA	A	N	D	SD
10. I feel threatened around people from backgrounds very different from my own.	SA	A	N	D	SD
11. I often get out of my comfort zone to better understand myself.	SA	A	N	D	SD
12. I am willing to defend my own views when they differ from others	SA	A	N	D	SD
13. I understand the reasons and causes of conflict among nations of different cultures.	SA	A	N	D	SD
14. I am confident that I can take care of myself in a completely new situation.	SA	A	N	D	SD
15. People from other cultures tell me that I am successful at navigating their cultures.	SA	A	N	D	SD
16. I work for the rights of others.	SA	A	N	D	SD
17. I see myself as a global citizen.	SA	A	N	D	SD
18. I take into account different perspectives before drawing conclusions about the world around me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
19. I understand how various cultures of this world interact socially.	SA	A	N	D	SD
20. I get offended often by people who do not understand my point-of-view.	SA	A	N	D	SD
21. I am able to take on various roles as appropriate in different cultural and ethnic settings.	SA	A	N	D	SD
22. I put my beliefs into action by standing up for my principles.	SA	A	N	D	SD
23. I consider different cultural perspectives when evaluating global problems.	SA	A	N	D	SD
24. I rely primarily on authorities to determine what is true in the world	SA	A	N	D	SD
25. I know how to analyze the basic characteristics of a culture.	SA	A	N	D	SD
26. I am sensitive to those who are discriminated against.	SA	A	N	D	SD
27. I do not feel threatened emotionally when presented with multiple perspectives.	SA	A	N	D	SD
28. I prefer to work with people who have different cultural values from me.	SA	A	N	D	SD
29. I am accepting of people with different religious and spiritual traditions.	SA	A	N	D	SD
30. Cultural differences make me question what is really true.	SA	A	N	D	SD
31. I put the needs of others above my own personal wants.	SA	A	N	D	SD
32. I can discuss cultural differences from an informed perspective.	SA	A	N	D	SD
33. I am developing a meaningful philosophy of life.	SA	A	N	D	SD
34. I intentionally involve people from many cultural backgrounds in my life.	SA	A	N	D	SD
35. I rarely question what I have been taught about the world around me	SA	A	N	D	SD
36. I constantly need affirmative confirmation about myself from others.	SA	A	N	D	SD
37. I enjoy when my friends from other cultures teach me about our cultural differences.	SA	A	N	D	SD
38. I consciously behave in terms of making a difference.	SA	A	N	D	SD
39. I am open to people who strive to live lives very different from my own life style.	SA	A	N	D	SD
40. Volunteering is not an important priority in my life.	SA	A	N	D	SD

41. My age in years, (e.g., 21) ___ ___

42. My gender is

- a. Female
- b. Male
- c. Other

43. Select the one that best describes your current status.

- a. American student at an American college/university
- b. Non American student at an American college/university
- c. Other

If answered "b" to item 43, also respond to 43a and 43b.

43a. How long have you lived in the United States? _____ years [fill-in-the-blank numeric]

43b. What is your country of origin? _____ [fill-in-the-blank alpha]

44. Select the one ethnic identity that best describes you:

- a. Multiple Ethnicities
- b. African/African American/Black
- c. Asian/Pacific Islander
- d. European/White
- e. Hispanic/Latino
- f. Native American
- g. I prefer not to respond

45. My status at the college/university in which I am enrolled.

- a. Freshman
- b. Sophomore
- c. Junior
- d. Senior
- e. Graduate student
- f. Faculty
- g. Administration/staff
- h. Other

46. My major field of study is (mark only one)
- Agriculture and natural resources
 - Arts and humanities
 - Business and Law
 - Communications and Journalism
 - Education and Social Work
 - Engineering
 - Health and Medical Professions
 - Physical and Biological Sciences and Math
 - Social and Behavioral Sciences
 - Other
47. What was the highest level of formal education for either of your parents?
- Less than high school _____
 - High school graduate _____
 - Some college, but less than a BA, BS degree ____
 - College degree _____
 - Some Graduate school ____
 - Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, MD, etc) ____
48. Are you a transfer student at the college or university where you are enrolled?
- Yes
 - No
 - Not applicable
49. What is your average grade earned in college?
- A or A+ ___ A-- ___ B+ ___ B ___ C ___ D ___

Since coming to college, how many courses have you taken in the areas listed below.

50. Multicultural course addressing issues of race, ethnicity, gender, class, religion, or sexual orientation	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more
51. Foreign language course	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more
52. World history course	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more
53. Service-learning course	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more
54. Course focused on significant global/international issues and problems	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more
55. Course that includes opportunities for intensive dialogue among students with different backgrounds and beliefs	0	1	2	3	4	5 or more

Since coming to college, how often have you participated in the following.

56. Participated in events or activities sponsored by groups reflecting your own cultural heritage	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
57. Participated in events or activities sponsored by groups reflecting a cultural heritage different from your own	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
58. Participated in religious or spiritual activities	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
59. Participated in leadership programs that stress collaboration and team work	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
60. Participated in community service activities	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
61. Attended a lecture/workshop/campus discussion on international/global issues	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
62. Read a newspaper or news magazine (online or in print)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
63. Watched news programs on television or computer	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
64. Followed an international event/crisis (e.g., through newspaper, social media, or other media source)	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
65. Discussed current events with other students	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
66. Interacted with students from a country different from your own	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often
67. Interacted with students from a race/ethnic group different from your own	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very often

68. Have you ever participated in a living-learning program with a global/international theme?

- a. Yes
- b. No

69. Prior to this semester or quarter, how many quarters/ semesters have you studied abroad?

- a. None
- b. Short term --summer session, January term
- c. One term
- d. Two terms
- e. More than two terms

70. I have a strong sense of affiliation with my college/university.	SA	A	N	D	SD
71. I feel that my college/university community honors diversity and internationalism.	SA	A	N	D	SD
72. I understand the mission of my college/university.	SA	A	N	D	SD
73. I am both challenged and supported at my college/university.	SA	A	N	D	SD
74. I have been encouraged to develop my strengths and talents at my college/university.	SA	A	N	D	SD
75. I feel I am a part of a close and supportive community of colleagues and friends.	SA	A	N	D	SD

76. Provide your ID number here _____

Appendix B
Email to Interview Participants

Dear [*Participant Name*],

Ciao! I hope that this email finds you well. As a current doctoral student at the University of San Diego (USD), I am working on a study entitled “Study Abroad as a Multifaceted Approach to Supporting College Sophomores: Creating Optimal Environments to Promote Holistic Student Development and Global Learning”. I am conducting an in-depth case study on the USD Second Year Experience Abroad (SYEA) program as my research interest is in how students responded to this experience.

I would like to invite you to participate in this research study by speaking with me in an in-person interview. I anticipate that the interview will last approximately forty minutes to one hour(maximum); it will be conducted at a time and date convenient for you. The purpose of this interview is to understand the student experience and perspective of the SYEA program. I will also request a second 30-minute meeting (maximum) to share my notes with you to make sure I am accurately representing your words. The interview as well as your decision to participate will be confidential; participation is completely voluntary and will not have any impact on future study abroad participation.

I hope you will be willing to speak with me as the information you provide will be very helpful and insightful to administrators who developed the Second Year Experience Abroad program as well as other administrators who may implement a similar program. Please email or call me to let me know if you are willing and able to participate in this study. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Jessica Luchesi
jessicalu@sandiego.edu
619-507-9047

Appendix C
Follow-Up Email to Interview Participants

Dear [*Participant Name*],

I am writing to follow-up with you regarding my request for you to participate in my research on the effects of the Second Year Experience Abroad (SYEA) program. The purpose of this interview is to understand the student experience and perspective of the SYEA program.

If you are interested in participating in this research project, I would like to ask you to kindly respond to this email. The interview will last approximately forty minutes to one hour (maximum) and will be conducted at a time and date convenient for you. I will also request a second 30-minute meeting (maximum) to share my notes with you to make sure I am accurately representing your words. The interview as well as your decision to participate will be confidential; participation is completely voluntary and will not have any impact on future study abroad participation.

Your participation in this interview will be extremely beneficial to my research as it will provide me insight on how this program affected participants. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Jessica Luchesi
jessicalu@sandiego.edu
619-507-9047

Appendix D

Overview of Interview Participant Demographics

Overview of Interview Participant Demographics,

Participant	Location	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Major	Level of Parent Education	Transfer Student	GPA	Study Abroad Terms
Shannon	Florence	Female	19	European/White	Business and law	Some college, but less than a BA, BS degree	No	B+	No terms
Alexa	Florence	Female	19	European/White	Arts and humanities	Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, MD, etc.)	No	B+	No terms
Allison	Florence	Female	19	European/White	Health and medical professions	Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, MD, etc.)	No	A-	No terms
Lauren	Florence	Female	19	European/White	Business and law	Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, MD, etc.)	No	A-	No terms
Davey	Florence	Female	19	African/African American/Black	Health and medical professions	Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, MD, etc.)	No	B	No terms
Matt	Seville	Male	20	European/White	Communications and journalism	Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, MD, etc.)	No	A-	No terms
Rita	Seville	Female	19	European/White	Social and behavioral sciences	College degree	No	A or A+	No terms

Overview of Interview Participant Demographics (continued)

Participant	Location	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Major	Level of Parent Education	Transfer Student	GPA	Study Abroad Terms
Lorae	Seville	Female	19	European/White	Social and behavioral sciences	College degree	No	B+	No terms
Ailsa	Hong Kong	Female	20	Hispanic/Latino	Engineering	Some college, but less than a BA, BS degree	No	A or A+	Two terms
Bobby	Hong Kong	Male	19	European/White	Business and law	College degree	No	A or A+	No terms
Christy	Hong Kong	Female	19	European/White	Business and law	Graduate degree (Masters, Doctorate, MD, etc.)	Yes	A-	No terms

Appendix E
Interview Protocol

Interview Protocol

Topic: Study Abroad as a Multifaceted Approach to Supporting College Sophomores: Creating Optimal Environments to Promote Holistic Student Development and Global Learning

Research questions:

- 1) What impact, if any, did this program have on participants' cognitive, intrapersonal, and interpersonal domains of student development as measured by a pre-and post-experience survey?
 - a) How does this vary/differ across program year and location?
- 2) To what extent were the changes in these three constructs attributable to the following:
 - a) Participant's demographics such as gender, academic major, ethnicity, grade point average, and level of parental education
 - b) Program characteristics such as size, location, and program maturity (year)
- 3) What impact, if any, and in what ways, did this program have on the development of participants' intercultural maturity?

Purpose: The Second Year Experience, a three-week study abroad program in three international locations, was designed to meet the needs of sophomore students. I am curious to know how the developmental needs of sophomore student needs may have been addressed by this program as well as how participating in this program may simultaneously foster development of self- authorship and intercultural maturity.

Thank you for agreeing to meet with me today and I appreciate your willingness to participate in this research project. This interview will last approximately one hour and will be audio recorded as I had mentioned to you in my initial email.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Pre-College Characteristics:

1. Where are you from? How would you describe your upbringing?
 - a. How would you describe your culture? (Note: if they describe it as having a culture or not)
 - b. What kinds of experiences have you had around interacting with diverse others?
 - i. PROBE: own heritage, international experiences
2. When you describe "culture", what comes to mind? How do you define it?
 - a. How has this definition changed over the last year?
3. What experiences, if anything, has prepared you in your life for diverse interactions?

- a. PROBE: Interactions with diverse others, course-work, community-service, travel Have there been any classes (do not limit to academics; extend to overall life experiences—community service, etc.)

Deciding to Study Abroad

1. When you signed up for the SYE Abroad program, what were your intentions?
 - a. Why did you decide to participate in the SYE Abroad program?
 - b. What drew you to the program? (*this will give me information on their initial intention to study abroad*)
 - c. Who was involved in the decision to participate in the program (family, friends, faculty, staff)?
 - d. Were there any challenges to this decision?
2. What were your expectations before studying abroad?

While Abroad

Internal: How did comfort level in navigating host culture evolve over time?

1. Can you describe some of the initial cultural interactions while abroad?
 - a. If you were with other students, how did they react? Was it the same/different than your initial thoughts/beliefs?
2. How did your cultural interaction evolve as time went on?
 - a. What experiences contributed to the shift?
 - b. How did you make sense of the shift?
3. How about interactions with locals (if the student did not already mention this above)? How did you make sense of that interaction?

Cognitive: Challenges to ways of thinking

How people think and understand diversity issues: Knowledge as certain → knowledge as grounded in context with ability to entertain multiple perspectives

1. I'm interested to learn about a time where when you felt challenged by what you were learning (could be related to classroom, small group discussions, host culture learning plan, interactions with other—faculty, students, staff, locals).
 - a. What caused you to feel challenged in your thoughts/beliefs?
 - b. What was the outcome of the situation?
2. Please describe the most significant learning experience you had during your time abroad.
 - a. Why do you identify that moment as most significant?
 - b. What factors do you think influenced this decision?
 - c. Where there other people involved in this learning experience?
 - i. Did you debrief about happened? If so, what did you talk about?
3. Has your study abroad experiences affected the way you think? If so, in what ways?
4. How do you respond to the following statements:
 - a. In different settings, what is right and wrong is simple to determine

- b. Cultural differences make me question what is really true

Interpersonal: Interactions with others

Ability to interact effectively and interdependently with diverse others: Perspectives of others tolerated but viewed as ignorant or wrong → capacity to engage in intercultural interactions that are interdependent, respectful, informed by cultural understanding, and mutually negotiated

1. Can you describe your relationship with your friends/classmates while abroad?
 - a. How did these relationships evolve while abroad?
 - b. What differences did you notice in perspectives, practices, and beliefs?
 - i. How did these change over time (while abroad and now)?
2. Have any of your other relationships been affected as a result of your study abroad experience?
 - a. What experiences led you to that notion?
3. Thinking back on your experience abroad, how has an important decision you made been influenced by this experience? (while abroad, until now, etc.)
 - a. How did you make this decision (by yourself, with input of others)?
 - b. Looking back, would you have made the same decision?
4. How has your experience impacted how you see yourself as part of a global community?

Intrapersonal: How people view themselves

Lack of awareness of identity; identity defined by others' expectations → integration of identity & ethnicity

1. Looking back, has the way you describe yourself changed as a result of the SYE Abroad experience?
 - a. What changes have you noticed?
 - b. Is there a situation you can talk about from your time abroad when you felt challenged as an American citizen?
 - c. What caused the situation to occur? How did this make you feel?
2. What changes do you notice in how you think about yourself as an *American* and how you thought of yourself before you went abroad?

Internal: Programmatic Components

1. Can you talk a little bit about your experience related to the experiential/reflective component of the program?
 - a. First, tell me about your Host Culture Learning Plan.
 - i. Prior to departure, what did you anticipate "investigating"?
 1. How did that change in the fall?
 2. How did that change while abroad?
 - ii. What challenges did you find with what you encountered abroad?

- iii. How did the conversations you had with your ELP affect your plan?
- b. Can you also share your experience related to the small group meetings?
 - i. What types of things did you talk about? Were there things that were discussed that challenged your understanding?
 - ii. If you disagreed with something, did you share it in the group or write about it? If not, why?
- c.

In Reflection...

1. Reflecting on the situations and memories from your time abroad, what are the differences that you notice now in how you view or interpret daily parts of your life now that you are back in the US?
 - a. PROBES: Interests, curiosity toward others
2. Can you describe a time where a decision you made was influenced/informed by your time abroad?
3. Let's look back at your timeline. Can you describe yourself at the beginning? How does that compare to how you describe yourself now?
 - a. What had the most impact on this change?
4. How impactful do you think your study abroad experience was to your overall college experience?