

The Importance of Reflection within the Academic Assignments of Study Abroad programs

Raymond Vidal Plaza

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Gresilda A. Tilley-Lubbs, Chair

Bettibel C. Kreye

Kerry J. Redican

Richard K. Stratton

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ABSTRACT

Today, almost 305,000 U.S. college students are taking advantage of study abroad opportunities throughout the world. While study abroad experiences have been increasing in number and scope, there continue to be questions about the importance and value of study abroad on the students' growth and development. This study highlights a summer study abroad program at Virginia Tech from 2008 – 2012.

Reflection and transformative learning serve as the primary theoretical frameworks for this study. The work of Dewey (1933), Mezirow (1991, 1997), Moon (2004), Whitney & Clayton (2011) and others help to provide additional insight into better understanding reflection and transformative learning.

The methodological framework is a qualitative case study focusing on the student participants from summer 2012 and examines the role of reflection in the academic components of the program and whether or not reflection helped to further enhance the influence and impact of the experience on the students.

I collected data from photo journals, weekly reflection papers and their final exam paper, all of which comprised the academic requirements for this credit-bearing course. The participants consisted of seven female identified students and four male identified students, representing the following academic disciplines: Human Development, Geography, Political Science, Journalism, Studio Art and International Studies.

Through content analysis (Mayan, 2009; Merriam, 1998), I discovered the themes of self-awareness and visibility and presence. These two themes provide a deeper understanding about how the study abroad experience has a distinct influence on the students, as can be evidenced through their academic work. While the two themes help to further reinforce the importance of reflective practice, the study also reveals that reflection can be problematic as well.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family.

As a first-generation college student, this milestone is a testament to the love, support and encouragement that my family has provided. To my mom, dad and sister, I will always be grateful for your perspective and support. You were always supportive of my desire to learn more, to take risks, to travel, to my crazy ideas and endeavors.

I also recognize that this dissertation allows me to join a select group of Latino/a/x colleagues that have reached this important milestone.

May this dissertation serve as a point of hope and inspiration for others and my family.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Since the development of the first recognized study abroad programs in the United States in the 1920s, more and more students are today taking advantage of this opportunity. Today, almost 305,000 United States students spend time abroad as part of their college education (IIE, 11/16/15). The rapid growth in study abroad has taken place within the last twenty-five years. Some of this growth stems from the desire for internationalizing higher education, globalization efforts and by national and governmental reports calling for an increase in these types of efforts (American Council on Education, 2002; McPherson & DeLauder, 2006). Initially, programs had an emphasis on the learning of a foreign language, but today, there is a wide spectrum of opportunities for students including programs for their major or an interdisciplinary experience or a specific focus on a particular topic (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004).

As participation in study abroad has increased, there has also been a change in the types of programs. Initially, the first sets of programs were long-term immersion programs that lasted a year and primarily focused on language acquisition. Today, there has been a huge shift with a majority of programs now considered as short-term programs of ten weeks or fewer, and/or consisting of one semester. This increase and shift has taken place within a relatively short-time period of ten years (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Donnelly-Smith, 2009; Hulstrand, 2006). This increase in short-term programs is due to a number of factors ranging from time to degree challenges and costs (Spencer & Tuma, 2002).

This spike in growth in the number of short-term programs has raised questions about the effectiveness of such programmatic efforts. The traditionalists within study abroad argue that short-term programs cannot be as effective as long-term programs because of the lack of time

spent abroad (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; Kauffman, Martin, Weaver & Weaver, 1992). They argue that it takes time for a student to understand the experience and for the experience to be meaningful.

As the number of short-term programs continues to increase in size and in popularity, there has been more attention placed on the overall framework of these programs. The biggest questions and concerns surrounding these programs deal with the desire for a legitimate academic focus/component (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004; Hulstrand, 2006). While the framework often looks at the structure of such programs, it does not address the types of components (i.e. activities) that take place within the academic aspects of the program. In addition, the discussion of the framework also does not take into account the role of the program leader (Citron, 1996).

Current literature on study abroad reveals more focus is on the different non-academic components of the process instead on the process for how students learn and how they process the experience. These non-academic components include the actual student experience, the background of the student and their experiences/expectations, the mechanics (i.e. characteristics) of a program such as lodging, language and location, the structure of the program such as the role of the program leader, and nature of the instruction (Engle & Engle, 2003; Spencer & Tuma, 2002).

When I first developed my study abroad effort in summer 2008, there was not much guidance available to me in terms of the structure. I looked at what my colleagues were doing within their respective programs, and I also looked back at my own study abroad experience as a student. While unintentional at first, the activities that I developed and folded into the program have made a difference in the type of influences that the experience has had on the participating students. My initial goal was to develop a different set of activities that would allow the students

to remain engaged throughout but also to reflect on their experiences. These activities have now become integral parts of the main aspects of the program. While not identified at first, the role and concept of reflection would become an essential component of the program.

Learning about Diversity and Social Justice: The European Perspective

In fall 2007, I submitted a formal grant proposal to develop a new study abroad experience as part of a desire to expand summer course offerings at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Upon the approval of funding, this started the process for the full implementation of the course with the development of the course syllabus, the planning of the logistics of the study abroad program as well as the recruitment of students.

This new course offering mirrored the model used for the existing course taught within the Multicultural Opportunity Social Awareness Interest Community (MOSAIC). This course, “Learning about Diversity and Social Justice” focused on engaging the students on the different diversity terminology as well as understanding the intersections of the different diversity components. The main goal for the new course was to focus on issues of diversity from different global perspectives, and for this initial effort, I selected the European perspective with the rationale that I was more familiar with Europe and with the potential destinations.

As the course was being developed, it was designed to engage and expose students in critical thought about race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality and physical differences, and their intersections through the European perspective. Through the different excursions and opportunities in different areas of Europe, this would provide the vehicle to understand the concept of the European perspective. The ultimate goal was that through these hands-on experiences and the dialogue about these issues, the students would gain a greater

understanding and appreciation of the European perspective and, in turn, a better awareness of the dynamics of these issues in the United States.

As the course development neared completion, I was also developing a set of learning objectives for the program. This set of learning objectives mirrored the course description and included the following:

- To engage in dialogue around difference and similarity, including the social locations of race, gender, age, class, sexual orientation, and ability;
- To gain an understanding and appreciation for the European perspective on these issues of diversity and social justice;
- To articulate any differences or similarities between the issues in the United States and in Europe;
- To interact with their peers around controversial issues and learn to articulate one's personal position;
- To reflect on one's future role as a member of a multicultural and global society;
- To understand various forms of prejudice and discrimination as well as the social, political and economic mechanisms that perpetuate them.

How did the students learn about diversity and social justice?

The framework for understanding diversity and social justice was in framing the trips/experiences in terms of different diversity and social justice topics. The intent was that by being deliberate with the focus of each trip, students would be able to better understand the topics as well as to build the interconnection (i.e. relationships) with the other topics.

Diversity and social justice is not just one issue but also a myriad of issues and interconnections. This is where this program fits, as it focused on the interconnections. It was

through this that the student group could better understand the issues of diversity and social justice and look back at those items from a United States perspective as well from the European context.

One key goal was to focus the themes and aspects that were pertinent to the places that the students visited in Europe. In Paris for example, the focus was on immigration due to the historical challenges that the French have had with migrants from North Africa, as well as recently in the 2000s with the riots that hit Paris in the various banlieue areas.

In Madrid, the focus area was on the socio-economic issues. In recent trips, this became more profound due to the economic downturn that hit Spain and the world economy in 2009, with high unemployment rates and other challenges that Madrileños and Spaniards have faced.

In Rome, the focus dealt with religion, politics, and their intersections. Rome provided the perfect venue with the Vatican and the relationship with the Italian government. This allowed the students to better examine the role of religion.

In subsequent years, I added Munich and this allowed the students to look at this concept of generationalism and how different generations understand things. In addition, being in Munich allowed students to explore a city filled with a history of contradictions ranging from a strong Jewish community to the birthplace of extreme political movements such as the Nazi party.

Following Munich, the addition of Prague allowed the students to look at another diversity dynamic of the freedom of speech (i.e. opinions, expressions). Prague has been a city under siege for different facets of its history. During its long history, the Prussians, the Nazis and the Soviets all conquered it. The examples of the Prague Spring and the Velvet Revolution provide a backdrop to the discussion of freedom of speech, as well as the works of Frank Kafka.

The home city/home base of London provided an opportunity to see all of these diversity and social justice facets in action and also to explore other aspects of diversity and their intersectionality. The intersectionality refers to the fact that within the diversity construct there are multiple layers and relationships between the topics.

In the end, it was through the exploration in the cities and subsequent discussions about these topics that I was able to engage the students in learning about diversity and social justice from a European angle. My main goal was to try to show the intersectionality of diversity through a focus on the individual aspects and discussion about diversity as a whole, and to be intentional as well as creative with my approach.

Statement of the Problem

With the increase in efforts to expand and sustain study abroad participation among United States students, what can be done to ensure that these study abroad experiences are seen as worthwhile for the students? While there are a number of resources available that help explain short-term programs, much of the focus has been on ensuring the logistical structure of such programs; the answer rests within the type of experiences and academic assignments (i.e. components, instructional strategies) that make-up a program and how they infuse reflection in these efforts. I acknowledge that each study abroad program will be different and that the experience will be unique for each student. However, there are certain approaches coupled with the usage of reflection, when used by program leaders, can further heighten the experience and meaning for the students.

My hope is that by focusing on the role of reflection, I may help to make the process more engaging for faculty. While short-term programs are growing, there is an increasing challenge in getting interested faculty to be willing to engage in the development of such

opportunities as well as getting the institutional support needed to make such programs happen. My goal is that by providing an approach to this process, this may increase faculty engagement with all study abroad programs as well as increase institutional support for these efforts.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this particular study is to focus on the role of reflection within study abroad programs as a way to understand the influence that these experiences are having on the student participants. Through this, I can develop new approaches in thinking about the academic assignments (i.e. instructional strategies) that make-up study abroad, especially short-term programs. I will be looking at those items that make the academic assignments of the program, coupled with the experiences of the program. It is through this interaction and relationship that I can begin to determine the influence on the student through their particular responses and participation. I believe the nature of the activities, coupled with the experiences and the underlying connection of reflection within this model, help to accelerate the learning, transformation, and influence of the experience on the student participants.

To look at this, I will be using the study abroad program that I developed in summer 2008, “Learning about Diversity and Social Justice: The European Perspective” at Virginia Tech, a large public research institution, as a case study. The program took place each summer from 2008 to 2012, and 2012 marked its fifth anniversary. Through a qualitative approach, I will look specifically at the cohort of students that participated in the summer 2012 program as a way to understand through their personal reflections and the influence the different assignments have had on their overall experience and transformation. My goal is to show that even within a short-term program, the influence and transformation on the student is just as significant and meaningful as a long-term program because of the reflection process. Reflection is one of the

central components that help to make this happen. Better understanding the role of reflection would have a profound impact in legitimizing the value of such opportunities.

Objective and Research Questions

In undertaking this case study, my overarching objective was to understand the role of reflection in the study abroad experience as a way to understand the role of these experiences on the students. To carry out this objective, I addressed the following research questions, which guided my data collection as I sought to understand the role of reflection in my study abroad program.

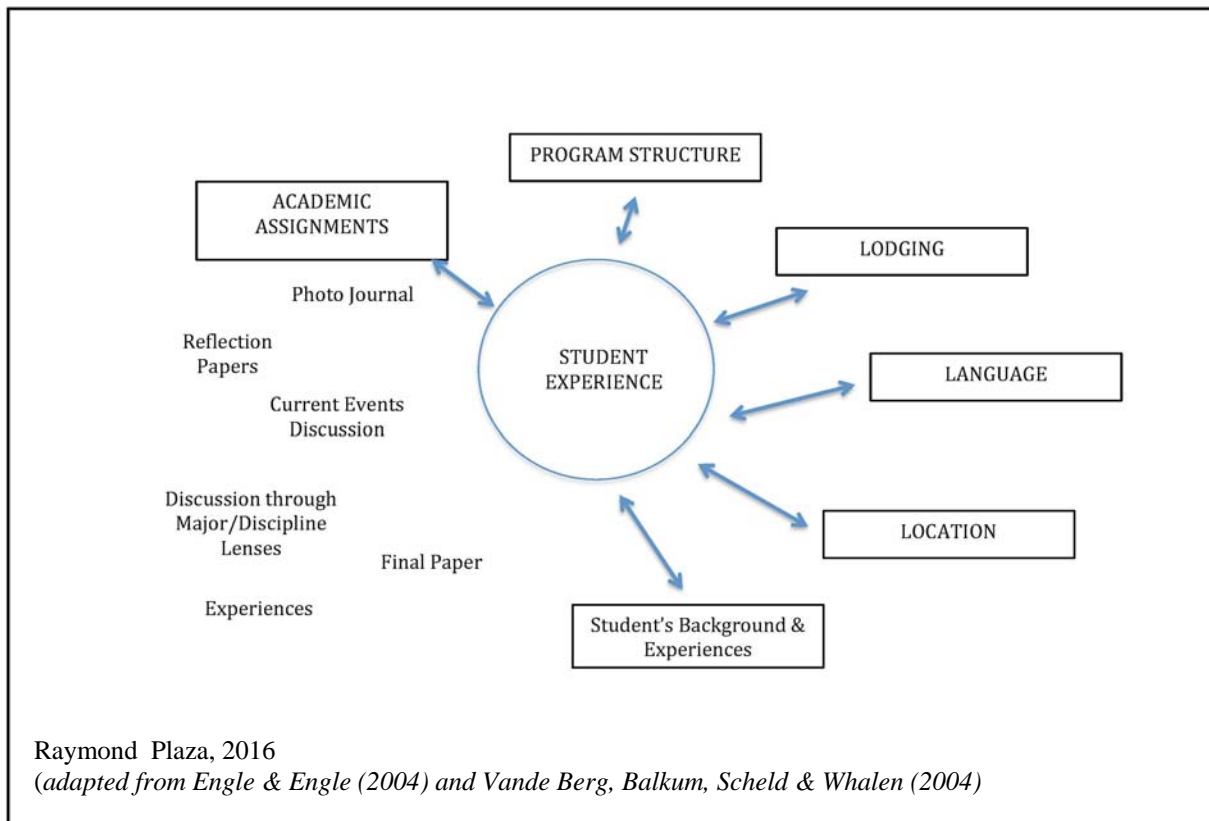
- How does reflection shape the experience for students participating in a study abroad program?
- How did students demonstrate, or not, reflexivity in their written reflections and photo journals?
- What is the role of the academic assignments (papers, photo journals, exit interviews) in fostering reflection within the students?

Significance of the Study

This study is significant in that it will provide the basis for a deeper understanding of the role and importance of reflection as part of the study abroad process. In addition, I hope that this can lead to the development of a potential model and a new structural approach for how a short-term program can use the academic assignments to better utilize the tool of reflection. It would be through the reflection process that short-term study abroad program could be more influential and meaningful for the students. While there are non-academic components that are involved in developing a study abroad program, the specific academic assignments are critical in helping to shape the experience of the students.

Figure 1.1 provides a breakdown on the components that influence a student's experience within a study abroad. Among these include the program structure, lodging, language, location, the student's own background and experiences as well as the academic assignments. This figure is adapted from the work of Engle and Engle (2004) and Vande Berg, Balkum, Scheld and Whalen (2004). Within Figure 1.1, my specific model will focus on the academic assignments, which I have added.

Figure 1.1 Influences on the Student Experience within Study Abroad



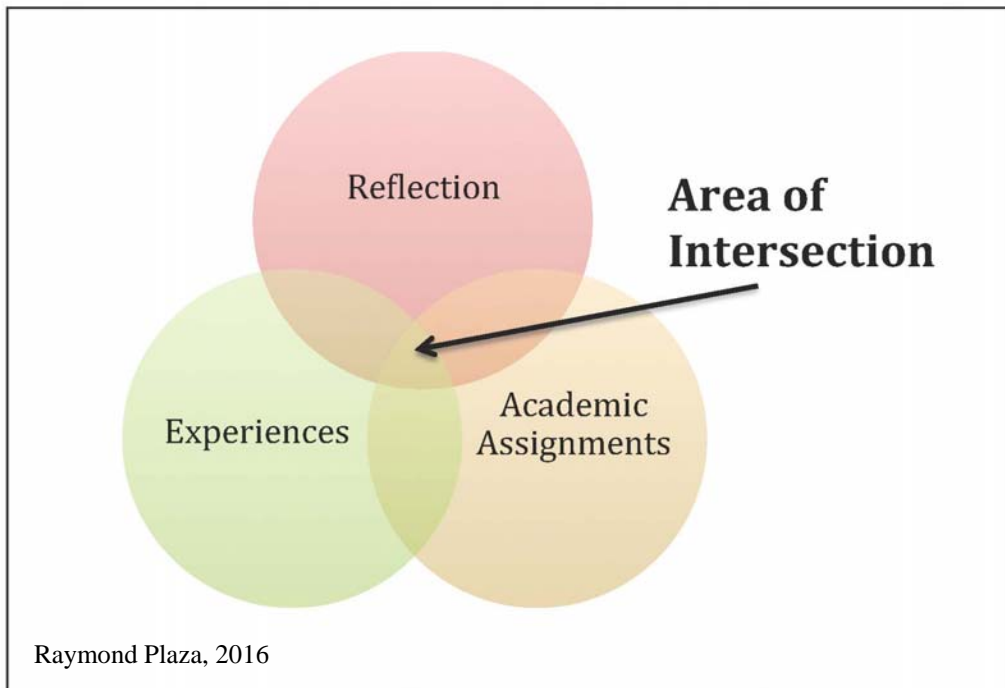
The potential model will provide a better focus on explaining the academic assignments as displayed in Figure 1.1. My hope is that the model can be adapted to any particular program and different assignments (i.e. activities) used at distinct times. The critical aspect is that these assignments (i.e. activities) can help to increase the transformation that takes place with the students.

While the above model focuses on the specific academic assignments, another significant aspect of this study will be to explore the relationship and role reflection plays within the effort. This approach allows for a deeper look at the intersection of the academic assignments and experiences using the underlying framework of reflection.

As illustrated in Figure 1.2, there is a relationship between the academic assignments and experiences, and when the role of reflection is taken under consideration, it leads to an area in which all three intersect. This raises the question of what this area looks like and what is its role in helping to shape the experience for students.

The study abroad experience will have some type of influence on students (Langley & Breese, 2005; Yu, Chick, & Lin, 2008), the question and challenge is in terms of how study abroad professionals can be more intentional in helping to shape the nature of the student transformation and how they can examine this through the student's own reflective process.

Figure 1.2 Understanding the Relationship of the Intersection of Reflection with Study
Abroad Experiences and its Academic Assignments



Definitions of terms

In regards to this particular study, it is important that I provide a common understanding of the different definitions and meanings of the terminology used throughout this dissertation.

- *Study/education abroad*: Study/education abroad is an experience where an individual takes academic coursework outside of their home country (Garraty & Adams, 1957; Freed, 1999; McKeown, 2009).
- *Sojourner*: Sojourner is a term used to describe an individual living or staying outside of their home country for a period of time (Siu, 1952; Miller, 1987; Pitts, 2009).
- *Short-term*: Short-term in this particular case refers to programs that have duration of ten weeks or fewer. These are most often held in summer months or for less than a semester (IIE, 2015).
- *Long-term*: Long-term in this particular case refers to programs that have duration of at least two semesters or one academic year (IIE, 2015).
- *Medium-term*: Medium term, or medium length in this particular case, refers to programs that are typically a semester or quarter in duration or often greater than 10 weeks in duration (IIE, 2015).
- *Faculty-led program*: A program led by a faculty/staff member at a student's home institution.
- *Exchange program*: A program in which a student enrolls at a foreign institution as part of a particular agreement with the student's home institution.
- *Third-party program*: A program is that organized and managed by a third-party entity that allows for institutions and students alike to have a greater selection of opportunities.

- *Reflection*: Reflection is an individual's personal analysis of an experience, and an opportunity to explore that nature of the experience and the impact. In defining reflective thought, John Dewey (1933) felt that it was an "active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusions to which it tends" (p. 118).
- *Critical Reflection*: Critical reflection, according to Dewey (1933), is a much deeper level of reflection.
- *Experiential learning*: Experiential learning refers to the theory developed by David Kolb in which learning takes place because of witnessing a particular experience, often seen as a more hands-on approach in dealing with the surroundings. Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory (Kolb, 1981) defines experiential learning as "the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience. Knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience."
- *Transformational learning*: The study of transformational learning emerged with the work of Jack Mezirow. Transformational (or transformative) learning refers to learning that alters the perspective of the individual, and builds upon existing knowledge (Mezirow, 1991, 1997). Clark (1993) defines transformational learning as learning that induces more far-reaching change in the learner than other kinds of learning, especially learning experiences which shape the learner and produce a significant impact, or paradigm shift, which affects the learner's subsequent experiences.
- *Academic discipline*: Academic discipline refers to the academic subject area that an individual is pursuing.

Limitations of Study

In terms of limitations, this study is a case study involving one particular study abroad program. While other programs may be different, this particular program can provide a foundational understanding of the approach that I am taking in looking at the role of reflection. I also have four years of pilot data from 2008 to 2011 that provide a foundation for this model, which I will attempt to demonstrate by using a study of the summer 2012 participants. Since the theoretical premise is based on reflection, Mezirow (1991) notes that there are a number of ethical considerations that a researcher needs to understand and the implications if the activities are not properly explained.

Another limitation includes the types of activities incorporated into the study abroad experience. This raises the question of whether or not the activities are relevant to the nature of the particular study abroad program and can also influence how I analyze the data. My personal role as the program leader is also a limitation. As the program leader, I coordinate all aspects of the program logistics as well as the instruction. Through this role as a program leader, my biases and perspectives can influence the students.

Other limitations involve the nature of the reflection activities and the interpretation of guided and unguided questions. While the students were free to reflect on their own experiences in responding to the question, I wanted to ensure that the type of question did not hinder or limit the ability of the student to respond freely. Another limitation dealt with the nature of the group within the study abroad. The role of the group dynamics influenced the way the students interacted with each other and how they responded to the assignments and the experience. Another limitation dealt with the overall nature of the study abroad program and the research

timetable. This particular timetable constrained my ability to ask additional follow-up questions of the students.

Assumptions of the Researcher

As a researcher, I was making several assumptions as I undertook this project. I was basing these assumptions on my prior experience with the program as well as with my desires to ensure that student learning takes place.

In regards to the students, I assumed:

- The students were sincere and genuine in their responses and in their completion of the required assignments of the program.
- The students treated the activities with seriousness.
- The students were open to the opportunity of reflecting on their own experiences and in sharing their perspectives on the experience.
- The students were open to the experience of learning as part of the study abroad program.
- The students were able to engage with each other in a positive manner.

In regards to my role, as both the program leader and researcher, I assumed:

- I was able to manage all of the roles and responsibilities that I served with the program.
- I did not unduly influence how the students responded with their own reflections as they made their own meaning.
- I was able to respond to the students concerns and requests.
- I was able to manage the data collection and the analysis without hindering the management of the program.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Framework

Various researchers have argued that the theoretical framework is critical to the foundation of any study. Merriam (1998) states, “the theoretical framework is derived from the orientation or stance that you bring to your study. It is the structure, the scaffolding, and the frame of the study” (p. 45). This stance is critical in the development of the next step of the methodology, as Mayan (2009) focuses on the importance of ensuring methodological coherence with one’s framework.

In thinking about Merriam’s focus on the importance of the theoretical framework, I have selected two interconnected theories that relate to my proposed study of the role of reflection with study abroad and to provide the best explanation for what I propose to do. The principle framework of this study is that of reflection and it is central to the foundation of this effort.

Reflection and Critical Reflection

Reflection in its basic form is the process in which an individual looks back at a particular experience and begins to think about it in a more deliberate way. Within the scope of the learning process, the more commonly used definition was developed by John Dewey in the 1930s, in which he wrote, “active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and the further conclusion to which it tends (Dewey, 1933, p.9). The concept of reflection is not a modern concept as it dates back to the time of Aristotle (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985), and others such as Plato, Confucius, Lao Tzu, Solomon, and Buddha (Hatton & Smith, 1995).

Since the initial definition developed by Dewey, the definition of reflection has been expanded and refined. Individuals such as Mezirow (1991) write that, “Reflection involves the critique of assumptions about the content or process of problem solving...The critique of premises or presuppositions pertains to problem posing as distinct problem solving (p. 105). Boud, Keogh and Walker (1985) see reflection in the “context of learning as a generic term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to lead to new understandings and appreciations” (p. 19). Boyd and Fale (1983) define reflection as the process of creating and clarifying the meaning of experience (past or present) in terms of self (p. 101). Jarvis (1992) defines reflection as an essential phase of the learning process, where people consciously explore their experiences to arrive at new understandings and behaviors.

Hatton and Smith (1995) note that four key issues emerge from Dewey’s work with reflection. These issues include: 1) whether reflection is limited to thought process about action, or is more inextricably bound up in action; 2) to the time frames in which reflection takes place, and whether it is a relatively immediate and short-term or rather more extended and systematic; 3) has to do with whether reflection is by its very nature problem centered or not; 4) is concerned with how consciously the one reflecting takes account of wider historic, cultural, and political values or beliefs in framing and reframing practical problems to which solutions are being sought, a process which has been identified as “critical reflection” (p. 34).

Researchers have taken Dewey’s focus on reflection and have expanded it to get a deeper insight into the components of reflection. One of the aspects of reflection is that of critical reflection. Critical reflection must be continuous, connected, challenging, and contextualized (Eyler, Giles, & Schmeide, 1996). Whitney and Clayton (2011) expand upon these four

components to explain that the reflection must be ongoing, must be connected with “assignments and activities related to and building upon one another” (p. 155), challenging “in terms of the expectations that students’ take responsibility for their own learning” (p. 155), and contextualized to “broader issues and the role of the students” (p. 155).

Rogers (2001) focuses on reflection as a process that allows the learner to “integrate the understanding gained into one’s experience, in order to enable better choices or actions in the future as well as enhance one’s overall effectiveness” (p. 41).

Ash and Clayton (2004) expand the notion of reflection further as they provide guidance in regards to the design of critical reflection. These guidelines include: everything is reflection worthy; reflection can be in multiple forms -written, oral, or both; it can be individual or collaborative; reflection can lead to various learning outcomes including knowledge, skills, attitudes/values, and behaviors; reflection is useful to design a strategy that builds upon a series of questions and that reflection can be “cumulative”.

Whitney and Clayton (2011) argue that the sort of reflection process that generates, deepens, and documents learning and lends itself to rigorous investigation does not occur automatically. Rather, it must be carefully and intentionally designed. They also argue that reflection serves as an independent variable in the design of research and can therefore be studied in terms of its role in producing outcomes. It can also be a source of data, which can be mined to investigate many questions that include and transcend student-learning outcomes.

These researchers posit that critical reflection helps students achieve a deeper understanding of academic material – including how to think from the perspective of their discipline and that “critical reflection can best be understood as the component of the pedagogy that generates, deepens, and documents learning” (Whitney & Clayton, 2011, p. 183).

Within the reflection context, I find the identification of a higher level of reflective thinking. Dewey used the term *critical reflection* to describe this more profound level of reflection, while Mezirow used the term *premise reflection* (Kember, Leung, Jones, Loke, McKay, Sinclair, Tse, Webb, Wong, Wong, & Yeung, 2000). Another way to view critical reflection is through deep reflection or intense reflection. It is simply the notion that these individuals engaged in a form of reflection that was fundamental and deeply challenging and, therefore, significantly different from more routinized or simple reflection (p. 444). Peltier, Hay, and Drago (2005) note that critical reflection is at “the pinnacle of the non-reflection – reflection hierarchy as it represents a more intense form of reflection and involves the transformation of meaning frameworks” (p. 14).

Transformative Learning

Reflection and the concept of critical reflection also serve as a theoretical framework of Mezirow’s concept of transformative learning. Transformative learning arises from the work of Dewey, but Mezirow furthers a deeper understanding of the role of reflection. Mezirow (1991) describes critical reflection as knowledge that does not exist in books or in the teaching experience of the instructor but only in the learner’s ability to analyze and reconstruct the meanings of an experience in his or her own background and experiences. Mezirow defines reflection as “the process of critically assessing the content, process, or premise(s) of our efforts to interpret and give meaning to an experience” (p. 104). Mezirow bases his focus on transformative learning but explores the different forms of reflection from non-reflective action (learned, habit), to reflective action (in making decisions or taking other action predicated upon the insights resulting from reflection).

Reflective learning involves the confirmation, addition, and transformation of ways of interpreting experience (Mezirow, 1991). Transformative learning results in new or revised meaning schemes or, when reflection focuses on premises, transformed meaning perspectives. He notes that transformative learning involves an enhanced level of awareness of the context of one's beliefs and feelings, a critique of their assumptions and particularly premises, as assessment of alternative perspectives, a decision to negate an old perspective in favor of a new one or make a synthesis of old and new (p. 161).

Mezirow (1991) emphasizes that it is through transformational learning that one's perspective is transformed. This perspective transformation can happen within groups through what he described as "opening up", "sharing", "analyzing", and "abstracting" as significant moments in the process (p. 187).

Mezirow provides insight into the important role that the educator plays with transformative learning. In the context of this study, the study abroad program/group leader is the educator. He notes that the educator plays a role in facilitating and initiating the transformation, handling value conflicts between the educator and learners, and dealing with psychological problems. While his work was based on adult education, it has relevance in working with individuals of all age groups.

As Mezirow concludes, "Transformative learning involves reflectively transforming beliefs, attitudes, opinions, and emotional reactions that constitute our meaning schemes or transforming our meaning perspectives" (p. 223). In addition, all transformative learning requires taking deliberate steps to implement those insights that arise from the critical reflection (Mezirow, 1991), and that "critically reflective thinkers move from abstract critique to critical

self-reflection, thereby ‘recovering the personal’ and a stronger sense of self-understanding” (p. 193).

Stages of Reflection

As researchers have examined the role and nature of reflection and the reflective process, this has led to the development of different models to explain what happens in the reflective process. Kember et al. (2000) developed a scale based on a series of four stages that starts from the basic process to the more in-depth nature of the reflective process. These stages include: 1) habitual action – that which has been learnt before and through frequent use becomes an activity that is performed automatically or with little conscious thought; 2) understanding – an understanding of a concept without reflecting upon its significance; 3) reflection – based on the definitions of Dewey, Mezirow, Boyd; 4) critical reflection – more profound level of reflection.

Mezirow divides reflection and reflective learning into seven hierarchical levels. The first four levels are seen as consciousness and the last three levels as critical consciousness: 1) reflectivity – act of becoming aware of a specific reflection; 2) affective reflectivity - becoming aware of how we feel about the way we are perceiving, thinking, or acting or about our habits of doing so; 3) discriminant reflectivity – assessing the efficacy of our perceptions, thoughts, actions, and habits of doing things; 4) judgmental reflectivity – making and becoming aware of our value judgments about our perceptions, thoughts, actions, and habits; 5) conceptual reflectivity – is becoming conscious of our awareness and critiquing it; 6) psychic reflectivity – recognizing in oneself the habit of making precipitant judgments about people on the basis of limited information about them; 7) theoretical reflectivity – becoming aware that the reason for a habit of precipitant judgment or for conceptual inadequacy is a set of taken-for-granted cultural or psychological assumptions which explain personal experience less satisfactorily than another

perspective with more functional criteria for seeing, thinking, and acting. Mezirow's learning theory sees "learning as making meaning, and meaning as making sense of our experiences" (Dempsey, Halton, & Murphy, 2001, p. 650).

Hatton and Smith (1995) developed their own variation on the stages/levels of reflection. These include: 1) descriptive writing; 2) descriptive reflection; 3) dialogic reflection; 4) critical reflection (Moon, 2004). Hatton and Smith (1995) also note that some researchers argue that reflection involves "conscious detachment from an activity followed by a distinct period of contemplation" (p. 34).

Relationship between Reflection and Learning

Kolb's (1981) concept of experiential learning relates to reflection and transformational learning. Under Kolb, learning is a four-stage cycle (Kolb, 1981), which includes a) concrete experiences, b) observations and reflections, c) formation of abstract concepts and generalizations, and d) testing implications of concepts in new situations. In the experiential learning theory, knowledge results from the combination of grasping and transforming experience (Gonyea, 2008). Since the focus is on the importance of reflection, Kolb notes, "In the course of cognitive growth, thought becomes more reflective and internalized" (p. 237).

In terms of the relationship between reflection and learning, I come across the concept of reflective learning. Boyd and Fale (1983) define reflective learning as "the process of internally examining and exploring an issue of concern, triggered by an experience, which creates and clarifies meaning in terms of self, and which results in a changed conceptual perspective" (p. 100). They also note that reflection is not a one-way, linear process: "it is more comparable to an alternating current, flowing back and forth between intense focusing on a particular form of experience and outer experience" (p. 105).

Through the efforts of Boyd and Fale (1983), they developed their set of six stages of reflective learning. These stages include the following: 1) a sense of inner discomfort; 2) identification or clarification of the concern; 3) openness to new information from internal and external sources, with ability to observe and take in from a variety of perspectives; 4) resolution, expressed as “integration”, “coming together”, “acceptance of self-reality”, and “creative synthesis”; 5) establishing continuity of self with past, present, and future; 6) deciding whether to act on the outcome of the reflective process (p. 106).

David Schön looked at reflection and learning through the lenses of the reflective practice and how one could use reflection in their daily work and activities. He developed a three-stage process which included: 1) knowing-in-action; 2) reflection-in-action; 3) reflect on reflection-in-action (Schön, 1987).

Moon (2004) viewed learning as concerned (i.e. connected) as a sequence of stages and this relates to the role of reflection. Her stages include: 1) superficial noticing; 2) making sense; 3) making meaning; 4) working with meaning; 5) transformative learning. According to Moon (2004), an interplay happens between reflection and learning (p. 87). She argues that reflective learning takes place when the material of learning is not straightforward or is relatively challenging to a learner who has the intention of attaining meaning (i.e. takes a deep approach) (p. 123).

While Kolb does not specifically mention reflection, another model provides a different perspective. This model developed by the British Further Education Curriculum and Development Unit (FEU) focuses on three phases: 1) experience of the learner; 2) the specific learning which occurs on the basis of the experience; 3) the reflective actions which are needed to extract specific learning of the overall experience (Boud et al., 1985).

This concept of learning and the learning cycle is further broken down into the types of learning. Van Woerkam (2004) focuses on the work of Argyris and Schön (1996), which examines learning through the concept of single and double loop learning. Single loop learning refers to instrumental learning that changes strategies of action or assumptions. This type of learning is depicted as a more adaptive form of learning. Some view single loop learning as lower level learning. Lower level learning is seen as focused learning that may be mere repetition of past behaviors – usually short-term, surface, temporary, but with associations being formed. Cope (2003) indicates that this type of learning captures only a certain element that of “single loop, routine level” (p. 433). When looking at lower level learning and Mezirow, “instrumental” learning is involved in task-oriented problem solving – how to do something or how to perform. This leads to developing an understanding of the procedural assumptions guiding the problem-solving process (Cope, 2003).

Double loop learning is more closely related to critical reflection and refers to learning that results in a change (Van Woerkam, 2004). Dewey believed that reflective learning involves: a state of doubt, hesitation, perplexity, and mental difficulty, in which thinking originates, and an act of searching, hunting, and inquiring, to find material that will resolve the doubt, settle, and dispose of the perplexity (Dempsey, et al., 2001, p. 632). Double loop learning is also seen as higher level learning with the development of complex rules and associations regarding new actions (Cope, 2003). When looking at higher level learning and Mezirow, “transformative” learning has the capacity to transform an individual’s meaning perspectives”, perceptual and conceptual frameworks that form, limit, and distort how individuals think, believe, and feel and what, when, and why they learn (Cope, 2003).

Another perspective to the learning process is through the concept of scaffolding. This scaffolding process involves the construction of a series of opportunities that systematically support learners to reflect on their previous experience, knowledge, and skills, as well as on their current thinking and practice (Dempsey, et al., 2001). This is seen as a useful framework, developed by Seidel & Blythe (1996), for approaching reflective learning as one which involves the learner in looking backward, looking inward, looking outward, and looking forward (Dempsey et al., 2001, p. 633)

Boud et al. (1983) points to the fact that reflective learning tends to be ignored. They write, “it is easy to neglect as it is something which we cannot directly observe and which is unique to each learner” (p. 8), and “any form of learning actively and demonstrate the reflective plan” (p. 111).

It is with an understanding of the relationship between reflection and transformational and experiential learning that through this particular theoretical framework, I can demonstrate the purpose of this study. As explained in the first chapter, the different academic components are based on the concept of engaging students through a set of activities, with the underlying framework of reflection and, more particularly, critical reflection. It is through this understanding of reflection that I am better equipped to analyze the data collected as part of the student.

The Study Abroad Movement

To better understand the study, it is essential that I provide an overview of the study abroad movement in the United States and to provide some comparisons with efforts in the European Union. In addition, I want to provide an overview of the study abroad field and its components, as well as to show the current landscape of study abroad literature.

How is “study abroad” defined? In the truest sense, study abroad is the opportunity to take classes and experience life in a foreign country (Freed, 1999; McKeown, 2009). As the recent Open Doors Report numbers illustrate, more and more students are seeking these opportunities and study abroad professionals need to understand the factors that shape this experience for the students. The next segment of this chapter looks at the earliest historical predecessors to the modern study abroad concept, examines the start of the movement in the United States, and looks at the role of government. The latter part of the chapter focuses on the mechanics of the study abroad process.

Early Historical Comparisons

While the term “study abroad” is a modern term dating back to the 19th century, the concept and initial framework for study abroad dates back centuries. The closest example to the modern study abroad movement is that of the Grand Tour. In its prime, it was a rite of passage for the aristocracy. This custom flourished from the 17th century until the middle of the 19th century. The Grand Tour was an opportunity to travel throughout Europe to experience the arts, study with masters, and come back home (Brodsky-Porges, 1981). Some scholars have noted it was not only an opportunity to experience life and the so-called excesses of society such as alcohol and sex (Bragg, 2002). Perhaps the most famous example is that of Lord Byron and how his journey shaped his life experiences (Storrs, Findlen, & Roworth, 2010). The Grand Tour

often saw members of royalty and of the aristocracy engage in such travels (Peck, 1996). Wealthy families would send their sons and subsequently their daughters to other countries for study (Gross, 2008). Today, this concept of sending children abroad continues through the usage of boarding schools and in terms of governments sending citizens abroad for training. For example, South Korea will send their employees abroad for graduate study to such places as the United States.

Even in the American South before the Civil War in the 1860s, plantation owners would send their sons to Europe for the experience of the Grand Tour (Garraty & Adams, 1959). There is the example of Thomas Jefferson and other figures in American history engaging in similar activities. The Grand Tour ended with the rise of the Industrial Age and the Napoleonic conflicts that were impacting Europe (Bragg, 2002).

Origins in the United States

For the purposes of this research, I looked at some of the key elements within the history of the study abroad movement in the United States. A review of the history shows that in the beginning of the 20th century, specific universities had developed programs in specific countries/cities. These “junior year” programs, as they would occur in the student’s junior year, often focused on the concept of language immersion (Garraty & Adams, 1957; Kauffman, Martin, Weaver, & Weaver, 1992; McKeown, 2009). Back in the 1920s, the methods of transportation played a role with study abroad, and required traveling by ships before the onset of commercial air travel.

Indiana University

The first documented faculty-led study abroad program can be traced back to Indiana University in 1879 (Hulstand, 2006). Indiana University records indicate that David Starr Jordan,

biologist and a colleague in foreign languages, coordinated a series of “summer tramps” in Europe. These programs involved “20 to 30 students and faculty to study of natural history, language, and culture in Switzerland, Germany, Italy, France, and England” (Office of Overseas Study, n.d.). This particular program appeared on the university course listing each year, was considered “academically focused” (Office of Overseas Study, n.d.).

University of Delaware

The origins of the modern study abroad movement in the United States can be traced to the efforts of Professor W. Kirkbridge, an instructor of Modern Languages at the University of Delaware in 1923 (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). He was veteran of World War I, whose experiences on the battlefield and during the aftermath of the conflict helped to shape his perspective (Institute for Global Studies, n.d.).

In an effort to promote a better understanding of people to avoid a repetition of such conflicts, he approached university president Walter S. Hullihen in 1921 with his idea of wanting to send students to France for their junior year (Institute for Global Studies, 2011). As noted in the historical documents, “Kirkbridge felt that this opportunity would produce better-rounded students, train future foreign language teachers, and provide experiences for students who wanted to go into careers with international aspects” (Institute for Global Studies, n.d.).

The Junior Year Program in France started in 1923, and continued until the onset of World War II. Due to changes at the University of Delaware, the support for this study abroad program was abandoned, but the program was taken over by Sweet Briar College in 1948 and has been running continuously ever since (Garraty & Adams, 1959). This particular program is now the oldest coeducational intercollegiate program in Paris (Sweet Briar College, n.d.), as it celebrated its ninety-third anniversary in 2016.

With the University of Delaware providing the first modern model, other schools soon followed such as Smith College in Geneva (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). In another example, Yale University had a program in which students would go to China upon the completion of the studies (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988). The origins of this program date back to 1901, where the students would provide service opportunities (Yale-China Association, n.d.).

Semester at Sea

As the initial efforts of the University of Delaware were starting, this period also saw the development of related areas such as the concept of shipboard education in what would become today's Semester at Sea program. While the first shipboard experience took place in 1926, the origins of shipboard education date back to 1877, when James O. Woodruff wanted to sail the world with students (Global Oceanic Foundation, n.d). His concept never took place in his lifetime, but in September 1926, Professor James Lough from New York University took students, faculty, and staff on the *S.S. Ryndam*. The trip lasted seven months as they traveled the whole world (Global Oceanic Foundation, n.d.; Institute for Shipboard Education, n.d.). The current Semester at Sea program dates back to the 1960s, and is an opportunity for students to take classes and travel the world on a cruise ship. The ship stops at different ports of call to explore and learn about different areas. The goal is to recreate the higher education experience as the students sail around the world or in particular areas, much as it was envisioned by Woodruff in 1877. Today, Colorado State University is the latest host of the Semester at Sea (SAS) program, previously hosted by the University of Virginia and the University of Pittsburgh.

These initial efforts provided the framework for the modern study abroad movement. In the aftermath of World War II, the movement gained more traction, especially with the onset of an increased role of the United States government.

Government Efforts in the United States

The model for government interest in the study abroad movement actually originated from the efforts of the wealthy British philanthropist, Cecil Rhodes. Rhodes had the desire to expand educational opportunities in the British Commonwealth by funding full scholarships to study at Oxford University. Today, the Rhodes Scholarships are one of the world's most prestigious scholarships open to students in both the British Commonwealth of Nations as well as in the United States. The scholarships were established in 1903 (Rhodes Trust, n.d.) as post-graduate awards supporting students to enroll and study at Oxford.

Fulbright Scholarship

The fledging international education movement slowly grew in the United States because of government efforts in the aftermath of World War II. One of the earliest initiatives was the Fulbright program, named after Senator John Fulbright. The Fulbright program provides financial awards to faculty and graduate students to spend time teaching, researching, and studying abroad as they interface with others from a particular country. Initially, the Fulbright program was developed as a way to send United States citizens to other countries to help educate those countries about United States values as well as to contribute to development focused around the concept of United States studies (Ardnt & Rubin, 1993; Walker, 1975). In the beginning of the Fulbright effort, it was coordinated thorough the United States State Department, and then was later transferred to the Institute of International Education (IIE) to organize and coordinate the program (Ardnt & Rubin, 1993). While IIE oversees the Fulbright Program, the Council of the International Exchange of Scholars (CIES) manages the day-to-day aspects of the program. Today, the Fulbright program has expanded to include additional

programs for faculty and graduate students from the United States, as well as efforts for foreign students/professionals to come and study in the United States.

While the Fulbright program is the oldest of the United States scholarship efforts, today there are other United States government sponsored scholarships designed to promote and expand the study abroad experience. These efforts have expanded within the last twenty years and fall under the auspices of the United States Department of State's Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs though the Institute of International Education (IIE) manages them. In some cases, other government departments oversee programs such as the United States Department of Education's International Education Programs Service.

Boren Scholarship

Among these additional United States government sponsored scholarships is the Boren Scholarship, named after former Senator John Boren. The Boren scholarship's main objective is to send students to learn language and cultural customs in distinct world regions, with a requirement and commitment of service to the United States government immediately after graduation. Started in 1991, the scholarship includes semester-long, yearlong, and summer opportunities. In addition, there are opportunities for summer study for students in the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) disciplines (National Security Education Program, n.d.).

Gilman Scholarship

The passage of the International Academic Opportunity Act by Congress in 2000 formally established the Benjamin A. Gilman scholarship (Institute for International Education, n.d.). The primary objective of the scholarship is to promote study abroad experiences for underrepresented students. Studies show that students from underrepresented backgrounds and first-

generation college students are less likely to take advantage of study abroad opportunities as their white, upper-class student counterparts. In addition, preference is given to students receiving Pell Grants, those interested in studying in non-traditional areas, those studying critical-language need areas, and to those coming from community colleges and minority serving institutions. The Pell Grant is a post-secondary educational federal grant sponsored by the United States Department of Education, which helps undergraduates of low-income families in receiving financial aid.

Humphrey Fellows

While the United States is promoting exchange opportunities for United States citizens to go abroad, there are also opportunities for international scholars to get support to study in the United States. For example, there is an international scholar component to the Fulbright program. One of the most prestigious and competitive of the international efforts is the Humphrey Fellows program. Founded in 1978 in honor of the late Senator and Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey, the fellowship allows mid-level professionals from foreign countries to come to the United States to learn English and to work side by side with United States faculty to advance their research (The Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program, n.d.). This is an opportunity for the professional to advance their English skills as well as their knowledge of the United States culture. The experiences vary over the course of the year. Institutions apply in a competitive process to host the scholars for the duration of a calendar year. In addition, institutions also serve as sites for the initial English language training that takes place at the beginning of the experience, before the Fellows go to their host sites.

United States Policies

The basic premise of all of these efforts in the United States is the focus on education and awareness. In the period after World War II, the 1950s and 1960s saw a continuation in the junior year abroad efforts, but access was still limited due to high costs of travel and other limitations. Other programs such as the National Student Exchange, starting in 1968, allowed students to enroll in partner institutions in the United States, its territories, and Canada in a more organized manner (National Student Exchange, n.d.).

During the 1970s and 1980s, there was an increasing desire to expand opportunities. A number of national studies and reports looked at ways to expand the international experiences for students, and even the United States government tried to kick-start study abroad efforts. In the late 1970s, under President Carter, the President's Commission on Foreign Languages and International Studies issued a report looking the nation's needs in regards to preparing students to learn a second language and to seek international experiences (Freed, 1999). The report emphasized the need for changes within study abroad as a way to increase the second language options for students.

As recently as 2000, Congress passed the International Academic Opportunity Act, which established a new grant program for undergraduate students to study at foreign educational institutions, and for students with limited financial resources. One of the direct results of this legislation was the establishment of the Benjamin A. Gilman scholarship.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks, the American Council on Education, in *Beyond September 11: A comprehensive national policy on international education*, noted:

The United States must invest on an educational infrastructure that produces knowledge of languages and cultures, and must be able to steadily train a sufficient and diverse pool

of American students to meet the needs of government agencies, the private sector, and education itself. (p. 3).

In 2004, the Commission on the Abraham Lincoln Study Abroad Fellowship Program was established. This Commission grew out of the work of former Senator Paul Simon, a huge proponent of study abroad and its influence on students. The goal of the Lincoln Commission was to look at the needs of study abroad and develop a set of recommendations (McPherson & DeLauder, 2006). The goal was to democratize study abroad, with at least one million United States undergraduate students studying abroad each year, that the demographics of the student participants be diverse and representative of the United States population, and that a certain number of students in non-traditional countries/areas. The Lincoln Commission issued its report in 2005 and President George W. Bush declared 2006 as the Year of Study Abroad (Hubbs, 2006).

The introduction of the Senator Paul Simon Study Abroad Foundation Act in 2007 established a national study abroad program. The goal would be for one million students to study abroad throughout the world (Durbin, 2006). Currently, the Simon Study Abroad Act has not been passed through Congress due to the current economic climate (NAFSA, n.d.).

In 2014, the Institute for International Education (IIE) unveiled a new initiative called “Generation Study Abroad”, which calls for a sustained commitment to double the number of United States students participating in study abroad (IIE, n.d.). This initiative’s primary objective is to increase scholarship opportunities for students and grants to institutions, with the goal of expanding student abroad opportunities.

Government Efforts – The European Union and Elsewhere

Just as the United States is undertaking steps to enhance study abroad, there are comparable efforts that have taken place within the European Union (EU). One of the examples is the EU-Erasmus and Socrates effort (Byram & Feng, 2006; Opper, Teicher, & Carlson, 1990). This concept of promoting exchange dates back to the start of the EU movement in the 1960s with the signing of the Treaty of Rome.

The Expanded Regional Action Scheme for Mobility of University Students (ERASMUS) started in 1987, and since that time, 2.2 million students have participated in this effort. On a yearly basis, over 200,000 students participate in the program (European Commission, Education, & Training, n.d.). The focus of this effort is for students to study at other universities in Europe, and they often focus on subjects relevant to their profession (Dekaney, 2008). In 1997, expansion of the program allowed teachers and staff the opportunity to work at other institutions. It is not just a study abroad program but includes options for job internships and language preparation. As the EU's flagship education and training program, it has further strengthened the interactions among the higher education institutions through funding to support collaborative projects and other opportunities.

ERASMUS is part of a broader lifelong-learning program established by the European Union. These lifelong-learning programs include four areas of education as well as training: *Erasmus* deals with higher education, while *Comenius* for schools, *Leonardo da Vinci* for vocation education and training, and *Grundtvig* for adult education (European Commission, Education, & Training, n.d.). These programs help to provide a better understanding of the EU system through experiences and opportunities (Barron, 2006; Opper, et al., 1990). These efforts

also help to reduce barriers in the EU, following in the concept of the Bologna effort to standardize processes within the European Higher Education system.

Even though I have focused primarily on the United States and EU roles, other world governments also have played major roles in promoting education abroad opportunities. There are examples where governments such as South Korea will provide funding for students to attend graduate school in the United States and they will have jobs available when they return and contribute back to the government. The concept is similar to what takes place in the corporate world with employers paying for advanced degrees.

Organizations

The rise of study abroad and international education in the United States, has led to development of organizations that maintain a prominent role within the movement in the United States and abroad. The following is a brief look at some of the more prominent organizations involved in the field of study/education abroad.

The Institute of International Education (IIE)

The oldest of the organizations is the Institute of International Education (IIE), established in 1919. Founded by Nobel Peace Prize winners Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University, Elihu Root, former Secretary of State, and by Stephen Duggan, Sr., Professor of Political Science at the College of the City of New York and IIE's first President in the aftermath of World War I. As stated in the organization's materials, "They believed that we could not achieve lasting peace without greater understanding between nations and that international educational exchange formed the strongest basis for fostering such understanding" (Institute for International Education, n.d.). The premise of the institute was to provide a vehicle for educational exchange when the system was at its infancy. It served as a point of contact and

source of information for both United States higher education and foreign nations interested in developing educational ties with the United States.

Today, IIE serves as the preeminent international education organization in the United States and issues annual reports such as *Open Doors*, which looks at the numbers of students traveling abroad as well as those international students in the United States. Members of IIE receive a number of special services that include being a part of the IIE Network, receive copies of the major IIE publications and weekly email newsletters. They also coordinate and manage the major United States government scholarship efforts such as the Fulbright, Gilman, and Boren scholarship programs.

NAFSA: Association of International Educators

Founded in 1948, NAFSA, originally known as the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers, grew out as a response to the increase number of foreign students that were coming to study in the United States after World War II. The organization arose from a desire to promote and provide professional development of American college and university officials responsible for assisting and advising these students. This grew out of the realization that meeting the needs of students from diverse educational and cultural backgrounds required special knowledge and competencies (NAFSA, n.d.). NAFSA pioneered the concept of providing professional services for post-secondary exchange students.

Over the decades, the association's scope expanded to include admissions personnel, English-language specialists, and the community volunteers who played an important role in helping foreign students become acclimated to American college communities. In realizing that awareness was not enough in the 1990s, there was a new focus in terms of international competence. This desire led to the creation of opportunities for Americans to study abroad,

participate in scholarly exchange programs, and study foreign areas and languages. In its history, it had changed its name twice, first in 1964 to the National Association for Foreign Student Affairs, and in 1990 to NAFSA: Association of International Educators (NAFSA, n.d.).

Today, the NAFSA annual conference and expo, which attracts over 7,000 attendees from throughout the world. The conference is the premier meeting for international education professionals and takes place in late May/early June. Individuals can become members of NAFSA and have access to networking, career advances, professional development, advocacy, and other services.

Forum on Education Abroad

Founded in 2001, the Forum on Education Abroad is the most recent of the major education abroad organizations. The mission of the Forum is to help to improve education abroad programs to benefit the students who participate in them. Forum members include United States colleges and universities, overseas institutions, consortia, agencies, and provider organizations. It is recognized by the United States Department of Justice and the Federal Trade Commission as the only Standards Development Organization (SDO) for education abroad (The Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.). The Forum has developed a *Standards of Good Practice*, which provides a potential measuring guide to determine the quality of education abroad programs. The Forum's Quality Improvement Program for Education Abroad (QUIP) uses the Standards of Good Practice as part of a self-study and peer review quality assurance program that is available to all Forum institutional members. The Forum also offers guided Standards Assessments, which guide participants through an assessment of specific areas of the Standards of Good Practice (The Forum, n.d.).

The Forum focuses on developing and implementing standards of good practice, encouraging and supporting research initiatives, and offering educational programs and resources to its members. The Forum also holds an annual conference, and membership can be on an individual and institutional level. The Forum also oversees *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, which is one of the two major academic journals within the study abroad field, along with the *Journal of Studies in International Education* (JSIE).

Council on International Education Exchange

Formed in 1947, the Council on International Exchange (CIEE) is a non-profit organization promoting international education and exchange. It is the oldest non-governmental organization in the field of international education and study abroad. It serves as a third party provider through its consortium agreements. Institutions become members of the consortium, and their students can then access the services of CIEE, such as scholarships and publications.

CIEE administers study abroad programs, high school abroad, and gap year programs and teach abroad. In addition, they coordinate work programs for international students interested in working in the United States. It serves as the largest sponsor of J-1 visa programs through its seasonal work experiences in the United States for international students (Council on International Education Exchange, n.d.).

The name of the organization has changed over the years. First known as the Council on Student Travel in 1947, the organization in its early years was known as "the Council." In 1967, the organization's name changed to the Council on International Educational Exchange, or CIEE (Council on International Exchange, n.d.).

Institute for the International Education of Students (IES – Abroad)

IES-Abroad is a non-profit and non-governmental organization founded in 1950 when they sent their first group of United States students to Vienna, Austria (IES Abroad, n.d.). It is one of the largest of the study abroad providers through its consortium agreements. Their primary focus is to provide study abroad programs and they work with institutions to provide options for students. IES has been a leader within the field through its introduction of the IES Model Assessment Practice (MAP) in 1999 and their involvement in the development of the Forum on Study Abroad (IES Abroad, n.d.). They also have conducted one of the few studies on the influence of study abroad experiences through their 50-year longitudinal alumni study, completed in 2004 (IES Abroad Alumni Survey Results, n.d.).

Role of Organizations

It is through these organizations that international education and study abroad operates in the United States. In addition to those listed above, there exists the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA). Formed in 1982, AIEA is for institutional leaders engaged in international education both in the United States and internationally. There is also a European equivalent known as the European Association for International Education (EAIE). Both of these groups form a part of the Association of Studies in International Education, which consists of a group of ten worldwide organizations that focus on international education.

These different organizations are critical for the growth and development of the international education and the subsequent study abroad movement. They are valued such as IIE through their connections with such major United States efforts as the Fulbright, Gilman, and Boren scholarships. Higher education institutions are not required to participate in any of these organizations, but these organizations have major conferences such as the annual NAFSA

conference that provide valuable resources. The Forum now oversees the *Frontiers* journal, which focuses on issues impacting international higher education. While I have highlighted CIEE and IES-Abroad, today there are a large number of other third-party providers which provide and coordinate study abroad opportunities. It is through these third-party providers that institutions can increase their available options for their students.

Summary

The second part of this chapter provided an overview of the development of the study abroad movement in the United States and of the factors that influence its development. Prior to the development of the first modern program at the University of Delaware, the concept of travel for education was limited, but it did take place as seen in the examples of the Grand Tour.

The growth in the study abroad movement in the United States grew out of this desire to develop ambassadors. This model for the Fulbright program and the subsequent partnership with IIE set the stage. The process added a new dimension with the development of the Peace Corps, as a way to volunteer and provide service abroad. Today, the United States government is encouraging study abroad opportunities through federal programs and federal scholarships. Recent reports have called for an expansion of the efforts to enhance the growth of study abroad as seen with the IIE's Generation Abroad Initiative.

Today, almost 305,000 United States students are studying abroad in some capacity, and this number will continue to increase. It is important to understand the historical framework for the study abroad movement in the United States, as I proceed to examine the mechanics involved in the study abroad process.

A Primer to Study Abroad

Study abroad is about engaging and learning about the world. Today, there is a growing desire to provide greater opportunities for students to become more engaged on the global level as seen with the various national reports of the last thirty years (McPherson & DeLauder, 2006). Most of these international opportunities are through study abroad experiences but not limited to these efforts (Freed, 1999). However, there is a general lack of knowledge surrounding the types of study abroad programs that exist and the factors that go into the development of such efforts. The understanding of the “how” behind study abroad is essential in the evaluation and enhancement of study abroad.

Types of Study Abroad

Initially, study abroad programs were focused on language immersion. Students would enroll at a foreign institution, live with a host family, and spend a year in this setting. In some cases, the student’s home institution would arrange the logistics, while in other cases it was up to the student (Freed, 1999; Garraty & Adams, 1959; Kauffman, et al., 1992; McKeown, 2009).

Today, students have many different options when it comes to choosing between various study abroad opportunities (Engle & Engle, 2003; Goodwin & Nacht, 1998; Lantis & DuPlaga, 2010). Depending on the institution, the following types of study abroad opportunities may be available including exchange programs, yearlong programs at outside institutions, faculty led programs, third party led programs, and individually tailored opportunities developed by the student themselves.

Exchange Program

An exchange program, often in the form of a bilateral agreement, is a program in which two institutions agree to allow their respective students to enroll and get credit for attending the

other institution. These programs allow the student to enroll at the partner institution while paying their respective fees as if they were at their home institution. These exchange programs are individually driven by the student, as they schedule their own courses. The classes at the other university would be in the language of the institution (Engle & Engle, 2003). Without the bilateral agreement, it would often be difficult for students to maneuver through the admissions process and be accepted by the institution as well as get approval for the credit-transfer. This type of program would be considered a full-immersion type of experience (Goodwin & Nacht, 1998).

Yearlong program at outside institution

Related to exchange programs are yearlong programs. Instead of spending one semester at a different institution, the student spends an academic or calendar year at another institution. Such programs are set as part of the bilateral exchanges between institutions or as part of consortium agreements. This type of program would also be seen as a full immersion type of experience (Burn, Cerych, & Smith, 1990; Engle & Engle, 2003; Goodwin & Nacht, 1998).

Faculty-Led Program

Faculty-led programs are normally programs that are coordinated and sponsored by the student's home institution. The program leaders for such programs are faculty from the home institution, and the program is related to a specific academic discipline or research by the faculty member (Vande Berg, Balkum, Scheld, & Whalen, 2004). The institution officially sanctions this type of program. Most faculty-led programs tend to be shorter in duration than traditional semester or yearlong opportunities.

Third Party Program

Third party programs refer to programs that are offered by other parties besides the student's home institution. It is through these third parties such as CIEE or IES that students have more options in terms of potential areas of study as well as locations. Normally, third party organizations will work with the individual host schools and develop reciprocal relationships with other schools that may offer particular programs relationships to make the process for students much easier (Lantis & DuPlaga, 2010). In this case, students can facilitate the transfer process as well as the cost of fees. These third party programs can either be yearlong, semester or summer based programs.

Individually Tailored

In the end, it is the student that decides the type of program that they want to participate in (Lantis & DuPlaga, 2010). Students have many options from looking at the types of institutions that its home campus may have agreements with, to looking at options through third-party organizations, or at the types of faculty-led opportunities. Students have the option to shape the experience that they would like to pursue (Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2007).

The types of study abroad programs really cater to the different needs of the students as well as the needs and abilities of the institutions. Some institutions have the financial ability to have sites in other countries while others have partnerships with specific institutions. Others provide incentives to faculty to develop programmatic opportunities.

Reasons for Pursuing Study Abroad

Recent studies suggest that the reasons for how students choose to go on a study abroad are similar to how students choose to go to college (Salisbury, 2011). There are certainly many reasons why students would want to spend time abroad, with perhaps the most obvious being the

desire to travel and explore something completely different. However, beyond traveling and experiencing the world, there are other factors:

- Heritage seeking – an opportunity to explore historical roots (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; Tsantier & Titus, 2006);
- Language skills – to better learn a language and become proficient in another language (Allen, Dristas, & Mills, 2006; Freed, 1999; Goodwin & Nacht, 1988);
- Work experience – to help in the job market and global understanding (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; Hannigan, 2001);
- Personal dreams/goals – personal motivation for going abroad and investing in this effort (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988);
- Enhance academic background – provide more depth to academic experience (Goodwin & Nacht, 1988; Shaftel, Shaftel, & Ahluwalia, 2007);
- Cultural learning and exploration – to experience other cultures and customs (Allen, et al., 2006; Anzai, Dobberful, Matsuzawa, & Zimmerman, 2008; Goodwin & Nacht, 1998).

In the end, it is up to the student to make the decision for their own motivation (Lantis & DuPlaga, 2010). A study abroad is much more than just sightseeing, shopping, or partying; it is an intentional effort as part of an academic experience (McKeown, 2009).

Challenges and Barriers to Study Abroad

Conversations about the benefits of study abroad can be overshadowed due to a lack of awareness and understanding. One of the biggest challenges is a lack of familiarity with the process of study abroad, and as a result, this becomes a key barrier to lack of participation.

Student Aspects

One of the primary challenges of study abroad is convincing individuals about the relevance and importance of the experience (Stanitski & Fuellhart, 2003). This has a significant role in the overall recruitment of students. This challenge of relevance and importance is related to the others mentioned below. In most cases, students are not really educated about study abroad. They might go to a study abroad fair and walk around, but they might feel overwhelmed by all of the choices and not know where to begin. Without an understanding of study abroad, it is much more difficult for the students to engage their parents as well as advisors about their study abroad interests (Fisher, 2012; Hobbs, 2006).

Practicality with Major

Another challenge is talking about the relevance of study abroad within the discipline and how it would be valued. Certain majors and/or academic disciplines are more represented than others (Open Doors Report, 2015; Shaftel, Shaftel & Ahluwalia, 2007). One of the challenges that students face is the number of available academic credits that they have in which they can pursue study abroad. Other concerns deal with the issue of language preparation and if courses would be in another language.

Program Timing and Duration

One of the main questions that arise is whether or not the students have enough time within their academic schedule to spend time abroad during their collegiate career. This issue of timing is important as students may stumble upon study abroad when it is too late in their academic career. In addition, it is also related to the issue of the duration or length of a particular program.

Stereotypes and Myths

There are other concerns about the quality of time spent and whether or not individuals and/or parents are comfortable with students being in potentially more open environments. The other issue is whether or not the student can manage appropriately in such a setting. Study abroad is much more than sightseeing and partying every night, but these are some of the common stereotypes (Rodriquez, 2000). There are also concerns about how the students will be treated and how will they be able to communicate, eat, and interact. (Lantis & DuPlaga, 2010).

Faculty/Instructors

While recruiting students is a critical piece, another aspect is the recruitment of faculty to develop and lead programs. Those that currently manage programs often do so out of a research interest or a personal desire. Unfortunately, there is not much growth in these programs because faculty are often not supported in these efforts. While they might be encouraged, the support is lacking in terms of funding. In addition, faculty are often unaware of the logistics and planning process that is required or it is perceived to be too much work. There are examples of efforts in which institutions can try to encourage and support faculty. One example is the Virginia Tech Summer Sessions grant program, which provides funds for the development of new course opportunities in the summer.

Related to the issue of recruitment of faculty, is the issue that faculty are often unaware of the how the study abroad process operates and the opportunities that are available. There is also the issue of perceptions surrounding the benefit of study abroad and what it entails. This lack of knowledge hinders their ability to educate and advise their students about their study abroad options (DeKaney, 2008).

Financial

While all of the challenges are important, perhaps the most critical is that of financial support to make this effort happen (Burn, et al., 1990; Stanitski & Fuellhart, 2003). Regardless of the type of program, finances are a critical piece. While students with financial need might be eligible for aid, the main challenge is that financial aid for study abroad is often limited in its scope and scale. Different scholarships are available in the United States, but there is great competition for these limited resources as well as a lack of familiarity that these scholarships exist. On the local level, students may have access to institutional scholarships and other means of support. It is this financial piece that often makes a difference in the lack of underrepresented and first generation students within study abroad, as these students do not have the financial resources to make such opportunities happen (Shaftel, et al., 2007). National data shows that a majority of study abroad expenses are covered by the individual student and their families (Open Doors Report, 2015).

Components that influence Study Abroad

The act of going on a study abroad can be transforming in itself as one is going to another country to study. However, beyond the culture shock value, what other transformations take place? These other transformations are due in part to the engagement of the student (i.e. participant). A more engaged student may see changes greater than someone that is not as engaged (Langley & Breese, 2005). The same can be said for the role of the program leader and their actions.

Within the study abroad areas, there are many different components (i.e. pieces) that can influence the experience (Engle & Engle, 2004; Vande Berg, et al., 2004). These components include the following: 1) lodging within the program; 2) courses (classes) within the program; 3)

language of instruction; 4) structure of the program; and 5) location of where the program takes place.

Lodging

Within the study abroad construct, lodging can take several forms. It can be in the form of a home stay, where a student stays with a host family. This type of living experience forces the student to adjust to a new situation in terms of language and customs. It can also be in the form of institutional housing as provided by the exchange institution. This type of lodging provides the opportunity to live with other students in a more controlled environment. It can also be in the form of staying with the assigned group, whether the students are staying in hotels or university accommodations (Engle & Engle, 2004).

Class Location

Classes could be held at the host institution using their regularly scheduled courses, as the students are a part of the general study body. In another case, a special course taught by the faculty at the home institution is taught at the host institution as part of the program for their specific students. In another case, the special course is taught by faculty at the host institution specifically for the students participating in the program (Engle & Engle, 2004).

Language

In some cases, the courses at the host institution would be taught in the language of that particular country. In other cases, the course would be taught in the primary language of the student (Engle & Engle, 2004).

Structure

The structure of the program opportunity refers to the specific roles of the student and the program leader (Engle & Engle, 2004). In one case, the student determines the structure.

Programs may have a formal schedule, and the student determines what they do in their free time and how they choose to interact with others. In another case, there may be a program leader from the home institution. Depending on the program, the leader may be more or less involved in the direction and nature of the program. The leader may be able to provide more guidance and direction to the students. The program may have a program liaison from the home institution, who may be more or less involved. As a liaison, their role is much less than that of a program leader.

Program Location

Location depends on whether the student is participating at a particular institution or through their home university. Programs are affiliated with outside institutions that serve as the home during that period of time for students or the outside institution allowing for other universities to use the space for their programs. In a different case, a program happens in a country without any affiliation to an outside institution besides their sponsoring home institution. This location variable will depend on the type of program (Engle & Engle, 2004).

Long-term Programs versus Short-term Programs

Within the study abroad field, opportunities are classified as either short-term or long-term. Initially, all opportunities were considered long-term opportunities. Today, more and more opportunities are short-term opportunities. In terms of a historical perspective, the IES Alumni survey noted this difference, as “the number of students studying for less than 10 weeks tripled from the 1950s and 1960s to the 1990s” (Dwyer & Peters, 2004).

The duration of study abroad programs (i.e. length) are broken down into short-term, mid-length, and long term. A long-term opportunity is one that spans an entire academic or calendar year. A mid-length opportunity includes one or two quarters, and/or one semester. A

short-term opportunity is one that lasts less eight weeks or less during the academic year, or is 5 - 6 week summer or winter program. Most short-term efforts are less than six weeks.

In terms of the data for duration of study abroad programs, my analysis of the Open Doors Reports reveals the following patterns:

- Since 2000, long-term programs have dropped from 7.9% to its lowest percentage of 3.0% between 2000 – 2014.
- Short-term programs surpassed and remained above the 50% mark since 2003.
- Mid-length programs represent 35% of all programs.
- Summer continues to be the time period for the most frequent type of opportunities.

Within the literature of study abroad, there is much debate about the role and the relevance of the influence of short- and long-term programs (Chieffo & Griffiths, 2004). In most cases, the traditional approach is a yearlong program where a student is completely immersed, lives with host family, and takes classes with other students (Garraty & Adams, 1957). In most cases, these yearlong programs were focused on language preparation (Aveni, 2005). Traditionalists in the study abroad academy believe that language should still be the sole focus of such opportunities. In addition, the traditionalists do not view short-term opportunities as favorable (Kauffman, et al., 1992; Spencer & Tuma, 2002).

In terms of numbers, more and more study abroad programs are seen as short-term opportunities. In the most recent *Open Doors* report (2015), 62% of all study abroad programs were short-term of less than 8 weeks in length. This number is expected to grow as students lack the flexibility and costs to spend extended time away from school.

Influence of the Study Abroad Experience on Participants

The positive influence of study abroad on students was observed from the earliest days of the movement. Within the study abroad literature there are a number of influences that have been documented. All of the influences can or cannot happen and a lot depends on the student as well as the type of program. The influence of study abroad varies per student, but studies have shown that the experience can affect the development of students in different ways as well as their academics. While the experience of traveling abroad is in itself one significant influence (Langley & Breese, 2005), there are other transformational elements that take place. Among these are students' self-confidence, comfortability, adaptation, survival, and adjustment. It has been noted that the relationships of the elements is critical to the study abroad influence on the learning process and transformation that takes place (Yu, Chick, & Lin, 2008).

Students often bring individual and personal motivations to their study abroad experiences, and these can include 1) to adapt; 2) to compare; 3) to cooperate; 4) to learn; 5) to go sightseeing; and 6) to socialize (Byram & Feng, 2006). Langley and Breese (2005) noted, "students who study abroad, for they observe, interact, and travel as ways to learn the culture" (p. 320).

Another key influence is that of intercultural competence, in which students are better able to understand the issues surrounding cultural competence and cultural immersion (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Redden, 2010; Rodriguez, 2000; Shaftel, et al., 2007; Wang, 2009). In the introduction of their work, Byram and Feng (2006) note the following: "achieving a degree of intercultural understanding during a temporary stay abroad cannot be a secondary objective or side effect of an individual action primarily focusing on other goals" (p.127). The value of intercultural competence is important in today's increasingly global society. This conversation

about intercultural competence is related to the issue of understanding diversity and how students view this concept (Edgar, Kelley, Taylor, 2009; Ismail, Morgan, & Hayes, 2006). McKeown (2009) argues “that studying abroad is an activity that challenges students by forcing an intense encounter with diversity” (p. 99).

Today, more and more United States students are choosing non –traditional locations such as Asia and South America (Open Doors Report, 2015). For example, there is some evidence as to the challenges that certain areas pose for United States students, one of those being Paris, France (Kauffman, et al., 1992). Paris poses a challenge for students in terms of understanding and communicating in the French language, interpreting the nature of the individuals whom they encounter, and in facing the realization that their idealized image of the city may not be completely accurate. Location also raises the question of the role of student goals for cultural immersion focus (Garraty & Adams, 1959; Kauffman, et al., 1992). This debate is not a new one and has been around since the 1950s. Even from the works for the 1950s, I found that “most students say and demonstrate by their actions, that study in Europe has altered their interests and their point of view” (Garraty & Adams, 1959, p. 139). More recently, the role of the location also enhances the student’s goal (whether intentional or unintentional) of gaining a more global perspective (Carlson & Widaman, 1988; Edgar, et al., 2009; Gonyea, 2008).

In this process of cultural immersion, students often encounter cultural shock. Students encounter various stages during this process, which first includes the experiences of personal reactions to the culture, such as “Oh, how charming!” In the next stage, students experience cultural confrontation, or “cultural fatigue”, where real differences start to sink in. As the students develop a better understanding and appreciation for the culture, they move through cultural adjustment. Finally in cultural adaptation, they accept the culture as simply another way

of life, and as such, they relax and enjoy themselves in the new environment (Hill, 1991; Lantis & DuPlaga, 2010; Paige, Cohen, Kappler, Chi, & Lassegard, 2007). It is important that students understand they will move through these stages before they embark upon a study abroad program.

Some institutions make an effort to explain this concept of culture shock. As Hill (1991) notes from the handbook of Brigham Young University: “The greatest shock of traveling abroad may not be in the foreign culture itself, but rather in the realization that one’s own values, attitudes, habits, and preferences have been shaped by one’s own cultural background” (p. 6). Another related concept is that of cultural stress based on the work of Larson and Smalley (1972). Cultural stress is defined as the disorientation that occurs within an individual whose social position or role in the foreign culture has shifted in comparison to that of their native culture (Aveni, 2005).

While cultural adaptation is the final stage of personal development, study abroad also has a strong influence on a student’s intellectual development (McKeown, 2009). This influence also relates to the students’ cognitive and affective development (Gonyea, 2008). This influence on the student’s personal development also is related to the concept of student dependence and inter/intrdependence. Some have pointed to the work of Baxter-Magolda in the movement from dependent to independent (Kauffman, et al., 1992; McKeown, 2009). Intellectual development is related to intellectual awareness and student dissonance (McKeown, 2009; Nash, 1976). It is also influenced by the transformative learning strategies that may be used in the study abroad program (Jones & Brown, 2007).

Some have observed that another critical influence is on the students’ own impressions of their home country and how this relates to the students’ re-entry and readjustment period

(Gonyea, 2008; Kauffman, et al., 1992). Adler's work in 1975 explored how the student's attitude of their home culture changes due to their experience and their increased world mindedness (Nash, 1976).

Study abroad has shown itself to have an effect on the academic career of students (Hadis, 2005). In a recent study as part of the Georgia Learning Outcomes of Students Studying Abroad Research Initiative (GLOSSARI) looking at study abroad within the State University system of Georgia, it was noted that students that participants in study abroad have higher grade point averages than their peers, and also had higher graduation rates (Redden, 2010).

GLOSSARI was a ten-year study (2000 – 2010) that involved students within the Georgia state system that participated in study abroad. The project was focused on three areas: 1) looking at the impact of study abroad on graduation rates and grade point average of students; 2) understanding the intercultural learning outcomes of a sample of students; and 3), looking at the disciplinary learning outcomes based on a case study of three programs (Redden, 2010). The graduation rate and grade point average study looked at the data from 19,109 study abroad participants with a control of 17,903 non-study abroad participants. The intercultural learning outcomes involved 440 study abroad students and 230 non-study abroad students from the thirteen institutions in the Georgia state system (Redden, 2010).

Study abroad can have a tremendous influence on students with their personal growth and development. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) finds that study abroad provides the type of 'high impact' college experiences that teach the cognitive complexity and intellectual engagement in today's increasingly sophisticated world. Some have explained that the influence of study abroad is not due to the length of the program but rather to the nature of

the experience as well as the relationship to the students' academic discipline (McKeown, 2009; Redden, 2010).

Regulations and Authority governing Study Abroad Programs

Study Abroad or Education Abroad programs are managed and situated in different areas within the collegiate setting. These different areas can include international affairs, academic affairs, or student affairs (Hayden, 2006). Some offices will solely focus on study abroad, while others will include services for international students as well.

Study Abroad programs are subject to a wide range of university, state, and federal regulations. In most cases, these regulations are determined by each institution and their respective policies. The critical question facing higher education is the issue of liability for the participants as well as the institution. The preparedness of students and leaders for study abroad programs is critical. For example, program leaders are responsible for the development of timetables, finalizing of logistical arrangements, ensuring that all required forms have been submitted and verified, and account for a wide range of other items before they leave for the trip. In addition, students are required to agree to abide by program expectations and to purchase travel insurance provided by the institution.

Some of the major professional organizations have provided best practices for institutions. The Forum on Education Abroad developed a set of professional standards about study abroad programs in the United States. While not required, there is a desire to formalize a set of criteria that institutions should follow with their study abroad efforts. Recently, the Forum has provided guidelines for short-term as well as long-term study abroad programs. In addition, IES-Abroad has developed a Model Assessment Program (MAP) system in 1999, which serves as an assessment tool to examine study abroad programs. The MAP system provides a template

that institutions can use to evaluate areas that include the student learning environment, student learning and the development of intercultural competence, resources for academic and student support, and program administration and development (IES-Abroad, n.d.).

The other regulatory factor that affect most programs are those dealing with the respective immigration policies of each country and their specific requirements for issuing student visas. These requirements vary from country to country and can require a lot of planning ahead to avoid delays.

Program Evaluation of Study Abroad

The challenge in designing effective study abroad programs is in terms of how to measure or quantify this experience. Unfortunately, the means for assessing the influence of study abroad on student's personal and academic growth is not uniform. The measuring of this influence is difficult by the sheer complexity and differing standards.

Currently, in U.S. colleges and universities, there is increased importance being placed on assessing educational outcomes. This includes an expectation that institutions must demonstrate the value of educational experiences, including hands-on activities that students participate in as part of their preparation to enter their chosen careers.

(Hannigan, 2001, p. 3).

This assessment is especially critical since the number of students participating in study abroad is steadily increasing (Hult & Lashbrooke, 2003; McKeown, 2009). The growth of study abroad programs is generally not understood, nor is the impact on students consistently measured (Redden, 2010). As noted previously, some of the growth was due to the national initiatives through the Lincoln Commission and other organizations that elevated the profile of study

abroad and its importance to higher education students (Dekaney, 2008; McPherson & DeLauder, 2006; Salisbury, 2011).

N.L. Kauffman (1992) stated, “Study abroad challenges educators and researchers to discover new ways to explain and measure the process of change that is the essence of education” (p.144-145). As Kauffman noted, those that work with study abroad need to find a new way to look at the evaluation process.

The first major efforts took place in 1982 with the development of the Study Abroad Evaluation Project (SAEP). The results of this major longitudinal study were published in 1990 and examined study abroad programs as well as their influence on students (Carlson, Burn, Useen & Yachimowicz, 1990; Dekaney, 2008; Kauffman, et al., 1992; McKeown, 2009). While the SAEP project research was conducted in the United States, a similar effort was undertaken in Europe (Burn, et al., 1990). The United States SAEP project was followed by the Study Abroad Articulation Project (SAAP) in 1987. This study focused on the barriers to student participation in study abroad (Dekaney, 2008).

In addition, IES-Abroad completed a 50-year alumni survey of its study abroad participants covering (1950 – 1999). The survey examined the long-term impact of the study abroad experience as perceived by alumni over 49 years. The survey tracked academic attainment, cultural development, career impact, and personal growth of participants (Dwyer & Peters, 2004).

The biggest question in evaluation is how is the “experience” of study abroad is measured. McKeown (2009) argues that study abroad professionals need to examine the perspective of study abroad as “academic lite” (p. 97) and change the paradigm by measuring program impact. Rodriguez (2001) observed that study abroad programs are traditionally

marginalized because they are not viewed as credible and more as “time away from real learning” (p.1), which affirms the notion of academic lite, espoused by McKeown.

There is a desire to find an effective method to assess programs among professionals and researchers. Some have looked at the desire to create templates of common characteristics of programs (Engle & Engle, 2003, 2004; Vande Berg, Connor-Linton, & Paige, 2009). Darla Deardoff in Byram & Feng (2006) noted that 80% of all programs are compatible even without a national set of standards. She argues that it would be easy to develop some type of framework, but none has been developed.

Examination of the underlying framework of study abroad programs, similar to accreditation opportunities, is another method to determine if programs meet best practices criteria in the field (Engle & Engle, 2004). The two current program evaluation initiatives, the Forum’s QUIPs and the IES-Abroad MAPs, evaluate the mechanics of a study abroad program.

The IES-Abroad MAP provides guidelines for the student learning environment, student learning and intercultural competence, resources for academic and student support, and program administration and development. The other initiative, the Forum’s Quality Improvement Program (QUIP) is an evaluation tool that assists organizations in assessing how their education abroad programming conforms to the Forum's Standards of Good Practice for Education Abroad (The Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.). The Forum then certifies a program as being QUIP certified (The Forum on Education Abroad, n.d.). These efforts reveal a desire to at least standardize some of the evaluation procedures revolving around study abroad.

In addition, there are the efforts of the Georgetown Consortium, which conducted a three-year study (2004-2007) that involved students from Georgetown University, the University of Minnesota, Rice University, and Dickinson College, as well as a survey of study abroad students

from throughout the country. The Georgetown Consortium project was designed as a way to examine what Vande Berg, Connor-Linton & Paige (2009) described as “what types of experiences abroad promote meaningful knowledge and skills, and thereby improve study abroad programming at our institutions”. The major findings of the Georgetown Consortium project included that study abroad students’ intercultural competence increases, and that a combination of program variables and personal characteristics is associated with language development and intercultural development. Program variables include: on-site cultural mentoring and language study, program duration, culturally dissimilar destinations, interacting with host culture persons, and studying with other United States as well as international students (Paige & Fry, 2009).

Engle and Engle (2004) explored the impact of the environmental factors on student learning abroad. There are also the recent efforts of the GLOSSARI project that took place within the State University system of Georgia. This provided a closer look at the influence of study abroad within an entire system (Redden, 2010).

With the continued growth in study abroad participation and the increase growth in short-term opportunities (Open Doors Report, 2015), the assessment pieces will continue to be more and more vital, as Chieffo and Griffiths (2004) urged study abroad programs to “explain or defend with only spotty evidence what the benefits of these short-term sojourns might be” (p. 166). In light of the recent economic challenges and the increasing competition for resources, if study abroad programs are indeed having a measured influence on students, more research is needed and the results need to be conveyed to institutions. This assessment piece is an important one in understanding the framework of study abroad.

Summary

It is important to understand the motivation for students who choose to participate in study abroad and the challenges and barriers they encounter. While more and more students are seeking opportunities, there are still hundreds of thousands that are unsure or not prepared to take advantage of these opportunities. Another challenge is the fact that having the capacity to serve all of these students will be limited unless study abroad professionals examine systematic challenges and provide potential solutions. Coupled with this is the concern about the influence of the experiences on the students' themselves.

While the type of study abroad program is important, there are personal and academic variables shaped by student background and experiences, which are important to examine. Increasing numbers of students interested in short-term programs offer this researcher an opportunity to explore the value of short-term programs in terms of the instructional and the influence of personal and academic characteristics of students.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this chapter, I provide the research design that guided my study. I describe the methodological process I used to design and conduct research that would address my overarching objective to explore the influence of reflection in a study abroad program. I used a qualitative research process focused on a case study. I provide the context by looking at the places of the study abroad, and I describe the participants for summer 2012 when I conducted the research. I highlight the nature of the different academic assignments and their connection to reflection.

I also explain the process for how I collected and analyzed the data. I used ethnographic methods for the data collection: interviews, written artifacts, and participant observation using the items from the academic assignments. I describe how I analyze and sort the data.

The Research Focus

As I started to look more closely at the academic assignments and structure of my program, I started to think about how my study abroad program was different from other programs and how that influenced the experiences of the students. As I explored this further, my initial focus was on the subject matter: issues of diversity and social justice in various European cities. However, I felt that in most cases, this focus on diversity and social justice was one that should be central to all programs, so I had to approach this in a different way. I regarded this in terms of the intentionality of the experience, and how this structure provided more of a framework. I considered the differences between short-term and long-term programs, but I came

to the realization that there was no visible way I could measure differences between such programs.

Then I examined the common elements and threads of the assignments and the different experiences. The concept of reflection and the nature of how the students reflected on their experiences seemed to emerge as the main thread that was central to the essence of the program and its experiences. The group was not only traveling through Europe. They were traveling, exploring, and discussing in a structured way the required component of reflection. My own reflection helped me to reshape and refine the nature of my research questions. These research questions align much more closely to the focus of reflection and its central role in helping in the experience for the participants.

Objective and Research Questions

In undertaking this case study, my overarching objective was to understand the role of reflection in the study abroad experience as a way to understand the role of these experiences on the students. To carry out this objective, I addressed the following research questions, which guided my data collection as I sought to understand the role of reflection in my study abroad program:

- How does reflection shape the experience for students participating in a study abroad program?
- How did students demonstrate, or not, reflexivity in their written reflections and photo journals?
- What is the role of the academic assignments (papers, photo journals, exit interviews) in fostering reflection within the students?

It was through these research questions and the data that I have collected, that I can begin to better understand the role of reflection within this study abroad program and use it as a way to provide a framework for future practitioners. While this initial study was going to examine the differences between short-term and long-term programs, I was now focusing on the role of reflection as that essential piece of the academic assignments within any study abroad program.

Qualitative Research

Research Design

I used a qualitative approach, which provided the best means to understand the influence of the study abroad experience through student reflections. A qualitative approach allowed me to get access to detail as found in the photo journals, reflection papers, and exit interviews, provided tangible evidence that answered my research questions. Through this detail, I was able to understand the students' experience as portrayed through their own voices and perspectives.

Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials: case study; personal experience; introspection; life story; interview; artifacts; cultural texts and productions; and observational, historical, interactional, and visual texts that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). The qualitative approach provided me the opportunity to look more closely at the students' perspectives and insights through an examination of their written work, photo documentation, and oral feedback through the exit interview process. Through my role in developing and coordinating a study abroad program for five years, I was able to see certain patterns and experiences emerge. Through this qualitative approach, I obtained data that provided rich and vivid details about certain topics and experiences. As a result, I was able to seek patterns that emerged through the data.

Case Study Approach. The case study approach provided the best vehicle for me to study and explore the role of reflection in the students processing of the experience. The case study approach allowed me to focus on the particular area and, with this data, provide an explanation of what I was trying to address. Yin (2009) defines the scope of a case study and provides a technical definition for case studies. The case study inquiry

Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result; relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result; benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 18).

Yin (2009) argues that such a definition signals that the case study is all encompassing.

Merriam (1998) notes that case studies are different from other types of qualitative research in that they are “intensive descriptions and analysis of a single unit or bounded system. Qualitative case studies in education are often framed with the concepts, models, and theories from a variety of disciplines” (p. 19). She continues the point in emphasizing that “evaluative case studies involve description, explanation, and judgment. Case study is best because it provides thick description, is grounded, is holistic and lifelike, simplifies data to be considered by the reader, illuminates meanings, and can communicate tacit knowledge” (p. 39).

In utilizing the case study approach, Mayan (2009) stresses the importance of ensuring a methodological coherence. In this case, my study is a case study grounded in a reflection/transformation theory framework, which aligns with the research question, participants, sample size, data collection, setting, and data analysis.

Case Study Parameters. To set the parameters of the case study, I first established the boundaries of the case, which determined the research design. The boundaries “indicate what will and will not be studied in the scope of the research project” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 547). Yin and Stake (1995) suggest that placing boundaries is critical to ensure that the research stays focused on the question. Baxter and Jack (2008) provide a summary of ways that can bound a particular case study, including time and place (Creswell, 1998), time and activity (Stake, 1995), and by definition and context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). This was a bounded case study focused on the summer 2012 study abroad program and the participating students.

Case Study Design. With case study design, it was necessary to determine whether the study required a single or multiple case study design. A single case study focuses on just one particular case that takes place at a given place and time. A multiple case study focuses on more than one case, which can take place in different places and times (Baxter & Jack, 2008). This was a single case study with embedded units looking at the entire group of participants for this summer 2012.

This study was also an exploratory case study, which Yin (2003) defines as being used to explore those situations in which the case being evaluated has no clear, single set of outcomes. This case study can be considered an instrumental case study, which Stake (1995) defines as “accomplishing something other than understanding a particular situation. It provides insight into an issue or helps to refine a theory. The case is of secondary interest; it plays a supportive role, facilitating our understanding of something else” (p. 442). Baxter and Jack (2008) indicate that if the “intent is to gain insight and understanding of a particular situation or phenomenon” (p. 550), then according to Stake (1995), he would recommend that an instrumental case study be used to gain a further understanding.

The Case Study

This case study looked at the role of reflection in providing a lens into the influence of the students' experiences on their transformation and understanding. It focuses on a cohort of students who participated in the "Learning About Diversity and Social Justice – The European Perspective," study abroad program that took place in summer 2012 during a six-week period from July 9 – August 18, 2012. Summer 2012 marked the fifth anniversary of this program that started in May 2008.

During the process of putting the program together, and actually implementing it, I started to think more critically about the students' experiences and their developmental process. I witnessed firsthand what I saw as the transformation that took place from week one as the students arrived in London, to the moment when that they were ready to return home to the United States at the end of week six. I saw the students being more comfortable with their surroundings as they were less fearful of traveling by themselves, more confident in exploring unknown areas and in engaging with the general public. As I further explored this, I wondered if I was doing something specific or special to cause this change I witnessed. I started to think about the nature of my specific program and the experiences that I provided. I started to piece together a possible relationship between the assignments and the experiences, and how they came together under this program structure. The missing link seemed to be something that was visible all along, but I had never thought about it in terms of the role and importance of reflection. As I started to look back, it became clear that the common thread in all of the assignments was this distinctive reflection piece. Reflection seemed to be central to the program and crucial in serving as the vehicle that helped to accentuate the experiences for the students and in turn to influence their personal growth and development. This thought process had

evolved over time, but I did not realize it until I started to further explore the study abroad movement and the process.

Context

Places. For summer 2012, the program took place in different locations throughout Europe. The home base for the program was the King's Cross area in London, United Kingdom. The group stayed in accommodations known as NIDO Student Living. Other locations for the program included Paris, France; Madrid, Spain; Rome, Italy; Vatican City; Munich, Germany; and Prague, Czech Republic. All of these locations served as classrooms during the course of the summer program. Through these different locations, the students visited areas of Western Europe, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and Southern Europe.

Each of the selected places provided opportunities to explore the issue of diversity and social justice in different ways. Each city was distinct in terms of learning about the program's focus on issues of diversity and social justice, including immigration, socio-economic issues, religion, politics, generationalism, and freedom of speech. In addition, most of the cities, with the exception of Munich, are capital cities, giving each a different character. For each city, I provided specific guiding questions for each reflection and photo journal. It was through these assignments that I was able to collect data that addressed my research questions. Over the five-year history of the program, I have added additional cities to the schedule. This has allowed me to include other areas within Europe to ensure that I was including other aspects of Europe and not only focusing on Western Europe.

London. London, United Kingdom, served as the home base for the students and was the home away from home for the duration of the trip. Being in London allowed students to get their bearings before the group started on the respective excursions to the other places in Europe. The

program structure allowed each group to spend three to four days in the different cities, always heading back to London for the weekend. This was beneficial because the group could leave their main luggage at the home base, so they could travel lightly with carry-ons only, providing more flexibility, and saving on overall costs/expenses.

Over the duration of the study abroad program, I experimented with staying longer in different cities to explore more as well as providing more free time flexibility for the students. The schedule was to travel on a Monday, and return on a Thursday night or Friday morning. Saturdays and Sundays were open days for the students. Friday became a rest day. This schedule provided the students the flexibility to explore more of London on their own, and as a result, it became more familiar for them.

Significance. The first week in London was crucial to showcase the structure and format of the experience. In addition, it helped to prepare the students for the type of traveling schedule they would face in the program. Typically, the group gathered in the morning for discussion, dialogue, and review. Then the group would leave NIDO to explore and experience a particular area or topic, such as the British monarchy, as well as lunch. In the afternoon, the group came back to the home base (NIDO) and dined together.

The first week was a combination of different topics, such as understanding diversity, as well as exploring and better understanding London, its history, and the different Boroughs, including Great Britain, the rest of the United Kingdom, and the European Union. It provided a chance to see the key sites but also to understand their context within the focus of the program. Over the years, I included different cultural activities such as European football matches, Shakespearean performances at the Globe Theatre as well as different excursions outside London to such places as Cambridge, Dover, and Stonehenge. I included lunches at the famous Borough

Market as a way to experience and see a different side of London. In the end, students could decide if they wanted to return to those areas or explore new ones while in London.

Participants. For summer 2012, the participants consisted of eleven students, with four male-identified and seven female-identified students. These students represented different academic disciplines: Political Science, Business, Human Development, Geography, Studio Art, Sociology, and International Studies. All of the students came from Virginia except for one student from Massachusetts.

The following is a brief biological sketch of the participants. In lieu of using their real names, I am using pseudonyms based on the top male and female baby names from 1972.

Michelle is a white female-identified student from a middle-class background, and a junior with a major in Studio Art. She is from Virginia and has done some traveling outside of the United States to Europe during high school.

Michael is a white male-identified student from a middle-class background and a senior with a major in Business – Finance. Michael is interested in sports. Michael is from Virginia and has never traveled outside of the United States prior to the study abroad.

Lisa is a white female-identified student from a middle-class background, and a senior with a major in Sociology. She has an interested in working for the federal government. On campus, she is involved with her sorority. Lisa is from Virginia and has never traveled outside of the United States prior to the study abroad. She comes from a large family and is Christian.

Christopher is a white male-identified student from a lower/middle-class background, sophomore with a major in Geography. Christopher is interested in music. Christopher is from Virginia and his only experience outside of the United States as a trip to the Caribbean as a teenager.

Kimberly is a white female-identified student from a high/upper class family, and a senior with a major in Political Science. On campus, she is involved with her sorority. Kimberly is from Virginia and her only experience outside of the United States was a trip to Cancun, Mexico.

Amy is a white female-identified student from an upper middle-class family, and a senior with a major in Human Development. Amy is passionate about social justice issues and also involved on campus in a sorority. Amy is from Virginia but her family roots go back to Italy. Her only experience outside of the United States has been with family vacations in the Caribbean.

Angela is a white female-identified student from a middle-class family, and a senior with a major in Human Development. Angela is from Virginia and her travel experiences have included trips to Canada, Mexico, and the Bahamas.

Melissa is a white female-identified student from an upper middle-class family, and a junior with a major in International Studies. Now living in Virginia, she has lived and studied abroad during both middle school and high school. She has spent time in Southeast Asia and limited time in Europe.

James is a white male-identified student from an upper middle-class family, and a graduating senior with a major in Geography. Now living in Virginia, his family has traveled throughout Eastern Europe due to military assignments.

Stephanie is a white female-identified student from an upper-class family, and a senior with a major in Journalism. Stephanie is active on campus through her sorority. Stephanie has traveled outside of the United States to Europe to visit family and in accompanying family on business trips.

David is a male-identified student from an upper-class family, and a sophomore with a major in Political Science. David is from outside Virginia and is open about his Jewish

background and heritage. He has traveled outside of the United States to Europe and the Caribbean.

The Application Process. Students had to submit an application to participate in the program. The application process started in October 2011 and consisted of a formal written application that included short response essays followed by a formal interview. Once the students had formally applied and completed their interviews, they received their acceptance notifications. One condition of acceptance was the non-refundable payment of an initial deposit to confirm their interest.

The application period remained open until May 2012 to allow for any last minute participants, but most students had applied and accepted their offers by December 2011. Coincidentally, I had one student join the group in late May due to the cancellation of his original program since he needed the course credit to graduate. His department contacted me directly, and I agreed to accept the student.

Pre-Departure Meetings. Before the students left for the winter break in December 2011, I held the first monthly preparation meeting. These meetings allowed the students to start to get to know each other and allowed me to start the preparation process of reviewing trip dates, logistics, items to bring on the trip, and to answer questions. I held these monthly meetings during the spring 2012 semester. Since the program didn't start until the Summer II term, I communicated by email with the students during May and June with final details. This allowed me to finalize the paperwork required by Virginia Tech, and to prepare the student travel booklet with all of the itineraries and a new program workbook. When I added the additional student, I had to readjust some things to make it all work, such as purchasing additional plane tickets.

The finalization process for students was fluid since I had some students who initially applied and accepted, but dropped out due to a change in majors, loss of financial aide, or other circumstances. I also had some other students join at the latter part of the process. After a point, I had to finalize the numbers so I could confirm and finalize the trip logistics of purchasing airfare and reserving hotel rooms.

Course Registration. At the onset of the program in 2008, the Office of Provost authorized the six-credit course. Subsequently since summer 2009, it has been administered through Africana Studies in the Sociology Department and the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. From 2008 – 2012, I served as the instructor of record for the course in addition to my role as the program leader.

Setting the Parameters of the Study

During the previous four summers (2008 – 2011), I had been processing students' reactions and what I regarded as changes in perspective, all of which helped me to design this study. Summer 2012 provided the best opportunity to study this group of participants. This would be the first program during which I had formal authorization to collect data. I decided to design a qualitative study to explore the role of reflection through the different academic components. I received the official go-ahead from my committee and received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to collect the data.

As I began planning this study, I had to acknowledge aspects about my role as well as determine how the process would work. My role was not only that of the program coordinator but also as the instructor and guide for the program. I coordinated all logistical and academic aspects of the program. I taught the course, guided the discussion, and served as the tour guide for the students. It required a lot of work to stay current and be prepared.

My role as guide was to ensure that the students got to experience and see certain things that I felt were critical. I not only served as a role model for exploring, but also in learning how to navigate the respective cities so the students learned how to get back to the hotel on their own as well as how to travel on their own using various transportation systems.

I dealt with all aspects of planning, responding, and addressing student concerns and parent inquiries, and revising and adjusting schedules. During the five years, each summer group was different, and one of the key traits I needed to develop was flexibility with the schedule and with the activities. Another critical component was listening to student concerns, needs, and desires, and addressing these accordingly.

Using my Course for the Study

In regards to using my class for this study, I had to ensure that I was following the proper and appropriate IRB policies to ensure fairness. The challenge was that I would use data collected from required assignments from my own students. I needed to ensure fairness with no bias for any potential non-participants. On the first day of the program, I explained the study, gave students the informed consent form (Appendix H), and answered their questions. The students had 48 hours to review and to submit their informed consent forms in a sealed envelope to me. I affirmed that I would not open the envelopes until after the conclusion of the program and the submission of the final grades. This provided the assurance that student grades would not be affected by their decision to participate or not participate in the study. The only impact on their grades would be if they did not complete the required assignments for the course. As a result, during the entire duration of the program, I did not know if the students had given their consent.

Data Collection

The data included student reflection papers, final papers, photo journals, and an exit interview. The data consisted of the following: five weekly photo journals with five photos each and a description, five weekly reflection papers, one final paper, and one exit interview for each student in the program. I analyzed the data to inform my study of the role of reflection.

Overview of the Academic Assignments

As part of the study broad program, I initially developed a set of academic assignments. I sought ways to make the experience meaningful for the students, as well as to provide the necessary academic rigor. Today, five years later, these assignments have become central to the intentionality of the experience. This strategy is valuable in explaining the influence that reflection has on the students' experiences. While these academic assignments may seem basic within the context of the program, they provide the basis for guiding the students to analyze their own experiences.

Photo Diary/Journal. The first assignment was a weekly photo diary. Students took and submitted five photos based on a specific topic. At least three of the photos were required to be from the location for that week, while the other two could be from elsewhere. The students posted the photos and described why they took them. Through the online website for the course, the entire group was able to review all of the submitted photos. The students had one week to take and submit their photos.

The inspiration for this activity came from the movie *Born into Brothels* (Kauffman, Briski, Dreyfous, Boll, Baker, & McDowell, 2005). This 2004 documentary describes the work of Zana Briski in her study of the red light districts in Calcutta, India. She provided cameras to

children of mothers working in brothels as a way to gain an insight into their lives. When I saw the documentary, I wanted to replicate this powerful strategy in my own course.

Digital cameras and smart phones have made this activity easier. I found that this activity made the students more intentional about focusing on what they were looking at, and what they were capturing through their images. The students had flexibility in the types of photos they could take within the established guidelines.

Reviewing the photos provided a vivid picture of the diversity of images captured and provided evidence of how the students were becoming aware of and capturing the world around them. The photos provided insight into what each student was thinking about, how they were interpreting the assignment, and how they regarded the issue/topic.

Weekly Reflection. The second assignment was the weekly reflection paper, in which the students responded to a distinct short answer question in two pages. This assignment allowed for both valuable reflection and critical writing to take place. The question related to the topics discussed during a specific week. This reflection allowed the students to review what they had learned and experienced and provided an opportunity to share with me as the instructor.

These writings provided important evidence that helped gauge the impact of the experience on the student. In developing the questions, I tried to keep them relevant to the week by making the students think about a specific issue. The writings also helped to shape the overall planning in terms of making adjustments and modifications. It was also important for me to hear the individual students' voice in their writings as a way to better understand their feelings and understanding.

Table 3.1 Locations and Topics

Week	City/Location	Topic
1	London, United Kingdom	Experience of coming over to London
2	Paris, France	Immigration
3	Madrid, Spain	Socio-economic challenges
4	Rome, Italy and Vatican City	Religion and Politics
5	Munich, Germany and Prague, Czech Republic	Freedom of Speech

Current Events Discussion. The academic assignments included a daily discussion of current events taking place throughout the trip. This provided greater awareness by the students of their surroundings. In addition, it was a way for the students to be more open about what was happening in the distinct areas of the trip, but also about what was happening back home. The discussions allowed the students to gain an appreciation about what was taking place in their local surroundings, especially in the United Kingdom and particularly in London. The students read the latest news online or in print form. The students came prepared to share what they had read or seen, and I would supplement with additional headlines as needed. The group then talked about the impact of that story and its potential relevance to the overall theme of diversity and social justice.

Discussion through Major/Discipline Lens. One of the goals of the program was to have an effect on the students' academic and career goals. In this light, I asked the students to share their thoughts about their visits to the cities through the lenses of their majors. This allowed them to articulate in their own words the influence of an activity on their major, and it

also allowed the entire group to gain a better understanding about that major. This made the reflection and discussion much more substantive, and it reinforced the relationship of the experience with their majors. In some respects, this allowed for deeper insight into the outside activities the students were engaged in.

Final Paper. The last academic assignment was the final paper. In lieu of a traditional final exam or research paper, the final paper was a deeper reflection paper responding to a series of questions that related to the whole experience. It gave me an opportunity to gauge the learning and influence of the experience on the students and to get their feedback on their own changes in perspective. I gave them the assignment for the final paper toward the middle of the program. It was due after the students returned home so they had time to reflect. This return home was a part of the assignment. The final paper reflected any transformation that might have taken place in the students, as they reflected about what they learned, did not learn, what they liked, did not like, and so on. For each student, the papers showcased their thoughts about their experiences.

Exit Interview. The final data collection activity was an individual exit interview with each student. This provided an opportunity for me as instructor to interact with each student one last time before starting the departure preparations. It was an opportunity for me to ask a series of questions and to get feedback from the students. While group processing took place, the one-on-one provided a more candid and open space for the sharing of thoughts and perspectives. Typically, these exit interviews took place during the last days in London and often lasted between fifteen and thirty minutes. I tended to focus on questions that were not a part of the final paper. I took notes on each interview with the student participants and tried to keep the questions consistent throughout the process. This exit interview also allowed me an opportunity to touch base with the students on their final travel arrangements and any other information. These exit

interviews provided significant valuable insight and perspective that helped to shape subsequent trips.

How do these fit in. As I developed these academic assignments, I needed to ensure that they would align with the goals of the program, which focused on the role of experiencing and witnessing diversity and social justice topics. I attempted to create a combination of discussions, experiences, and reflection that helped students. The concept of a traditional classroom expanded to include the actual cities themselves.

For example, in London, the group met in one of the student lounges to start the day. I began the discussion with current events and I addressed the agenda for the day. I focused on the main discussion for that day, such as the British monarchy. At the conclusion of the discussion, the group explored and witnessed that specific topic. This allowed the city to become the true classroom setting or living-laboratory for the experience. In turn, this brought the discussion into focus, made it more real for the students, and allowed the students to experience the topic for discussion to gain a better understanding of the issue.

I used this approach in each destination and throughout the whole trip, both as the group visited sites and during the group meals. In this respect, the cities became the learning canvas for the group. While potentially too intense or too chaotic, this structure provided an opportunity to take advantage of the short time we had to get the maximum out of the experiences.

During this experiential learning, the group took photos for their photo diaries, took notes for their reflection journals, and collected their thoughts for the discussions per their majors. This experiential learning approach was central to the whole experience. Not all of their time was structured. The students had free time in each city and on the weekends in London, to do their own activities. This provided a nice balance between the structured and unstructured activities.

Written Artifacts

As noted above, the bulk of the data came from the analysis of the written documents produced by the students. These written documents included the weekly reflection paper, photo journals and final reflection paper. In looking at the data that is collected, it is important to note that Bogdan and Biklen (1992) refer to personal documents as “any first person narrative that describes an individual’s actions, experiences, or beliefs” (p. 132). Merriam (1998) notes that such could include diaries, home videos, photo albums, and travel logs. With this study, most of the data collection was in the form of personal documents that also fall under the category of researcher-generated documents (p. 118).

In addition, Harrison (2002) notes that photographs are a form of storytelling, exploring narrative, and providing insight into memory and identity construction. He also notes that the research process can lead to the production of photographic images, such as research-generated photo diaries.

For this case study, the program assignments are researcher-generated documents. Merriam (1998) notes that researcher-generated documents are those prepared by the researcher or for the researcher by participants after the study has begun. Merriam indicates that the “specific purpose of generating documents is to learn more about the situation, person, or event being investigated” (p. 119). Yin (2009) argues that the various sources of evidence are “highly complementary” and that a “good case study will therefore want to use as many sources as possible” (p. 101). These sources need to be aligned with the overarching objective of the study and the research questions.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, I performed a content analysis on the written reflection journals, photo journals, final reflection and exit interview notes. This required the following: copying and reading through the materials while making brief notes in the margins, going through the notes in the margins and listing the different types of information (Merriam, 1998); reading through the list and coding each item in a way that offers a description of what it is about (Mayan, 2009); identifying whether or not the categories can be linked in any way and list them as a major or minor category to develop themes; and comparing and contrasting the various categories (University of Surrey, n.d.).

I followed the above steps for each set of items (written reflection, photo journal, final paper, and exit interview notes). After going through each of the items, I collected all of the categories and examine each in detail and consider if it fits and its relevance to the study (University of Surrey, n.d.). Once all of the items had been analyzed and sorted into the categories, I did a verification to ensure that the items are properly categorized (Merriam, 1998). At this point, I reviewed all of the categories and determine if some of the categories can be merged or if they need to be sub-categories (Mayan, 2009; Merriam, 1998). I understood that the process of content analysis would be lengthy and may require that as the researcher, I needed to assess the data carefully to ensure that I had done a thorough job of the analysis (Mayan, 2009). In the end, I had a data analysis that provided insight into the written reflection papers, photo journal, final paper and exit interview, as well as the whole set of items. This analysis also included a pre and post comparison on some of the students' written work.

Merriam (1998) indicates that content analysis is the primary means for the analysis of documents used within most qualitative case studies. Mayan (2009) further describes content

analysis as “latent” and a “process of identifying, coding, and categorizing the primary patterns in the data” (p. 94). I used the student-generated materials as a primary form of data collection. Merriam (1998) notes that there are both advantages and disadvantages to relying on this type of data. Some of the disadvantages include the fact the documents are not necessarily research documents. Issues with the determination of authenticity and accuracy, material may potentially be incomplete (Merriam, 1998). Nonetheless, Merriam (1998) notes that there are advantages to the usage of documents such as in such cases when “it appears they (i.e. the documents) will yield better data or more data...than other tactics” (p. 125) and that documents may be the “only means of studying certain problems” (p. 125). She also points to the fact that the presence of the researcher does not “alter what is being studied” (p. 126).

Nonetheless, Merriam (1998) points out that the treatment of data from documents can be the same as that for data from interviews or other type of observations. She notes that “personal documents” (p. 116) are a reliable source of data concerning a person’s attitudes, beliefs, and views of the world.

In terms of the analysis of the data, Merriam (1998) indicates that the researcher is experiencing both data collection and analysis throughout the whole process. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggest trying out ideas and themes, playing with metaphors and concepts, and having a grasp of the literature. Yin (2009) suggests that the researcher rely on pattern matching, explanation building, time-series analysis, logic models, and a cross-case synthesis.

Throughout the analysis of the data, Merriam emphasizes the importance of categories and their development. Categories are a critical part of the step-by-step process for analysis. Merriam (1998) notes that the “names of the categories” need to come from at “least three sources: the researcher, the participants, and [sic] sources outside of the study such as the

literature” (p. 182). I, as a researcher, need to be careful in merely selecting a category because it is part of a theory (Merriam, 1998). Merriam also notes some critical guidelines, in using categories. Categories need to reflect the purpose of the research, and they should be exhaustive, mutually exclusive, and sensitizing. The category name aligns with the type of data in that category and conceptually congruent.

Mayan (2009) mentions that categories can fall into two distinct areas, and be judged as having either internal homogeneity or external homogeneity. Internal homogeneity refers to the individual categories. Mayan asks the following question related to internal homogeneity: “Do all of the data reflect the category and fit nicely into it?” (p. 97). External homogeneity refers to the relationship among the categories. Mayan poses the question: “Are they [the categories] all distinct and separate?” (p. 97). She notes that the difference between the categories needs to be clear and apparent.

I used all of the collected data and I coded the materials according to different themes and organizing them into categories (Mayan, 2009, Merriam, 1998). Mayan (2009) notes that themes are “thoughts or processes that weave throughout and tie the categories together” (p. 97). Coding is the method of connecting data, issues, interpretations, data sources, and report writing (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Yin (2009) argues that a high quality analysis follows four principles: 1) analysis of all the evidence; 2) addressing all rival interpretations; 3) addressing the most significant aspect of the case study; 4) usage of prior, expert knowledge in the case study.

Usage of Reflection

As I examined the students’ reflections, I was looking for common themes and threads. These common themes and threads may include areas such as cultural experiences, crisis/unexpected situations, learning opportunities, and student initiatives, which are themes that

emerged as I reviewed the prior four study abroad sessions. In this process, I began to examine the reflections using some of the different theoretical descriptions that I discovered in the review of the literature on reflection and critical reflection. For example, what are examples of critical reflection in the students' writings? This allowed me to test the theories within the literature about the possible differences in the types of reflection that the students undertook during the summer 2012 experience. In addition, this could provide greater insight into which areas of reflection a study abroad experience can have the greatest influence on for the participants.

Interpreting the Data

In terms of interpreting the data, it was essential that I reflected on and reviewed the analysis constantly. As I went through each step of the content analysis process, I needed to reflect and revise accordingly. As I developed the common themes, I needed to be mindful of the parameters of my study in terms of the research questions. In light of using different sources to collect the data, this allowed me to understand what took place in terms of the students' experiences and reflection within the study abroad.

Presenting the Case Study

I provided historical examples as a way to provide a glimpse into the components of the case study. I included actual items from the different written artifacts from the student participants including the reflection papers, the final reflection, from my exit interview notes, and include aspects of the photo journals. The main goal through the case study was to focus on the voice of the student participants as a way to understand their reflections on what they experienced during the study abroad program.

Trustworthiness

As with any qualitative study, there are factors that I must consider in terms of the trustworthiness of the data. Merriam (1998) reiterates the importance of the audit trail so that other scholars can trace the process the researcher used to conduct and assess the study. This audit trail is critical in the potential replication of the study and as a way to study the real result, as a way to “authenticate” (p. 207).

One of the other factors is ensuring the trustworthiness of the data, which is associated with the concept of internal validity. Merriam (1998) notes that internal validity deals with how the findings of the research match “reality” (p. 203). This raises the question of my role as researcher and the steps that I have taken to ensure that I properly accounted for biases.

Reliability

In terms of reliability, the main pioneers of this work were Lincoln and Guba (1985), who argued that the notion of reliability with regard to instrumentation could be applied to qualitative case studies similar to its meanings in traditional research (Merriam, 1998). Merriam explains that by using various techniques of analysis and triangulation, a researcher can assess the reliability of documents and personal accounts. She notes that it is impossible to replicate the exact results of a qualitative study in the traditional sense of research and will not yield the same results. She argues that this does not “discredit the results” (p. 206). Instead, she argues it is possible to have several interpretations of the data until the data are disproven.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest that researchers look at reliability through the lenses of “dependability” and/or “consistency.” Merriam (1998) points out that this changes the traditional paradigm from “demanding that outsiders get the same results” to one in which the outsiders

“concur that, given the data collected, the results make sense” and that they are “consistent and dependable” (p. 206).

In order to ensure that the results are dependable, Merriam (1998) argues that the researcher must clarify their position in terms of “their assumptions and theory behind the study”, articulate how they will triangulate the data as this “strengthens reliability as well as internal validity” and the clear described concept of the audit trail (p. 204).

Conclusion

This chapter provided a road map for how I developed and analyzed the case study conducted on the summer 2012 program. I remain cognizant of my research question, constantly seeking to understand the role reflection played in helping students to change their perspectives during a study abroad experience. Chapter 4 presents the findings from the case study. Chapter 5 discusses the interpretation of the data and considers the implications from the findings.

Chapter 4

FINDINGS

Introduction

In this chapter, I present the findings from my data analysis through the presentation of quotations from the student reflections, and I formally interpret the findings in chapter 5. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of reflection in the academic components that help to shape the experiences of students participating in a short-term study abroad program. This case study focuses on the students that enrolled in “Learning about Diversity and Social Justice – The European Perspective” during summer 2012.

There were a total of eleven students enrolled in the class, consisting of four male-identified and seven female-identified students. For purposes of this study, I used pseudonyms (top baby names for 1972 in the male and female categories) to mask the students’ true identities when I share their own words in the findings.

Over the duration of this summer period, the students were engaged in a variety of academic activities which included photo journals, weekly reflection papers, their final paper, and an exit interview. At the conclusion of the course, the students as a whole had submitted 269 photos, 54 weekly reflections, 10 final papers, and 11 exit interviews. These items provided the basis for the items used in the data analysis.

As described in chapter 3, the data analysis involved the review of each of the components. I identified key words, which became categories, and this led to the formation of overarching themes. After looking at each of the components, I then brought all components together. The data led to the emergence of two main prevailing themes: self-awareness and visibility and presence. While the two prevailing themes are related to each other, each highlights

a different facet of the experiences. The following is a discussion of the findings with supporting quotations from the students' writings so that the student voices can be heard. In the process of sharing the student quotations, I am quoting directly from the students' words without correcting grammar or spelling.

It is critical to understand that these quotations were responses to questions that I posed for the different reflection papers. While there was no wrong or right answer, my main focus was to get an understanding about how the students' felt about the experience and to garner their particular viewpoint.

I realize that the quotations by themselves, without the context about the nature of the question and information about the student, could give the impression that the students are making sweeping generalizations about certain topics. This is not the intent or focus of this effort, but rather to gain a glimpse into what the students were saying and seeing things as they responded to the questions. As I highlight the quotations, I am also providing some brief background and context about the student.

Themes

Theme #1: Self-Awareness

I define self-awareness as the students' self-awareness of their own reactions as they observed and reacted to things (i.e. events, objects, people, and concepts). From the selected quotations, this provides a glimpse into how the students' viewpoints might have changed. To illustrate the theme of self-awareness, I shared insights provided by the students' in the different categories that emerged. Whether it was addressing arrival, understanding language, or religion, all of these categories comprise the aspects that are a part of the theme of self-awareness. The

findings provide an opportunity to gain an insight into how the students' responded about certain situations and experiences, and how they understood themselves.

Arrival. The arrival into London from the United States was an experience that proved to be an important moment for the student participants. The students were responsible for traveling to London on their own for the start of the program. The responses were a result of the initial reflection question, which asked the following: *In this first reflection, talk about why you wanted to participate in this Study Abroad and describe your feelings as you arrived into Heathrow and traveling to Nido. As you talk about your feelings, describe what you observed. Did anything catch your eye? What was different from what you are used to?*

Here are two experiences that provide a glimpse into the importance for the students:

The first trip on the Underground was exhilarating! I was so enthralled with all the different accents and languages that I heard, the fashion of everyone on the train and the little towns we drove through. (Lisa, reflection paper 1)

For Lisa, this was the first time that she had traveled outside of the United States. In getting to know her, I am not surprised that she focused on the accents and fashion. In later experiences, Lisa would be challenged to participate outside of her comfort zone.

By the time I arrived in Heathrow, I feel as though if I were to have looked at my smile in a mirror, it would have been ear to ear. I wasn't smiling at anything in particular, but was simply bursting with excitement. I enjoyed watching all of the people in the airport traveling for business, pleasure, or to see families for the first time who knows how long. They all had different purpose and ending destinations but in that travel day they had all

converged on this same place. I felt a part of something bigger. Maybe it was a sense of worldly citizenship that had never occurred to me before? Maybe I simply enjoy watching the world move in front of me? (Christopher, reflection paper 1)

For Christopher, he would be the first in his family to travel outside of the United States. This reflection provides a glimpse into how he was trying to understand and take in the experience. Over the course of the program, he provided distinct insights to the experiences. He was more of a free-spirit and from a lower-middle class background.

Understanding Language. Another category that emerged was how the students' understood language and how they felt about not being proficient in a language or familiar with a language. In response to the reflection question for the visit to Paris: *After spending the first week in London, we ventured into the European mainland with your first excursion to Paris, France. As you prepare your paper, consider your experiences in Paris and answer the following questions: 1) What strikes you about Paris compared to London (beyond the language)? 2) What is your impression of the French? Do they live up to the stories? 3) How are the immigration issues manifested? What did you see or not see?* I examine the students' perspectives on stereotypes later on this chapter. In responding to the above question, one of the students shared the following:

Not being able to speak French quickly labeled me as a tourist. I think Parisians are weary towards tourists and treat them differently. (Michelle, reflection paper 2)

For Michelle, she had traveled to Paris during High School but this time around, it was a different experience for her. She was able to see things differently as indicated in terms of how she felt because of her lack of French speaking skills.

I definitely have a new respect for people traveling out of their comfort zones and into a new place with a different language because of this. (Lisa, reflection paper 2)

As noted earlier, Lisa had never traveled outside of the United States, so the experience in Paris was completely new. The reflection points to her beginning to understand the role of travel and what it means.

Socioeconomic. Another category that emerged was that the focus and location of a particular experience or visit led to different perceptions and understandings about an issue. During the visit to Madrid, the focus was on understanding the role of socio-economic situations on diversity. The question for this particular visit was the following: *Over the past three weeks, you have had the opportunity to visit and explore the three largest cities within Europe. During this time, you have experienced first-hand the day-to-day life of the average person. With the news of the ongoing global economic crisis, I want you to reflect upon the situations that you observed. In this case, consider what you have observed in Madrid and how have you seen the socioeconomic component manifest themselves. Possible approaches could be looking at prices in the stores, public work projects, and activities taking place in the market areas or other*

observations. How do these socio-economic components compare to those in Paris or London, or even back home in the United States? What can we learn from the Madrid experience?

For the students, this led to the following:

Being a visitor in a city or country that is poorer or in this case in the middle of hard times makes you appreciate what you have at home. It makes you realize that some people that bear the hardships more obviously than others during economic recessions.

(Michael, reflection paper 3)

For Michael, this reflection provides an insight into how he was starting to understand what he was witnessing. This student, who was a Business major, saw things from a different lens. This reflection raises an awareness into what is seen and not seen when it comes to economic hardships.

Even in the days I spent in Madrid following the meeting at the embassy, I still did not catch on. It is only now, as I recollect on my three days there that I begin to put some of the clues together that suggest the economic health of Spain is poorer than what initially meets the eye. (Christopher, reflection paper 3)

For Christopher, the reflection became that a-ha moment that put together the context of the experience. The meeting at the Embassy was a briefing by the economic attaché in the United States Embassy in Madrid. As noted earlier, he had never traveled outside of the United States so he was seeing and experiencing things under a different light.

But the question that I struggled with the entire time we were in Madrid was, what can be done to help? (Kimberly, reflection paper 3)

In terms of Kimberly, this reflection begins to challenge her and her privilege. Kimberly represents a high socioeconomic background and a privileged lifestyle compared to others. Her response begins to show her struggle in trying to understand the situation. I do not believe that she was ever asked what could be done to help before.

Religion. During the visit to Rome, students were asked to look at the role of religion and politics. The question centered on the following question: *This week brings you to a place that has been at the forefront of significant historical events. One of the more challenging areas of diversity is religion and religious belief/freedom. In the United States for example, we have the freedom of religion (the right to choose how and when/who we worship). How have you seen religion manifested during these past few weeks in Europe? What has or has not surprised you? Is religious diversity important? Please provide examples and explain. You can compare and contrast between cities, countries, etc.*

This led to a variety of perspectives such as:

With a past so deeply rooted in Christianity, it is easy to make non-Catholics feel like outsiders in their own society considering the main tourist scene and production of revenue for the city comes from religious monuments. (Amy, reflection paper 4)

Amy was a student passionate about social justice issues and provided a different perspective when she reflected on her experiences. In this particular piece, one can see her thinking about

the area of inclusion when all of the outward appearances are toward a certain religious framework.

If I lived in Rome I know I would feel like an outsider within my own country and that does hinder diversity for the city and it seems like it is the city's prerogative to keep it that way. (David, reflection paper 4)

For David, the visit to Rome provided a different meaning due to his Jewish background. The student's perspective of feeling as an outsider is a powerful one.

Religious diversity and freedom is important because it helps people with different perspectives to coexist. People have their own beliefs that come from their religion but obviously there is not one correct religion. The important thing we gain from religion as a society are morals of right and wrong. Individually we get answers to tough questions like why we are here. Religious diversity and freedom help us accept others. (Michael, reflection paper 4)

Michael provided a different response to the reflection about religion. While the earlier reflections focused on leaving individuals out, this reflection shows the student's perspective about the value of different faith-based traditions.

Another religious aspect I noticed specifically in Rome is how commercialized the religion had become. To this, this connects church and state more than it should. (Angela, reflection paper 4)

Angela provides a different insight into the role of religion and its commercialization.

Religion is a little more subtle in the other cities that we went to. In England religion doesn't seem to be nearly as influential in daily life, except for in tradition. Tradition I believe plays a large role in religion being part of the people's lives in England, specifically the government. This is mainly because the Queen is also the head of the church and as such everything is about the King (Queen) and Country and God Save the Queen. (James, reflection paper 4)

James provides a different take on the role of religion in the United Kingdom. Some would argue that this is a gross generalization, but shows how he was trying to make a connection about the United Kingdom compared to Rome.

On the other hand in the United States of America people are free to choose their religion because our country is not founded on religion. For that being a member of a minority religion is never awkward nor do I feel like I am being a traitor to our country because of it. (David, reflection paper 4)

David, who was open about his Jewish background, provides another powerful reflection about the role and power of religion. Earlier he wrote about being an outsider in Rome, and then further illustrates that concept. This reflection mirrors the current discussion about what it means to be a Muslim in the United States.

Expression. During the visit to Prague, students were asked to look at the role of freedom of speech and diversity. The reflection question was: *This final week brings us to Prague via Munich in the heart of Bohemia in Central Europe. Prague has been the political, cultural and economic center of the Czech state for over 1,100 years. It has seen its share of hardships and has been occupied by foreign forces during this time and most recently Nazi Germany in 1939 and the reoccupation by the Soviets during the Prague Spring of 1968. The first democratic and free elections took place in 1990 following the Velvet Revolution of late 1989. For this reflection paper, I want you to focus on the issue of freedom of speech and thought. Often times in the diversity conversation, we tend to marginalize those that express different opinions or take on different stances. It can be very easy to fall into the trap of not acknowledging their rights of expression. How have you seen issues of speech and thought manifested in Prague? Can you still see the impacts of the communist era on the city? How does Prague feel to you in terms of its openness? You are more than welcome to compare and contrast between cities, countries, etc.*

This led to perspectives about the role of expression and its impact/role:

Thus, the markers of where they burned themselves and the memorial cross that is faded away are symbols of the plight to earn freedom of speech and expression and they are

valued by the citizens of the city of Prague and the country of the Czech Republic.

(David, reflection paper 5)

For David, this reflection captures, in a basic sense, the value of symbols and what it means to fight for freedom of speech and expression.

The Jewish Quarter, however, was a reminder that the Czech Republic has not always been this flexible to change. It was heartbreaking to see the art from the Jewish children, which was meant to take their mind off of the war but the war was still tangible and representative in their artwork. Expression can be a symbol of freedom, but can also be a stark reminder of what can so easily be taken away. (Stephanie, reflection paper 5)

Of all of the students, Stephanie was perhaps the most distant in terms of trying to understand the experiences. However, over the course of the summer, certain things resonated with her. This reflection provides a glimpse into her feelings and perspectives that was not seen in other areas as she found a connection to Prague.

Throughout Madrid, there was a huge amount of graffiti as well which I honestly had not expected. I think that shows just how much the economic crisis has hurt the youth of Spain because it's usually young people who take to graffiti for various reasons. (Melissa, reflection paper 3)

Melissa provides an interesting take on graffiti and who is to blame. This reflects a United States-centered bias that only young people can do graffiti.

I saw vandalism in Prague as more of an artistic expression than graffiti. The large murals on the sides of building that we saw were masterpieces that could be displayed in museums. I could not help but notice that the graffiti in Prague evoked me to think about what I was seeing rather than be disgusted that someone has ruined a previously clean street sign. (Amy, reflection paper 5)

Amy's reflection illustrates the role of perspective and context in trying to understand vandalism and graffiti. This reflection provides a glimpse into her personal dilemma in trying to understand the meaning behind graffiti rather than the traditional perspective of it being seen as vandalism.

Patriotism. The program also took place while London was hosting the Summer Olympic Games and this provided a unique opportunity for the students. In the final paper, the students were asked about the Olympic Games: *You have experienced being in an Olympic host city during the games, what was this experience like? What did you do to participate? What did you observe?* The Olympics brought up a range of thoughts for the students, which focused on their views on patriotism:

I felt it was just as important to root for the home team not to mention a nation that we grew to call home during the six weeks as it was to root for the U.S. At the beginning of

this trip, I would not have understood what it meant to feel pride for another country almost as much as I feel proud to be an American. (Amy, final paper)

For Amy, this reflection provides a powerful insight into the influence of the Olympic Games. This shows that the student is aware that they themselves have altered their perspective by supporting other countries.

I saw pride on people's faces when their country won and although the city was very disrupted by the Games, Londoners generally seemed proud of the fact. (Melissa, final paper)

Melissa had prior experience traveling in Asia but had not traveled in Europe. Her reflection captures the duality of the Olympic experience, the positives of competition, and the challenges with hosting the games.

I remember we were in London on the day of the opening ceremonies and there was just an absolute fervor in the crowds. People were just excited to have something to come together and root for. (Michael, final paper)

For Michael, his reflection captures his viewpoint of the excitement of the crowd but also his own experience of awe. It turns out that he was a huge sports fan and later in the summer, he would go to the British Open golf tournament.

The Art of Travel. As the students were writing about the influence of this experience, the art of travel was one that emerged as the students were responding to this question in the final paper: *How have you grown as an individual as a result of this experience?* Students shared their thoughts about their comfort level with traveling:

I have grown in my confidence in my abilities to travel around a foreign country by myself. (Melissa, final paper)

For Melissa, who had traveled before, the experience was transformative in terms of self-confidence. As seen in this reflection, she acknowledges a confidence in her abilities to travel. This was a confidence that was not there in the beginning of the experience.

I feel a lot more confident now in terms of finding my way through foreign lands that I did prior to this trip. I think I have become a more observant and aware traveler, which I know will help me for years to come. (Amy, final paper)

For Amy, her reflection points to specific examples of growth as seen in being more observant and aware of surroundings. In other reflections, this student talks about finding her own voice within the group, and how this was a struggle for her due to past relationships where she felt that her voice was stifled.

Another student provided a different spin on travel by stating,

While the traveling didn't change me, experiencing cultures widely different than some of the ones I already knew certainly did. Each gave me a new perspective into how people live their lives which changes how one views their own life. (James, final paper)

James had experience traveling in Eastern Europe due to his family being in the military. He provided a different vantage point in terms of how he viewed and understood the experiences. In this set of reflections, he was the only one that focused on something other than just traveling, but on experiencing cultures (i.e. immersion efforts) and how these experiences shape personal views.

Post-Program. Post-program refers to those experiences and feelings that happened as the students' were traveling back home and were already in the United States. In the final reflection, students were asked, *"In your first journal, you write about your experience coming over to London. How do you feel now in terms of heading back home?"* Here are some of the responses:

Additionally, I would have to agree with the article that you sent to the group as far as having issues adapting back into my everyday life at home. My family was so excited to see me and hear about my trip, but the biggest issue I have run into is that I feel like I changed so much as a person and my friends and family, since they did not have that experience with me, are the same and view me as the same person. (Lisa, final paper)

As I look back, Lisa was one of the students who began to better understand the meaning of the experiences. This particular reflection provides an insight into how she understood the

information that was shared in class and how she came to understand the concept. This reflection shows that she sees a difference in herself as a result of her experiences.

Now that I am heading home, I really appreciate European culture instead of trying to fight and missing the United States. (Melissa, final paper)

Melissa was one of the quieter students during the experience. This reflection provides a glimpse into her own struggles, which she never shared in other reflections or conversations. Her acknowledgment of these struggles is a reminder of being homesick.

Heading back home, I feel a variety of emotions. It is very bittersweet to be leaving this experience. I will also hold fond memories of this experience and the way it brought a group of people together with a special bond we wouldn't have had otherwise. (Amy, final paper)

For Amy, she became more engaged with the group as the experience progressed throughout the summer. This allowed me to better understand what she was looking for from this experience. This particular reflection highlights her emotions and feelings about how the experiences shaped her and the development of that bond. This bond is something that I had observed with previous groups.

Importance. The theme of self-awareness is significant because it helps to illustrate in a more tangible way, how the students were understanding and explaining their perspectives. By

using the different categories mentioned above including arrival, socioeconomic, religion, and expression, this provides an opportunity to highlight how distinct aspects of the experience are all interconnected. While each category could be seen as an overarching theme, it would fail to show the broader interconnection of the elements. While the students are not experts, their perspectives provide clues into how they are trying to make meaning of the different aspects of the experience. This self-awareness is essential for the experiences to have an influence on the students.

Theme #2: Visibility and Presence

The next emerging theme is that of visibility and presence. I define visibility and presence as how the students' viewed the visibility of certain things and their particular presence in relationship to the surrounding area, as well as how the students' viewed their own visibility and own presence in that specific time and place. To better highlight the theme of visibility and presence, I share some of the insights provided by the students in the categories that were prevalent. These categories include but are not limited to arrival, interactions, stereotypes, global understanding. The findings provide an opportunity to gain an insight into how the students saw their place in the environment.

I acknowledge that this concept of visibility and presence may be problematic as it appears that through the quotations that sweeping generalizations are made. My main goal was for the students to provide their viewpoint into what they were seeing and experiencing. It was not intended to diminish or "other" the experiences of the local citizens or to place the students above the locals. If anything the students had a privilege in being able to share their viewpoints and thoughts, and the privilege of being able to leave a particular environment.

Arrival. As noted earlier, the arrival in London was an important moment for the students. While the arrival was, for some students, a critical self-awareness piece, it also was a valuable visibility and presence moment as well. The following captures those feelings that were written as a response to the initial reflection question noted earlier:

Emerging from the King's Cross St. Pancras Underground station and first glimpsing the amazing city took my breath away. It was all I could do to not yell "Wow" aloud.

Stepping further into the city, we were both grinning widely as I realized I actually made it! I'm in London! (Angela, reflection paper 1)

For Angela, this reflection provides a powerful statement about place and visibility. It captures the student's genuine excitement about being here in London for the first time.

Walking off the flight I began to feel like an 8 year old walking around an uncharted territory. I became extremely observant and aware of my surroundings studying signs, advertisements, and people's facial expressions. I engulfed myself with my surroundings and decided this is how I wanted to live for the next six weeks, walking slowly and observing as much as possible. (David, reflection paper 1)

David would become an informal leader among his peers in the group. He was more open to things and not afraid to voice his opinion. This reflection, at the onset of the experience, provides valuable insight into how he was going to be present and visible throughout the summer.

Interactions – Positive and Negative. Throughout the six weeks, students were interacting and engaging with people on a variety of levels, whether it was through casual conversations, being a tourist, customer service, and business transactions or by being in a particular place and time. One of the patterns was in how the interactions were perceived as some were seen as positive and some were negative. Here is a snapshot of how the students' described their positive interactions:

In response to the reflection about the experience in London:

The three of us then bought day passes for the underground, which was my first experience using UK cash. I handed the worker a Euro on accident but he was very nice and explained to me what the right currency looks like. (Amy, reflection paper 1)

Amy provides a reflection about an interaction she had upon their arrival into London. For her, this was a whole new experience in dealing with foreign currency and managing to get from the airport to Central London.

In a response to the reflection about Paris:

In one experience, we met two Parisian college students who were very interested in learning about America, our group, the experience we were having in Paris, offering us advice and even teaching us a few phrases in French. They were very understanding with our inability to speak their language and were not offended when we could only communicate with them in English. They were very laid back and by the end of the night we all had great laughs with each other. (Lisa, reflection paper 2)

For Lisa, the experience in Paris was a true learning experience on many levels as she was forced to get out of her comfort zone. This reflection highlights one of the positive interactions that she had and how it made her feel. This reflection also provides a fascinating glimpse into how the students were interacting with others when they were by themselves.

One night one waiter even went to so far as to keep the restaurant open for us, recommended a wine and then gave a recommendation for a wine shop nearby. The shopkeeper within the shop could barely speak any English but was extremely helpful in picking out wine that there did not seem to be any language barrier. (James, reflection paper 2)

For James, this reflection provides a glimpse into how they and others managed to communicate with others while in Paris. In the end, this reflection reinforces the value of such experiences even though there were clear obstacles.

In a response to the reflection about Madrid:

Madrid was an amazing experience for me! The energy of the people was a complete 180 degree difference from Paris, where I didn't feel welcomed at all. In Madrid, I was asked many times where I am from, If I like Spain, how long I was going to be there, where I was going next, etc. (Stephanie, reflection paper 3)

As noted earlier, Stephanie was perhaps the most critical of any experience due to her overall attitude and demeanor. She also comes from a background of privilege. However, in this reflection, one begins to see her lower her defensiveness and acknowledges the positive nature of this experience for her. There is a language and tone that is more positive, which was lacking in prior reflections.

Here is a snapshot of how the students' described their negative interactions:

I felt uncomfortable at some of the restaurants I ate in because the wait staff and owners were quite snooty and almost acted like I was inconveniencing them. I was not prepared for this reaction to customers in a restaurant because it is so polar opposite of the "customer is always right" approach that American restaurants use. (Lisa, reflection paper 2)

As noted earlier, the city of Paris provides a set of challenges for Lisa. In this case, her reflection highlights her frustrations at some of the restaurants and trying to understand this in the form of the United States-centric lens of 'the customer is always right'. This realization was an important moment for her.

The influx of immigrants definitely negated my time in Paris as well as my overall experience in the city. I have no desire or reason to ever return to Paris again. The breaking point for me was on my last day in the city. While waiting outside of a McDonald's for [Amy] to get coffee, [Stephanie] and I saw a pack of gypsy kids literally terrorizing the streets. (Kimberly, reflection paper 2)

For Kimberly, the experience in Paris was a challenge because it took her out of her comfort zone for the first time. While London was different, this was a complete change for her. As noted earlier, she was from a high socioeconomic status and lived a privileged background. Paris exposed her to a level of diversity that was different. This reflection shows her exasperation and frustration with this particular encounter.

I felt more like a stranger in this city [Prague] than the rest. (Michael, reflection paper 5)

For Michael, this reflection is powerful because he was always open in his interactions with others during the course of the experience. This reflection highlights the struggle that he faced in trying to interact with others in Prague.

Stereotypes. One of the categories that arose was the concept of stereotypes and whether or not they were valid in describing a particular culture or people. Similar to interactions, there is a range of positive and negative viewpoints about stereotypes.

I definitely didn't think that Parisian people were any more friendly than any other city.

With every city, or country for that matter, you're going to get a wide variety of people.

(Melissa, reflection paper 3)

Melissa, who had experience living and studying abroad while in high school, provides a different reflection in this discussion of stereotypes. As she states, the Parisians are no different

than others, and that we will always experience a variety of people. Often times we forget this and instead focus on the stereotypes.

By making this inference I think it is clear why these stereotypes occur; considering we have the same stereotypes for them as they do for us. People approach others ignorantly speaking their language and expecting the person to drop everything they are doing to help them. A situation they would be insulted at if it had been reversed onto them.

(David, reflection paper 2)

David provides a powerful reflection about how and why these stereotypes may exist. He also raises a question about how one responds to such stereotypes when in a foreign country or place. Do you expect others to follow your beliefs and values? Or do you make an attempt to try to learn their respective customs? Not a lot of time is spent reflecting on this.

I like to believe that stereotypes are false and disregard individuality completely but unfortunately, the French lived up to their brash reputation. (Amy, reflection paper 2)

This reflection by Amy as seen in the context of other reflections points to the challenge that each interaction is unique and will be different. In this particular situation, she was clearly challenged in her interactions with Parisians.

Quality of Life. As the students' were experiencing daily life throughout the six weeks, they started to think about notions of quality of life and its visibility and presence. In response to the reflection question about Madrid:

In London and the U.S., I believe people are more proactive about improving their lifestyle. There are older people willing to work minimum wage positions and younger people seeking more education in order to secure jobs in their future. In Paris, I felt that people were more content with their socioeconomic status and were possibly too prideful to show their growing concern about their future. In Madrid, I felt that people were past the point of disguising their troubles and were resorting to extreme measures in order to simply get by. (Amy, reflection paper 3)

Amy provides an interesting vantage point in making a comparison between the United States, London, and Madrid. While it is certainly a generalization, it provides a sense of how she is trying to understand and comprehend what is happening. While it is basic, it shows that she is trying to come to grasp with what she is witnessing.

In responding to the reflection about Paris:

I observed that they see opportunity in the creation of cultural musings. It existed in the square of starving artists selling their defining works for scraps, in the Louvre where art is tourism, in the streets where musicians play for their next meal, and in those little cafe's where serving a meal is an art as well. Not only have the French managed to make their livings from these ventures, but they have managed to do it in a fashion that truly defines and improves the culture of the place overall. (Christopher, reflection paper 2)

Christopher provides a different way of trying to understand things through this lens of cultural musings. It is not a question if it is accurate or not, but provides an interesting insight into how he started to make connections and find common elements among different situations.

Siestas every day to get out of the sun which brought the city to a slower speed than what Americans would experience at the same time of the day. Madrid also seems to run at a speed different than the rest of the world, with everything taking longer to accomplish.

(James, reflection paper 3)

James provides another insight into the experience in Madrid. While this can be viewed as another generalization, it is relevant for him to indicate that everything takes longer to accomplish. He does bring experience living abroad.

In responding to the reflection question about Rome:

It appeared to me that while the Italians valued the Vatican's role in their history, it was not the defining characteristic by which they identify themselves. Instead I believe that what is really important to them is quality of life, enjoying ones food, the beautiful weather and the company in which you keep. (Christopher, reflection paper 4)

Christopher's reflection is powerful and problematic at the same time, raising questions about the generalizations. His previous reflections provide insight into how he was trying to

understand and connect things. He continues that in this reflection as he reminds us that Rome is much more than the Vatican.

The students' also provided perspectives on different dynamics of societal customs. For example on the dynamics of the outdoor cafes which are prevalent throughout the cities that the student visited.

At the cafés most people will sit at small tables outside that face outward. It changes the focus from the two people at the table to the world around them. I think that it shows an interesting difference because in America people face one another in order to block out distractions and be polite. (Michael, reflection paper 2)

Michael, in this reflection, shares an interesting observation about how people sit at a café in Paris versus a table in the United States. While certainly a generalization, this observation shows how he was trying to make sense of what was happening.

In another case, on how locals treat tourists,

Unlike in other cities in Europe, it did not seem that there was an attempt to pander to the pallets of foreign tourists. The Munich locals seemed confident that tourist would enjoy eating and sharing ale as they were used to doing. (Christopher, reflection paper 5)

Christopher's reflection points to an interesting perspective about how communities handle foreign visitors and tourists. It is clear that more work needs to be done in this area, but the reflection provides something to think about.

Rules and Norms. Related to concepts of visibility and presence, students observed how different rules and norms were followed in different places. In response to the reflection about Rome:

Photography in the Sistine Chapel was strictly forbidden. When I went through this visit, I was shocked at the little attention the guards were giving to tourists. They were all on their cell phones texting or making calls. When we made it to the Sistine Chapel, what I saw was surprising. The crowd was noisy and blatantly taking pictures. (Michelle, reflection paper 4)

Michelle is an Art major so a key aspect of this experience was the opportunity to engage with art and culture. She was often a quiet member of the group. However, this reflection highlights a voice of frustration that was not seen before because it is so close to her love of Art. I myself experienced the same thing at the Sistine Chapel so it was interesting to see her write about this.

When I took my weekend trip to Dublin however, religion was very prevalent. We arrived on a Sunday and there were very few places open, we could hardly find a place to eat. I never encountered that in London or Prague. This kind of surprised me because in the United States the only places not open is Chic-Fil-A and you always have those other services available to you. (Melissa, reflection paper 4)

In providing a response about the role of religion, Melissa provides insight from a weekend trip to Dublin, and how she begins to understand the differences in how certain things are open or

not open on a Sunday due to religious practices. This serves as a reminder about different cultural customs.

The three of us were looking at some jewelry, when all of a sudden I look up and there is a bare-naked lady walking at a snails pace for all to see! Of course, everyone around us was staring but no one was trying to cover her up or call the police or anything like that! It was interesting that she made it so far across the bridge without being stopped, because I feel like in America that would have potentially been stopped immediately! (Stephanie, reflection paper 5)

Stephanie's reaction in this reflection provides an insight into how one perceives certain rules and norms. It also raises questions about what it means to be a bystander and whose responsibility is it to take charge. In this case, it shows how she reverts back to her own United States-centered perspective.

In the response related to the reflection on Madrid:

Walking through parks the benches were occupied with homeless people posted up or sleeping. Back in the United States, and I'm sure in other countries, if homeless people try to sleep on a bench or stay in certain parks they are asked to leave or arrested. The police seemed to be very relaxed with it and didn't pay much attend to them. (Michelle, reflection paper 3)

Michelle's reflection provides a glimpse into how she is trying to understand what she is seeing with the homeless in the parks. She is not making a judgment about the homeless but in terms of how law enforcement may or may not interact with them.

People. The students' provided insight into how they viewed everyday citizens. I understand that these insights may be problematic because they are based on generalizations, but they provide an insight into how the students were seeing things. The following are comments that results from the reflection paper on Madrid:

I found so much inspiration in the resilience of Spain's people, although it was sad seeing so many beggars and so much homelessness. (Stephanie, reflection paper 3)

For Stephanie, Madrid provided an opportunity for her to be more open to the experience compared to Paris. This reflection was shaped by the briefing at the United States Embassy and the travels throughout Madrid. The reflection is a sincere statement on the resilience but also highlights what was actually happening on the ground in terms of the beggars and homeless.

Within the cities of London, Paris and Madrid, the citizens' act with completely different demeanors in regards to the business and economic section of their culture. (David, reflection paper 3)

David provides a more critical critique on how individual's handle economic challenges. The reflection doesn't take into account similarities that may exist in the approaches, but opens up the conversation to trying to understand what are the differences.

I think that the economic downfall has forced people to desperate situations and those that may not have talents to offer on the streets learn the trade of pickpocketing instead. My reactions included being bothered, especially by the widespread prostitution, but also annoyed by the persistence of the salespeople and finally the most on the defensive and aware of my surroundings (especially after my wallet was stolen) than the other cities.

(Lisa, reflection paper 3)

For Lisa, Madrid provided a moment of authenticity as she was forced to understand her privilege and comfort level. She was seeing things from her vantage point and was being forced to understand what has happening, and then experiencing it herself when her wallet was stolen. I was with her at the Police station as she filed the police reports and she saw that she was not the only victim of a robbery.

In response to the reflection about Prague:

In terms of openness, Prague definitely seemed different compared to other European cities that we visited. It has less open feel to it as compared to Western Europe. People seemed more cautious and closed off. (Melissa, reflection paper 5)

Melissa's reflection provides an insight into how she was experiencing Prague. While it did not get into specifics, she was starting to see a difference and trying to understand why. This is similar to a reflection by Michael in which he noted that he felt more like a stranger in Prague than anywhere else.

In responding in the final paper:

I may be wrong, but I could feel that there was more focus on preserving personal happiness in European countries than in America. There was more emphasis on little indulgences and less rigid laws and workdays that cause people to feel trapped. (Amy, final paper)

For Amy, this reflection provides an insight into how she was trying to make sense of what she was experiencing and what was happening back home in the United States. This generalization provides a basis for a more in-depth analysis.

I think Madrid symbolizes Spain's struggle to stay positive during their economic crisis. It definitely shows the cracks in Spanish society but maintains the glue that holds Spain together, the people. (Amy, reflection paper 3)

Amy provides a different take on the economic crisis by focusing on the people. Often times we focus on policies, but it is the people that have to bear the brunt of the challenges, and there is indeed a struggle of opinions.

Beyond the vandalism, I saw many people who were on the streets begging for money, since they had no job and no support. Some of these images will never leave my mind, like the homeless man with puppies, the homeless man with no arms, and many homeless people with children. (Angela, reflection paper 3)

As noted earlier, Madrid proved to be a turning point for Angela. In this reflection she captures powerful examples of what she has encountered.

Global Understanding. One of the visible items was the presence of the global nature of the experience. The students' shared the following perspectives,

Reading through newspapers, I was surprised to see how much global news especially from the U.S. was covered in them. People followed the presidential race here as well as other political issues. I think people here should become more globally aware of the issues and politics going on around the world. The economies of Europe affect us yet people do not know the state of other countries' finances. (Michelle, final paper)

Michelle's reflection provides a valuable insight into how she started to understand the value of global news coverage as she saw how the United States was covered in the European media but the same does not happen in the United States. This reflection also shows that she has learned a few things from the experience.

Today this means Europeans are more aware of events happening around the world. I ask a girl I met in Rome about her opinion of the election in the United States and she told me why she like President Obama and what topics she disagreed with Mitt Romney on. It made me feel sick when I couldn't even name the current prime minister of her country.

(Michael, final paper)

Michael's reflection is a strong self-reflection piece about his lack of awareness and knowledge of events outside of the United States. This interaction with an Italian individual led to a key moment for him as it highlights a difference in knowledge.

While attending a briefing at the U.S. Embassy, embassy employees told us, "The whole world is watching Spain". Before the embassy visit, I was not aware of the extent of Spanish problems, let alone how they could affect myself and the country. Americans seems to have this belief that what occurs on the other side of the ocean will not affect them. Well, they are wrong. After spending four days in Madrid, I learned how all economies are deeply interconnected. (Kimberly, reflection 3)

As noted earlier, Kimberly came to this experience from a position of economic privilege. While Paris was not a positive experience, Madrid proved to be a powerful turning point for her. This reflection provides a glimpse into how she was indeed paying attention and trying to understand what was happening. I felt a change in her behavior and openness after Madrid.

Challenges to Presence. The students also started to explore the idea of challenges to their own presence as United States citizens in this environment. Some noted the following in their final papers:

Although our travels made me appreciate diversity in America even more, they also opened my eyes to the ethnocentric lens that we as American view the world through.

(Amy, final paper)

This reflection by Amy is a powerful acknowledgement of the ethnocentric lens. It takes a lot to attempt or even acknowledge that this lens exists.

Americans are also very prideful and defensive over "the American culture". This has caused issues in the past and probably will continue to cause issues because some Americans expect that everyone should assimilate and reject their native culture. (Lisa, final paper)

Lisa provides a strong reflection about "American Culture". While this can be seen as problematic, it provides a glimpse into historical challenges that the United States has faced, especially in light of current conversations about immigration. For Lisa, this reflection showcases how they changed during the course of the experience as she would not have shared such as thing at the start of this effort.

Photo Journals. It is also important to note that the theme of visibility and presence was the main theme throughout the students' photo journals. For example, this was seen as the students' captured images of the different iconic landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, Big Ben, Puerta del Sol, and the Vatican. Each of the landmarks was depicted in different ways as the students reflected about the meaning and importance of a particular landmark.

Importance. The theme of visibility and presence is a critical component in helping to understand the value of the experience for the students. The different categories ranging from arrival, interactions, stereotypes, rules, and norms provide a framework for explaining this theme of visibility and presence. This theme can also be problematic because of the nature of the

generalizations and of the placement of the student. In this case, the student is the “other” since they are a guest in that particular environment. Even though it is problematic, the theme provides a valuable opportunity to understand and explain what is happening within the student experience.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided the formal findings of the case study. The findings were based on the analysis of the academic components which included the students’ photo journals, reflection papers, final paper, and subsequent exit interviews. The themes that emerged were that of self-awareness, and visibility and presence. All of these themes are very much inter-related and resulted from the students’ own reflections.

The theme of self-awareness focused on how the students viewed and interpreted things and how it influenced their own viewpoints. Under this theme, I was able to show such categories as arrival, understanding language, socio-economic, religion, expression, patriotism, art of travel, and post-program. These categories helped to reinforce the theme of self-awareness.

Visibility and presence focused on how the students viewed the visibility and presence of things that they encountered. In addition, this provided an opportunity to focus on how the students viewed their own visibility and presence in this environment. Under this theme, I was able to show such categories as arrival, interactions, stereotypes, quality of life, rules and norms, people, global understanding, and challenges to presence. These categories helped to provide the context for understanding visibility and presence. In addition to the reflections, the theme of visibility and presence was also more prevalent in the photo journals in terms of how the students viewed different landmarks (i.e. iconic images) as well as the contrasting styles of old and new.

In an effort to provide insight into the students' reflections, I provided the actual words used by the students. The examples provide insight into what the students were thinking and feeling as they were responding to the assignments/questions.

Chapter 5 provides the opportunity for me to interpret the data findings and to provide recommendations. It was also an opportunity for me to share my own reflections on what I learned through my own personal growth and development as the coordinator of this study abroad experience.

Chapter 5

INTERPRETATION

Introduction

In this final chapter, I present my interpretations of the findings that were discovered in chapter 4. Chapter 4 provided the opportunity to witness first-hand the accounts from the students themselves as seen in their written reflections. The purpose of this study was to examine the role of reflection in the academic components that help shape the experiences of students participating in a short-term study abroad program. The study involved a case study of the “Learning about Diversity and Social Justice: The European Perspective” program that took place in summer 2012. Summer 2012 marked the fifth anniversary of this program and consisted of eleven students.

The study focused on the following research questions:

1. How does reflection shape the experience of students participating in a study abroad program?
2. How did students demonstrate, or not, reflexivity in their written reflections and photo journals?
3. What is the role of the academic assignments (papers, photo journal, and exit interview) in fostering student reflection?

Findings and Interpretation

The data analysis resulted in the development of two major overarching themes: self-awareness and visibility and presence. These two themes helped to provide a framework for better understanding the nature of the student reflection in this study. The data analysis yielded

potential challenges to the nature and understanding of reflection. These challenges were in the possible problematizations of the reflections.

Caveat to Interpretations

In this chapter, I interpret the findings from the data analysis, using reflection as my interpretative lens. I also address the problems that emerged in the reflections. For me as the instructor, the assignments provided a unique opportunity to listen to each student through their own words and to see how they would articulate their thoughts to a particular question. While there were no wrong or right answers, some reflections provided more insight than others in terms of how the students were processing things.

As I went through the analysis, I had a distinct vantage point because I knew details about each student and could notice changes that someone from the outside could not. In presenting examples of what the students had provided, I tried to provide a context for why the example was appropriate in an area. In addition, I was trying to be inclusive in sharing examples from each of the participants.

The analysis of the data involved reading and re-reading the reflection papers, the final paper, re-reviewing the photos from the photo journals, and other related notes. In reviewing the different pieces, I took note of repeated patterns (i.e. codes). After reviewing the codes, I was able to combine them into related areas or categories. I then took those categories and examined what was the common thread amongst them and that is when the two themes emerged. Mayan (2009) explained that themes weave throughout and tie the categories together (p. 97).

Understanding Self-Awareness

In chapter 4, I defined self-awareness as the students' awareness of their own reactions as they observed and reacted to things. This theme resulted as a continuous thread that was present

throughout the categories that emerged, which included arrival, understanding language, socioeconomic, religion, expression, patriotism, art of travel, and post program. In this case, the categories provided the basis for how the students came to understand their self-awareness. This provided a broader sense for the importance of self-awareness and how this theme surfaced among the students.

Arrival

It is fitting that the arrival process would be a component of the self-awareness of the students. The arrival in London elicited different and similar reactions amongst the students. Depending on the student, the perspectives shared in this initial reflection set the stage for their experiences. As the instructor, these reflections provided insight into what these students were interested in and excited about. These reflections also helped to highlight what happens when they encountered something new for the first time.

Understanding Language

While there was no specific language requirement to participate in the program, it became a natural part of the learning experience as the group traveled to non-English speaking countries (Laubscher, 1994). As the instructor, I spent time providing basic vocabulary that would be helpful when the group traveled to mainland Europe. I have learned that acquiring language skills can be a scary thing for students. The fact that understanding language surfaced as one of the components in the reflections is not a surprise, but is more meaningful since it came directly from the students. They experienced this challenge for themselves. Understanding language challenged and forced them to get out of their respective comfort zones.

Socioeconomic

During each of the excursions, there was a different thematic focus that related to issues of diversity and inclusion. While the reflections focused on responding to a particular question, there was never any guarantee that a particular theme would be included in the reflections or observations that the students would make, or in how the theme would resonate with the students'.

The socioeconomic focus in Madrid and the resulting activities had a profound influence on some of the students. In the examples provided in chapter 4, the students' were beginning to come to terms with the meaning of socioeconomic issues. Nonetheless, the comments also point to a level of privilege that these students had in the experience. In the instance when Kimberly asked, "What can be done to help?" I saw this as coming from a genuine place, even though from an outside perspective, it appears that the student might be making a value judgment about the need for help. The reflections also indicate that sometimes, the students' did not think about common occurrences through certain lenses. In this particular case, the lenses of socioeconomic issues changed the construct for the students.

Religion

Over the five-year duration of the program, the subject of religion elicited different responses from the students. In this particular year, the situating of Rome and the Vatican played key roles in how the students started to shape their thoughts and perspectives about religion.

In multiple cases, the students raised the issue of how could a city or area so rooted in a particular religion be seen as inclusive toward others with different belief systems. For example, the responses from the Jewish student provided a glimpse of what being an outsider would feel

like in Rome. In another instance, the role and commercialization of religion surfaced and related to perceptions about the Catholic Church.

In other reflections, the students' began to articulate thoughts and feelings about religious freedom. In light of current global events surrounding individuals with different religious backgrounds and their rights, these reflections from 2012 are just as important today. As an instructor, I realized that religion is a personal thing for most students and discussing and writing about religion is never an easy task.

Expression

Expression turns out to be something that arose from different aspects of the experience. While the concept of freedom of speech and expression was the focus on the excursion to Munich and Prague, this thread appeared in other areas as well. The reflections brought out differing points of view towards graffiti and its contextualization. In one instance, Melissa viewed the graffiti in Madrid as part of the disillusionment of the youth, while Amy saw graffiti in Prague as part an artistic expression, and talked about how it evoked a specific feeling in her.

This illustrated the value of perspective and context, and how each reflection provided insight into how the students were trying to understand what was happening. Melissa and Amy are both correct and incorrect, but the fact that this surfaced in their reflections, is indicative of how they were trying to process and come to terms with this understanding.

Patriotism

Coincidentally, the program took place when London hosted the Summer Olympic Games. In asking the students to reflect about what it meant to be in an Olympic host city, the focus on patriotism came out in different ways. For example, Amy talked about how she felt connected to the home country of Great Britain during the games, and how it was such a different feeling that

she could not have imagined. In other cases, the students talked about the sense of pride not only in the competition but also in hosting the games, and also the challenges in hosting such an endeavor. One of the underlying pieces to the discussion about patriotism was the sense of community. While not explicitly stated, Michael implies it when he said, “people were just excited to have something to come together”.

The Art of Travel

Travel was an inherent aspect of a study abroad (Laubscher, 1994). In this program, there were multiple opportunities to travel as a group throughout Great Britain and mainland Europe. From personal experience, traveling is never easy, as it requires planning, flexibility, and finances. For students in the program, this experience would be life-altering for some, as it was the first time that they would have traveled outside of the United States, traveled on a plane and/or traveled on their own.

As the students’ reflected about their experience with traveling, there was a sense of greater self-confidence in their own abilities to travel and in navigating new and different things. Based on the reflections, this proved to be huge transformational moment for these students. In most cases, these students’ would never undertake the sheer amount of travel in such a short amount of time.

In other cases, travel as a means did not create change, but it served as a conduit that led to other perspectives. James’ insight about how experiencing cultures gave him new perspectives provides a clue into this aspect.

Post-Program

While a lot of the program focus was on the day-to-day experiences, a key moment in the self-reflection process occurred when the students returned home and began to look back on their

experiences (Laubscher, 1994; Levy, 2000; McKeown, 2009). In the final paper, one of the questions pertained to the experience of traveling back home from the program. The responses provided a valuable contrast into how the students had changed from their initial response about the arrival experience in London to the process of returning back home to the United States.

In the responses highlighted in chapter 4, this provided an insight into how the students saw their experience and what they learned/retained. In Melissa's case, her reflection provided a moment of understanding, that at times, she was fighting what the program was trying to do and was actually feeling homesick (but she never shared this). In another case, Lisa provided a clue into how she was learning and retaining knowledge in the program and how she was able to understand what she was going through as a result of what she had learned.

The post program experience would be different for each student but was a crucial element in the self-reflection and in the transformation of the student. The challenge is that this presumes that the only important part of the post program occurs when the student returns home. This assumption is not true, as any experience can have a meaningful impact, whether it is a memory or other activity.

In November 2015 in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris, one of my former students from the summer 2010 program contacted me via Facebook. He emailed me with a response to my birthday message to him: "Thanks, Ray!! I've been thinking a lot about our study abroad trip lately. Thanks so much for providing that experience for us - can't believe it's been over five years!!"

Through looking at the theme of self-awareness through the categories, each provided a basis for why self-awareness is a critical aspect to understanding the role of reflection. The

reflections have provided the opportunity for this self-awareness to come forward in a different way.

How is the Theme of Self-Awareness Handled?

When it comes to the theme of self-awareness, the literature in study abroad focuses more on the broader concept of awareness. Hendershot and Sperandio (2009) conducted a study looking at cohorts of students from Lehigh University in their Global Citizenship Program study abroad and the development of global citizen identity. In their analysis of their student reflections, one of their main attributes that arose from the student reflections was in the area of awareness.

In an analysis of the impact of study abroad on student learning at Michigan State University, Ingraham and Peterson (2004) discovered themes relating to personal growth, intercultural awareness, and professional development. They observed that students' insight into their own experience/culture comes from an experience in a new culture that "illuminates an unanticipated difference" (p. 94).

Sandgren, Ellig, Hovde, Krejci, and Rice (1999) in their study of how an international experience affects teaching through the Knight Global seminars at Concordia College, developed a causal process and theory. One of the components to their theory was the concept of self-awareness. They referred to self-awareness as one of two types of transformation that their participants encountered while abroad. The other type of transformation was social awareness. They defined self-awareness as "new or keener recognition of one's thoughts, emotions, traits, or behaviors" (p. 48).

Another example is the usage of awareness in terms of cross-cultural awareness. Hunter, White, and Godbey (2006) indicate that self-awareness is a critical step in the cross-

cultural awareness process. They highlight the work of Hunter (2004) in which a person must have a keen understanding of their own cultural norms and expectations. This is related to the work of Curran (2003) in which he states that familiarity with a new environment meant being aware of one's own personal characteristics, strengths and weaknesses, cultural biases, and norms, motivations, and concerns.

Outside of the study abroad field, the concept of self-awareness can be seen in work done with teacher candidates by Schussler, Stooksberry, and Bercaw (2010). They broke down their work in terms of teacher dispositions: intellectual, cultural, and moral. Their analysis indicated that those teacher candidates who possessed greater awareness of their own dispositions had the greatest capacity to unpack their assumptions (p. 361). While focused on teacher candidates, this study resonates with study abroad in terms of how students are prepared to engage and reflect about their experiences and “unpack” what they have learned.

Yan and Wong (2005) in looking at cross-cultural social work also focus on self-awareness. They highlight the work of Kondrat (1999) who proposed three approaches to self-awareness in social work practice. The three approaches include simple conscious awareness, reflective awareness of the self who is experiencing, and reflexive awareness (p. 185). These three approaches would resonate with self-awareness within the study abroad concept.

Townley (1995) focuses on how self-awareness is based on the belief in an inner self. She writes, “self-awareness involves a process of decipherment and excavation in order to gain access to another level of reality, a hidden, deeper, truer, and self” (p. 275). In thinking about study abroad, the reflective process provides for this self-awareness to take place.

One of the earliest definitions of self-awareness can be traced to the work of Duval and Wicklund (1972), who defined self-awareness in terms of the ratio of an objective (self-focused)

to the subjective (environment focused). Hull and Levy (1979) breakdown the model into four areas: self-focused attention, self-evaluation, affective reaction, and motivated discrepancy. Hull and Levy (1979) were arguing for an alternative to the Duval and Wicklund model of self-awareness. Through their study they discovered a pattern of “results that suggest that self-awareness serves to increase sensitivity to self-relevant aspects of the immediate situation” (p. 764). In relation to study abroad, this helps to reinforce the understanding that the students’ experience in the environment plays a role in how they understand themselves. In looking at the literature within study abroad, the theme of self-awareness would be seen as further contributing to the field.

Understanding Visibility and Presence

In chapter 4, I defined visibility and presence in terms of how the students viewed the visibility of things and their particular presence in relationship to the surrounding area, as well as how the students viewed their own visibility and presence. The theme of visibility and presence resulted as a continuous thread that was present throughout the categories that emerged. The categories included arrival, interactions – positive and negative- stereotypes, quality of life, rules and norms, people, global understanding, and challenges to presence. It was through these categories, that I was able to glean examples for how the students came to understand the role of visibility and presence in a range of areas.

In interpreting this theme of visibility and presence, I realize that some would argue that this could be similar to self-awareness. However, in going through the data analysis, visibility and presence provided a different type of understanding and meaning. In some instances, there were some categories that fell under both themes, which would be appropriate, because this reinforces the notion that different experiences can have varying influences on an individual, and

in this particular case, the students'. It was in visibility and presence, where I began to see some of the problematizations that arise from what the students were writing about in their papers.

Arrival

Arrival was one of the categories shared with the theme of self-awareness. In these reflections, I saw a focus on time and place, and the students' role in that moment in time. While the distinction was subtle, it was the time and place that stood out.

For example, Angela's comments about how she felt in that instance when she "emerged from King's Cross St. Pancras", to David's mindset about how he would proceed in this time and place by "walking slowly and observing as much as possible." If anything, understanding the role of "arrival" within the role with visibility and presence was a critical one in learning to understand how the experience was influencing the student.

Interactions – Positive and Negative

One of the key components of this program was in the day-to-day interactions that the group would have during the different excursions and experiences. It was through these reflections that I started to get a better understanding of how the students were managing this component and how they were interpreting these interactions.

In the process, it was clear that there were particular interactions that were negative and those that were positive as seen through the student lens. Regardless if the interactions were positive or negative, each provided valuable learning opportunities for the students. These reflections also provided a glimpse into how the students were handling stereotypes and other preconceived notions during these interactions.

The interactions paint a picture of how the students saw things and how they described them. Take for example, Amy in her interaction with the ticket agent on the Underground when

she handed him a Euro by mistake and his interactions with her. The positive nature of this interaction made a difference during the arrival process for Amy. On the other hand, this interaction could have gone differently if the ticket agent had scolded Amy, made fun of her, or even dismissed her. If this experience had gone negative, it would have changed Amy's overall arrival experience and had a potential ripple effect.

In another case, related to understanding language, Lisa talked about how they were able to interact with some Parisian girls even though she could not speak French as well. Even though language was a barrier, it did not prevent a positive interaction. One of the powerful pieces of this reflection was in witnessing how the students handled themselves when they were on their own.

In another case, James talked about how the language barriers did not dampen his experience. This reinforces that in any interaction, there are always be challenges, but it is how an individual thinks about them and overcomes them that helps to make a difference.

The value of interactions can be significant, and such was the case with Stephanie. As noted in chapter 4, Stephanie was not shy in expressing her feelings about how she felt about not liking certain things, etc. She often was the most negative within the group. In her reflections, I was pleasantly surprised when she started to open up with her feelings and thoughts, and this provided valuable insight into those things that she liked and did not like (i.e. things that took her out of her comfort zone.) The interactions that Stephanie had in Madrid were completely opposite from what she had experienced in Paris.

Just as there were positive interactions, the students also encountered negative interactions. The reflections provided insight into how students' own norms and customs were affecting how they were feeling about things. In the example of Lisa, she was not accustomed to

the level of customer service she received in Paris and how that this was so different from the “customer is always right” approach. In another instance, it was disturbing to see one of the students equate immigration with negativity. In Kimberly’s piece, her usage of language in describing the gypsy kids is problematic. The experience in Paris challenged Kimberly, as it took her out of her comfort zone. Nonetheless, Kimberly’s frustration and exasperation are visible at that particular moment. It is a vivid picture that is both disturbing and insightful at the same time.

In another instance, Michael talked about how he felt as a stranger in Prague. This reflection raises the question about how does an individual actually interact with others, and how do those interactions make us feel? It is not something that is often asked, but it is important. In this case, Michael was feeling quite different compared to the other locations.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes and the role of bias is something that inherently factors into most if not all experiences. The reflections provide a glimpse into how the students began to handle stereotypes and whether or not they affirm or discount the stereotype. The concept of stereotypes plays a factor in understanding visibility and place.

In some cases, the students provided a rebuttal to the notion of stereotypes describing certain people. In her response to the question about whether or not the Parisian stereotype was accurate, Melissa talked about how you will always find all types of people. Amy shared that while stereotypes are false, that the French lived up to their reputation.

In another instance, David challenged the premise of stereotypes and implied that this thinking is the thing that perpetuates these concepts. He raised a powerful point that as an instructor, I need to critically think about how I discuss and address stereotypes in the future.

Quality of Life

Another category that emerged was the notion of quality of life and how the students were providing opinions about this concept. I can understand how students' providing opinions about quality of life could be seen as problematic because of their lack of familiarity, lack of exposure, and short duration of their stay.

Nonetheless, the students' insight provided a glimpse in understanding how the students were coming to terms with what they were witnessing. While the reflections were leading to problematic assumptions about privilege, this was part of the learning process. Take for example, Amy and her reflection when she described how people in the different cities were handling things. Whether or not what she says was true or false, it was important to understand this viewpoint.

On the other spectrum, Christopher provided a different perspective in how he understood the French people. This was also problematic but this reflection provided a way for Christopher to start making connections with what he was seeing. Whether it was the musicians performing to the art of the meal, it was all-important within what Christopher was reflecting about. He shared a similar written reflection about what he observed in Rome.

It is evident that the students started to understand different facets of each city. In the case of Madrid, James wrote about the role of the siestas and how he saw things taking much longer. While he did not go into more detail, his portrayal is also problematic because it makes assumptions of the work ethic of Madrileños.

In another take on quality of life, Michael provided an observation about the differences in how individuals sit in the outdoor cafes and the role this potentially plays in society. In a related reflection, Christopher talked about how he felt that in Munich, he saw a city that did not

“pander” to tourists like in other places and he appreciated that. Both reflections are problematic due to the assumptions, but they provided an insight into how the students were trying to understand and explain what they were seeing.

It would take a major ethnographic study to confirm or deny what these students were saying. However, Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis (1997) indicate that “brief encounters do not necessarily mean superficial connections” (p. 139). I do not discount the fact that the students have started to think about these things even though they may or may not be accurate or correct. This in itself was the basis for asking for reflections in order to prompt the students to think critically about these issues.

Rules and Norms

It is fitting that in looking at the theme of visibility and presence that the category of rules and norms would surface in the reflections. Within visibility and presence, there are certain rules and norms that govern society regardless of time and place. Similar to quality of life and stereotypes, the students were trying to understand things through their own cultural and personal lens and trying to make a judgment.

In the case of Michelle, the issue dealt with photography in the Sistine Chapel. For example, the guards were not enforcing the rules of “no photography” as it was noisy and the guards were distracted while on their cell phones. As noted in chapter 4, her frustration was about how she felt this lack of rule enforcement, overshadowed her experience while visiting the Sistine Chapel.

In another instance, Melissa spoke about her surprise when she visited Dublin and that it was difficult to find a place to eat. She did not realize that due to religious reasons, most businesses close on Sundays. She expressed her surprise by comparing this situation with what

happens in the United States, as only certain businesses close on Sundays. While her reflection was genuine, it was also problematic because she was seeing things through her United States-centric lens. This would prove to be a valuable learning opportunity for her.

In other instance, the students wrote about how certain things occurred without any interference and how different that would be in the United States. In one case, students in Prague noticed a bare-naked lady walking across the bridge and no one was doing anything to help her. The students shared that in “America”, this lady would have immediately been stopped. This raises a lot of questions regarding both value and moral judgments about the response to certain situations. This reflection also situated the students outside of the event as they did not do anything themselves to help the lady.

In another case, a reflection mentioned seeing the homeless sleeping on park benches and indicating that in the United States, these individuals might have been asked to leave or even arrested. This is another reflection that raises questions about value judgments about how homeless individuals are treated. Assumptions were made regarding how the police were responding to these individuals. In some respects, it is not surprising that rules and norms led to reflections that were problematic because of the nature of how things are seen or unseen.

People

Related to quality of life, rules and norms, and interactions, are the people themselves. In this category, the students wrote about their thoughts about the people they saw and encountered throughout the program. While the reflections were genuine, they also raised questions about how the students situated themselves with the people (i.e. the other).

This was evident in Stephanie's reflection when she wrote about how she got inspiration from the resilience of Spain's people, but was sad with the beggars and homeless. She was placing a value judgment on beggars and the homeless.

In another reflection, David took the view that in London, Paris, and Madrid, that the people themselves have different views about business and the economy. This reflection raises questions about whether or not this is truly accurate. In another case, Lisa's own experiences and interactions shaped her reflection of people. In expressing her frustrations, she makes an inference that if an individual does not have any talents that they might resort to crime (i.e. pick-pocketing). Clearly this was problematic because of its wide generalization. However, it also brings to light that certain experiences can shape a students' particular reflection about something. In Lisa's case, she had her wallet stolen as she was the victim of being pickpocketed in Madrid. She was not alone, because when she went to the police station to file her report, she saw others waiting to file reports for similar reasons.

In another instance, Melissa was trying to understand why things (i.e. social interactions) were not as open in Prague as they were in other areas. She was placing different value judgments about what was right and what was wrong in how people were treating her.

On the other side, Amy started to think about the differences between those in the United States and those in Europe. Even though this is another generalization, she was trying to make sense of what she was observing in terms of how others were handling personal happiness. In a similar reflection, written a few weeks before, Amy spoke about the importance of the Spanish people amid what is taking place with the economy. While also another generalization, it provides a backdrop into how she would begin to make connections.

In a piece by Angela, she wrote about how some of the things she saw in Madrid would never leave her mind, such as the homeless man, the homeless man with no arms, and the homeless family. The problem here was that this reflection gives a sense of pity and judgment, even though that was not Angela's intent.

Global Understanding

One of the components of visibility and presence came in the form of the concept of global understanding. While current events were an underlying focus of the program, the reflections provide a glimpse into how the students were starting to make the connections about the relationship of the global nature of things.

In Michelle's reflection, she noted how the news was more prevalent in Europe and explains, "people here need to be more globally aware". Her "people here" means those in the United States. It was a powerful moment to understand what was missing in the news coverage in the United States.

In Michael's final paper, he wrote about how he felt when he encountered an Italian that knew the ins and outs of the upcoming United States Presidential election at that time and how he had no clue who was serving as the Italian prime minister. Michael's reflection highlights the feeling of ignorance that he felt in this instance, as he had truly no idea.

In another related reflection, Kimberly shared her thoughts about what she learned as a result of the United States Embassy briefing in Madrid. Recall earlier, the challenges that Kimberly had in Paris with her negative interactions and the nature of that particular reflection. This reflection highlighted a completely different tone and an emphasis as to why this issue was important. My perspective was that this global understanding started to be more apparent as the students started to travel and see for themselves the different interconnections and relationships.

Challenges to Presence

Closely related to global understanding was this concept of challenges to presence. This refers to the students' realizing their visibility and presence was creating discomfort in how they saw and understood things.

In her reflection, Amy talked about the ethnocentric lens that "Americans" view the world. While her terminology was not correct as she was referring to United States citizens, the reflection was a significant step forward in understanding. It was an important realization that "othering" was taking place.

Similar to Amy's reflection was Lisa's reflection where she referred to "American culture" and how Americans handled this. This was yet another example where the terminology was not correct, but the reflection provided insight into what Lisa was thinking about.

The theme of visibility and presence is important in helping to gain additional insight into how the students were reacting and thinking about their experience. The different categories help to provide a framework and context for how certain items and experiences can have an influence on visibility and presence. However, the theme of visibility and presence also increases the level of problematization in some of the reflections.

How is the Theme of Visibility and Presence Handled?

When it comes to the theme of visibility and presence, the study abroad literature is non-existent in regards to this topic. It is in such disciplines as architecture and design, where I found the concept of visibility and presence. Kwon and Sailer (2015) focus on visibility and co-presence in their analysis of museums and department stores. Their examples resonate with the presence of the students in the locations that were a part of the program.

Kwon and Sailer (2015) focus on the work of Hillier to describe the meaning of co-presence, and how individuals that are co-present can be “raw material for community”. In addition, they talk about how a space can bring people together. This understanding of presence can be seen in how the students were responding to the experiences.

Clifford (1963) defines the concept of visibility in terms of social visibility, as the position that an individual occupies within a certain place or group. In relation to study abroad, social visibility comes in the form of the privilege that the students have in their participation in such programs. Clifford goes on to describe other aspects of visibility ranging from positive visibility, social invisibility, and negative visibility. His work provides another potential area for further examination within study abroad.

In looking at the literature within study abroad, this understanding of visibility and presence would be seen as providing a contribution to the field of study abroad as well as additional opportunities for further exploration.

What was learned?

The data collection and analysis process provided further insight in understanding what had taken place during this study abroad program. In reviewing all of the material from the photo journals to the reflection papers, this helped to provide a clearer framework to my understanding of the research questions.

How does reflection shape the experience of students

participating in a study abroad program?

The data analysis and findings provided valuable evidence that reflection serves as a conduit to better understanding how the students felt about the experiences and what they have learned. It was through these written reflections that I saw first-hand how the students were

shaped by the experiences. This was important because this helped to confirm the value of reflection and why it was important to have as an essential component of the study abroad program. I acknowledge that the process for reflection is not easy, as was noted by Fabris (2015) that students take personal risks when they are writing about their experiences.

This study reinforces the important role of critical reflection in the process. Sharma, Phillion, and Malewski (2011) indicated that for Dewey, the focus of critical reflection is to make meaning of one's experience that brings change into one's understanding of the self and the world – self-awareness and awareness of the other (p. 12). Sharma, et al. (2011) were looking at the role of critical reflection in helping to develop multicultural competencies among pre-service teachers in Honduras. It was through this engagement of reflection that the students were able to gain a better understanding of themselves and their own perspectives. It is appropriate that the two themes of self-awareness and visibility and presence help to provide additional insight into the influences of the experiences on the students. Reflection reinforced the lived experiences that the students were having in the program.

*How did students demonstrate, or not, reflexivity in
their written reflections and photo journals?*

The students' demonstrated reflexivity in different ways in their written reflections, photo journals, exit interviews, and discussions. While there was no uniform definition for reflexivity, it can be seen in the way that student's positioned themselves in the process. Another view of reflexivity provides the following: "Reflexivity can simply be defined as an ability to recognize our own influence – and the influence of our social and cultural contexts on research, the type of knowledge we create, and the way we create it" (Fook & Askeland, 2006, p. 45).

In thinking about reflexivity and critical reflection, Dewey (1933) described six steps that were critical to reflective thought. These include: 1) an experience; 2) making inferences from the experience; 3) a state of perplexity, hesitation, doubt; 4) multiple hypothesis; 5) reconstructing experience to create a hypothesis; and 6) putting the hypothesis to test or taking action. These six steps help to provide a context into better understand how the demonstrating reflexivity in their written reflections. The students were taking part in the experience and in responding to the question prompts, were starting to make inferences, and in that process, were starting to see firsthand the perplexity, hesitation and doubt and then the hypothesis.

These six steps as articulated by Dewey also help to explain some of the challenges with the reflections in terms of their generalizations and problematizations. Meizrow (1991) talked about the ability to analyze and reconstruct the meanings of an experience in his or her own background and experiences. This resonates with the reflections that the students produced. In addition, this also begins to explain the how and why behind some of the problematization that took place because of how the students were understanding their own background and experiences. What does this mean? The theoretical foundation of reflection helped to provide a context for what I observed and saw within the students' works as seen in the papers, journals and exit interviews.

What is the role of the academic assignments (papers, photo journal, and exit interview) in fostering student reflection?

The academic assignments provide the formal vehicle for this reflection to take place in a systematic manner. In the context of this particular program, reflection was an active part of the framework of the course through the assignments. This study reaffirms that value of these

assignments and provides additional insight into ways to better enhance the connections to reflection and to raise awareness of the challenges of reflection.

For example, the reflection papers provided students the opportunity to respond to particular questions by providing their feedback and observations. The photo journals provided a visual vantage point to see how the students responded to the questions and how the images represented their viewpoints. The exit interview provided a quick snapshot as the students were responding to direct engagement with the instructor. All of these pieces reinforce Ash and Clayton's (2004) argument that reflection is cumulative. This helps to provide a better explanation for the role of the academic assignments as part of the weekly effort that would build upon each other. This cumulative approach also helped to provide clarification that the students' reflections were evolving and adapting throughout the duration of the summer program.

As I reflect about the three research questions, the data analysis and findings, I want to acknowledge that my research timetable hindered my ability to ask additional clarifying questions of the students. These additional questions in the assignments might have provided more details to help make the argument stronger in explaining the instrumental role that the academic assignments had in fostering student reflection.

The Role of Reflection and the Challenges

In the process of conducting the study and the data analysis, I learned that reflection plays a crucial role in a study abroad program. Unexpectedly, I also learned that there are challenges when it comes to the nature and style of the reflection and how others interpret reflection. The reflections by themselves without any context appeared to be problematic because of the wide generalizations that the students were making. I acknowledged that from an outside point of view this could be the case. My challenge was that as the instructor, I knew more about each of

the students and had a privileged vantage point, where I could talk about the reflections through this lens. Nonetheless, this raised critical questions about how as an instructor/facilitator, I used reflection in the activities. What role do I have in challenging what the students reflect about? Is it appropriate for me to challenge them on the generalizations?

These questions and concerns about the nature of the student reflections have led me to further self-reflect about ways that I could better prepare my students. I need to accept that there will always be concerns with how reflections are situated in particular activities. Is this something that I should take as a given? Are there other tools that I can use to reduce the problematization? Even with the concerns about generalizations and oversimplifications of areas, the students' writings show how the students were trying to understand, and come to terms with what they were experiencing and feeling at the moment. In the end, this is what critical thinking is about. Jessup-Anger (2008) noted that understanding how study abroad participants interpret their experiences can provide "valuable information to anyone interested in fostering the development of student identities and their understanding of difference" (p. 360).

While the students' themselves may not have had the academic background to fully know a certain subject matter, this does not discount the importance of their perspective and insight. As noted earlier with Dewey's six steps to critical reflection, the students' development of their hypothesis is part of the development process. This pertains to Kolb's four-stage learning cycle and the importance of the students trying to understand what is happening. If anything, this provides an opportunity to further explore ways that I can shape reflections to be seen as less problematic. One could argue that the nature of reflection is problematic but that in itself is part of the learning and transformation process. Just because someone is not an expert, does not mean that they cannot provide a reflection on an experience.

The Importance of the Themes

Figure 1.2, in chapter 1, provided a visualization of the relationship between the academic assignments, experiences, and reflection. The overlapping of all three highlighted areas created a specific area of intersection. In looking at this area of intersection after the analysis of the data, I can begin to develop a better picture of what is happening in this area.

In thinking about my study and the results, this area of intersection provides the basis for the major themes that emerged. Without the relationship among the three variables – academic assignments, experiences, and reflection, I would not be able to highlight the patterns that developed. Each of the variables are closely interconnected to what I was able to do within the study abroad program. Even if one of the variables is removed, this impacts the whole. It is true that the model could have both academic components and experiences, but without the intentional application of reflection, that area of intersection would be different.

In thinking about the two major themes that emerged, I would argue that these two themes are central to why study abroad is important and critical for students' today. The two themes showcase that the students become more self-aware of their own perspectives, as well as in better understanding what is taking place around them and their own role in the process. The learning outcomes for study abroad programs need to be focused on this exploration as the students learn in a new location.

In understanding the two themes and the respective categories, this provides a basis for enhancing and strengthening the role of reflection within the academic components in an effort to shape and define the experience. Take for example the study that Michael Laubscher (1994) conducted looking at the student perceptions of the role of out-of-class experiences in study abroad. In his findings, there were three overarching themes, which included personal

development, changing perceptions, and learning to be different. Thus the two themes that I identified in the process would not be out of the ordinary, but rather build a further understanding on the influence of study abroad.

Recommendations

This case study has further strengthened my belief in the value and importance of reflection. Through the data analysis and my own self-reflections, I have been thinking about ways that would help enhance the role of reflection. The following recommendations help to provide a better awareness of the value and important role of reflection within study abroad programs.

There needs to be better articulation in the learning outcomes for study abroad programs in regards to the role of self-awareness and visibility and presence: Through the discovery of the theme of self-awareness and visibility and presence, I would encourage that study abroad programs highlight these two areas as part of the learning outcomes of their programs. I suspect that these two themes occur in all or most programs in different ways but they are not explicitly listed as part of the learning outcomes.

Study Abroad instructors/coordinators need to reinforce the importance and value of reflection, even with the potential pitfalls: The role of reflection is critical in helping to shape the experience for the students. The academic assignments provide one way for reflection to be imbedded in a program. My recommendation is that programs focus on ways to intentionally add opportunities for reflection. It is also important for the instructors/coordinators to understand some of the pitfalls that come with reflection.

Study Abroad instructors/coordinators need to consider ways to better prepare students for the reflection process – what does it mean? This process has provided me with a better

understanding that additional preparation is needed to equip students as they embark on the reflection process. As instructors/coordinators, it is important that assumptions are not made about what the students' may know about reflection. This also relates to better understanding of the pitfalls that come with reflections. Understanding these pitfalls can provide additional learning opportunities in working with the students. These opportunities could have a role in helping to shape the nature of the preparation that students receive prior to going abroad, to those re-entry programs after the students return, and a means for further understanding self-exploration and self-reflection.

Suggestions for Future Research

As I reflect about the case study, the findings and my experiences, I see the potential for future research in a number of areas pertaining to study abroad and in particular to the questions this study has provided. Just as this study has raised a focus on the value and importance of reflection, I see this as creating additional opportunities to better understand the experience and framework for reflection. Among some of the ideas include the following:

1. *There needs to be an exploration of strategies to help minimize the problematic nature of reflection:* With reflection being an essential component within the study abroad experience, what are the most effective ways to respond to the problematizations that arise and to use this as a learning opportunity with the students?
2. *There needs to be further study in understanding bias in reflection:* The issue of the problematization in the reflections also raises a question on the role of bias. How can a study abroad program address bias? How does bias manifest itself while students are on a program?

3. *Consider how the students will take what they learn from the study abroad and what they bring back with them:* The student re-entry process is one that is garnering a lot of national attention. How does reflection in their study abroad program influence the student's ability to re-enter and how they use what they have learned back home?
4. *Further study is needed to determine if a study abroad program without any formal reflection activity can be seen as transformative:* This raises a question about the type of programs that students are participating in and whether or not there are structured activities. If students are going on a study abroad by themselves, how do they cope with self-reflection without guidance?
5. *Explore the role of the instructor/facilitator and what it means to a study abroad program.* What are skillsets that make a successful instructor for study abroad? This question provides an opportunity to further explore best practices for instructors/coordinators of study abroad and to better understand if there is a difference between teaching on one's home campus or abroad.
6. *Explore the concept of visibility and presence in more formal ways.* As seen with the theme that was developed, this concept of visibility and presence needs more study and understanding. The usage of the concept within architecture and design provide a different vantage point for looking at the other influences on the development of students' while on a study abroad experience.

Researcher Reflections - What I Learned about Myself

I had the privilege of developing, coordinating, and facilitating this particular study abroad program for five years. Throughout that time, I learned a lot about myself in terms of my style, how I interacted with the students, how I responded to situations, the importance of my

role, and the mistakes that I made. Each year provided additional opportunities for me to learn and reflect about what needed to be done to further strengthen and enhance the effort. The process of undertaking this study and the data analysis provided me with additional opportunities to critically self-reflect about what I learned.

What Did I Learn?

Clear communication is a critical component within a study abroad program and in engaging with the students: Communication is critical element and even with transparency, it is important to get constant confirmation from the students. This also means being prepared to repeat things and providing reminders to ensure that everyone is aware of what is happening. Communication and information sharing is central in resolving situations that may arise during the program. The lack of communication can create rifts within the group.

Do not underestimate status as a role model for the students: No one talks about being a role model. I have learned that that the students are constantly observing your interactions with others and your response to situations. It is important to understand that each student may have different expectations for what your role might be and it is important to acknowledge these differences. I learned that I needed to be clear in terms of my relationship with the students, both as the instructor and as a peer. As the instructor/coordinator, I learned that I could not satisfy everyone all the time. While the study abroad experience was a great learning opportunity for the students, I learned that my role was just as important.

Significant role in managing and handling crisis situations and conflicts: The role of a program leader is not an easy task. In the midst of crisis situations, I am representing the university and am helping to protect the students. How I handled situations and conflicts provided a learning opportunity for the students. I had to learn to be a mediator in responding to

concerns that arose within the group. In addition, I learned that I needed to be observant of what is happening within the group itself.

It is important that the study abroad program has an adequate balance of activities and a solid schedule: If I learned anything from the experience, it was the importance of the schedule and balancing the activities. In trying to ensure a quality experience, I scheduled too many things in a short time and the students were exhausted. This forced me to explore ways to better prepare students for the amount of travel and to prepare them for the schedule itself.

As an instructor/coordinator, being open to adjusting style as students were learning – taking a back seat when necessary: I had to come to terms with letting go of taking charge of things as the program progressed so that I could trust that the students were learning things and taking initiative. In the end, it was realizing that I was not going to be there all the time and part of this experience was in shaping their own personal development.

As an instructor, being open to trusting the students and letting the students experience mistakes and challenges: Similar to the concept of letting go was being open to consider student requests even though I knew that they would face problems. I learned that I had to be open and flexible not only in my actions but also in terms of my non-verbal communication. I realized that in some cases, I was allowing the actions of prior groups to influence my concerns for the current group of students. I needed to trust the students and their abilities.

As the instructor, being open to constructive feedback and being willing to adapt processes and procedures: I learned that I had to be adaptive each year and be flexible. I gained valuable insight after each of the exit interviews and final papers as these provided a context for my own self-reflection of ways to address challenges. Some of the criticisms were frustrating, as the students did not realize the behind the scenes challenges I was dealing with. It was often hard

to hear the constructive criticism from the students, but it was a valuable learning experience for me.

As an instructor, staying abreast and adding new experiences/components to the study abroad program: I learned that I could not just repeat the same things each summer. I had to explore and provide additional opportunities for the students to learn so that the program could remain successful. This allowed the program to evolve and grow over the duration of the five-year period. I also had to ensure that the program was meeting the academic rigor required for the course.

As an instructor, understanding the nature of the types of activities and how I used them with the program: This recommendation relates to adapting process and procedures. I learned the importance of the types of activities that I used and what I could do to provide other means. I learned that I needed to be willing to take risks with what I was adding. In some cases, certain activities worked and some did not. For example, I tried to incorporate video blogs during this fifth year but the technology did not work well for the group.

What would I do differently?

The process of this case study and my own self-reflection has provided me with valuable insight into what I have learned. I have grown in terms of my ability to work with students, to be a better teacher and facilitator, and to understand what I would need to do with future study abroad efforts in terms of planning and coordination.

My goal is to replicate this program at future institutions or to have others replicate what I developed at Virginia Tech. As I think about replicating this program, I would do a few things differently that I believe would further enhance this program. I have tried to highlight a few changes below:

In preparation for the program, I would provide specific examples of reflection and an understanding of generalizations: If I learned anything, it is that I needed to do a better job in preparing the students for the reflective process and in being more intentional as they are going through the reflection activities. I see this taking place during the pre-departure stages of the program and during the program itself. I cannot assume that the students understand what reflection means.

I would provide better guidance and training with understanding the sensitivity with photos journals: The photo journals provided a different vantage point to see how the students were responding to the experiences. In light of the concerns about reflection, I would spend more time preparing the students for the photo journal process. This would include discussing the implications and ethics of photography with the students as well as their role in the process.

I would explore more tangible hands-on efforts such as service activities as part of the program: One of my changes would be to consider additional ways to engage students with the communities and locations that are a part of the program. This is not a new idea for me, but it has been hardest component to envision due to the ambitious schedule that I attempted with the program. I need to look at scaling back the schedule in order to provide for the opportunity for an activity that could have an additional meaningful influence on the students. The one caveat is to be mindful and sensitive that I do not fall into the trap of making assumptions about what a community might need. I would need to work with local groups within the community to get feedback and insight.

I would develop and implement a group project component as part of the study abroad course: In relationship to the development of a service project, I would look at developing some type of group project as part of the program. This would provide the students with an opportunity

to work together on a particular project or task. This would provide another level of interaction among the group.

I would further explore the nature of learning and classroom environment for this program: I would explore ways to expand the learning opportunities within the program. For example, I would increase the scope, depth, and usage of the workbook that was developed for the program in summer 2012. I would look deeper at the flipped classroom format (i.e. videos prepared in advance, students would review before-hand and come prepared to discuss) and other ways to expand the notion of a traditional classroom.

Based on the feedback, I would re-examine the schedule of travel and activities to develop a better balance: I would look at ways to create better balance in the schedule. In hindsight, I attempted to do too much in a short time. While all of the activities were important, I need to look at ways to ensure quality time and focus amid a better balance. I learned that if the students were exhausted, this would hinder their ability to engage and learn.

I would add more support to help manage things as part of the program: In coordinating this particular program for five years, I learned that any future programs would require that I have more assistance. One possible idea would be to include a student assistant that would provide support as I manage and coordinate the different components of the program.

I would also examine the structure of the program itself in terms of its relationship with a local university. When the program was first developed, it was not connected or affiliated with a local university in Great Britain. This did create some challenges each time the group traveled back and forth to the United Kingdom. While the group was able to get around those challenges, a more direct partnership would open additional opportunities for the students and the program itself.

Summary and Conclusion

On the onset of this journey, I embarked on an effort to better understand the role of the reflection within the academic components of a program and how reflection would be a tool to better understand the nature of the transformation and change with the participants. While I had observed anecdotal evidence of this in prior years, it was through the formal analysis of the summer 2012 cohort that I was able to begin to look at specific examples and tangible evidence. Through the data analysis of written reflections, responses to their final paper, reviewing photos from their photo journals, and reviewing the notes of the exit interviews, I was able to start to discover what would become the two major themes of self-awareness, and visibility and presence.

The process of the data analysis also provided a more critical insight into how the reflections could be perceived by those that were not familiar with the participants. It also raised questions about the nature of the reflection activities themselves and whether or not they can be free of problems and other challenges.

In the end, reflection was important in helping to shape the experience for students. I also have learned that I need to question the meaning behind the reflections so that one can understand the problems that may arise. Without the guided reflection process that the academic components provided, I would not have been able to understand fully the true influence that the study abroad experience had on my students' in this journey. The two themes of self-awareness and visibility and presence, help to provide a better glimpse into understanding what is happening as the students' reflect about their experiences.

As I think about my personal journey, this experience has also shaped my own knowledge and skills as a higher education professional. I have a much better understanding of

the study abroad field as a scholar through the process of trying to understand the history and framework of study abroad. I have a much better understanding of what it means to coordinate, implement, and manage a study abroad program. This study has helped me to better understand how I can use study abroad to make a difference for students. This also has helped me to better understand how I can use reflection in my day-to-day activities. It has helped me to reflect about what I did well and not well when I was conducting this particular program.

In the end, I can attest from both personal experiences as a student, when I did my Study Abroad at the University of Cambridge and as a facilitator/instructor of this particular program, as to the important role that study abroad can play within the educational setting. It is the reflective process that further amplifies the importance of study abroad.

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APPENDIX A

Photo Diary Topics
Summer 2012

Week	Question:
#1	In these first few days in London, submit five photos of things that stand out to you (for whatever reason) and explain why you took this photo, what it means to you and what is the diversity context of the image.
#2	For this photo assignment, I want you to capture images that deal with issues of immigration (as you define it or understand it) and of differences between London and Paris. Please describe why you chose the image and what it means to you. At least four of the photos have to be taken in Paris and rest could be taken elsewhere in Europe.
#3	For this photo assignment, I want you to capture images that deal with issues surrounding socio-economic status (consider what is included in the definition of socio-economic), and explain why you chose this image. At least three of the images must be taken in Madrid and the rest from elsewhere in Europe.
#4	<p>For this photo assignment, I want you to capture images that deal with the concept of religion and society, and to explain why you chose the image. At least three of the five have to be taken in Rome and the rest could from elsewhere in Europe.</p> <p>Rome has been a major religious center throughout its history and its influence has been felt world-wide. As you consider your photos, think outside of the box. Please consider the question carefully and note that religion is much more than a nice church. When it comes to discussing diversity, religion can be a controversial topic.</p>
#5	For this photo assignment, I want you to capture images of the generational contrasts you experience while in Prague and/or Munich. Each generation or age brings a different feel to a city but how is it manifested? Is it through architecture? The commerce? The layout? The attitude of the people? Their remembrance of the past? At least three of these photos have to be taken in Prague/Munich and the rest from elsewhere in Europe.

APPENDIX B

Reflection Paper Topics Summer 2012

Week	Question:
#1	<p>In this first reflection, talk about why you wanted to participate in this Study Abroad and describe your feelings as you arrived into Heathrow and traveling to get to Nido. As you talk about your feelings, describe what you observed. Did anything catch your eye? What was different from what you are used to?</p> <p>Conclude with the one thing that you want to get out of this experience.</p>
#2	<p>After spending the first week in London, we ventured into the European mainland with our first excursion to Paris, France. As you prepare your paper, consider your experiences in Paris and answer the following questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What strikes you about Paris compared to London (beyond the language)? 2. What is your impression of the French? Do they live up to the stories? 3. How are the immigration issues manifested? What did you see or not see?
#3	<p>Over the past three weeks, you have had the opportunity to visit and explore the three largest cities within Europe. During this time, you have experienced first hand the day-to-day life of the average person. With the news of the ongoing global economic crisis, I want you to reflect upon the situations that you have observed.</p> <p>In this case, consider what you have observed in Madrid and how have you seen the socio-economic component manifest themselves. Possible approaches could be looking at prices in the stores, public work projects, and activities taking place in the market areas or other observations.</p> <p>How do these socio-economic components compare to those in Paris or London, or even back home in the United States? What can we learn from the Madrid experience?</p>
#4	<p>This week brings you to and to a place that has been at the forefront of significant historical events. One of the more challenging areas of diversity is religion and religious beliefs/freedom. In the United States for example, we have the freedom of religion (the right to chose how and when/who we worship).</p> <p>How have you seen religion manifested during these past few weeks in Europe? What has or has not surprised you? Is religious diversity important? Please provide</p>

	<p>examples and explain.</p> <p>You can compare and contract between cities, countries, etc.</p>
#5	<p>This final week brings us to Prague via Munich in the heart of Bohemia in Central Europe. Prague has been the political, cultural and economic center of the Czech state for over 1,100 years. It has seen its share of hardships and has been occupied by foreign forces during this time and most recently Nazi Germany in 1939 and the reoccupation by the Soviets during the Prague Spring of 1968. The first democratic and free elections took place in 1990 following the Velvet Revolution of late 1989.</p> <p>For this reflection paper, I want you to focus on the issue of freedom of speech and thought. Often times in the diversity conversation, we tend to marginalize those that express different opinions or take on different stances. It can be very easy to fall into the trap of not acknowledging their rights of expression.</p> <p>How have you seen issues of speech and thought manifested in Prague? Can you still see the impacts of the communist era on the city? How does Prague feel to you in terms of its openness? You are more than welcome to compare and contrast between cities, countries, etc.</p>

APPENDIX C

Exit Interview Questions Summer 2012

The main goal of the Exit Interview is to get a snapshot analysis of feedback before the students leave. We do not want to replicate the questions on the Final Exam/Reflection.

The Exit Interviews took place on August 16 – 17, 2012, and took place at thirty minute intervals.

Exit Interview Questions

1. One of the challenges that we face and will always face is the issue of meals. This year, after the first week, we allowed for a portion of the meals to be done via the allowance method until we could not sustain it. Do you have any preference for how to handle meals and food?
2. Favorite city/place/opportunity visited as part of program?
3. What worked well?
4. In my shoes, what would they have done differently?
5. In regards to your particular experience, what would you have done differently?
6. How have you grown as a result of this opportunity?
7. Are you glad that you had this opportunity?
8. Other thoughts/comments?

APPENDIX D

Final Exam (Reflection) Summer 2012

Reflection Component:

A little more than five weeks ago, you came to London to be a part of this Study Abroad experience. Each of you had different motivations and desires for this opportunity. During this time, you have traveled hundreds of miles to different cities and areas on both organized group and personal travel. In this final reflection assignment, we would like for you to respond to the following questions:

1. The focus of this program was in understanding diversity and social justice from the European Perspective. How would you define this perspective? Please provide examples.
2. How did you immerse yourself in the European culture? Please provide examples.
3. In light of what you have learned in Europe, has this changed your perception or understanding of diversity in the United States? What can we in the United States learn from Europe or vice-versa? Please explain.
4. If there was one city or location that you would revisit, which one would it be and why?
5. During this trip, we had the opportunity to get briefings from officials at different U.S. Embassies (Paris and Madrid). What was this experience like for you and what did you learn?
6. You have experienced being in an Olympic host city during the games, what was this experience like? What did you do to participate? What did you observe?
7. How have you grown as an individual as a result of your experience? What has been the impact in terms of your major, and/or your future career goals?
8. In your first journal, you write about your experience coming over to London. How do you feel now in terms of heading back home and what would you tell students thinking about studying abroad?

The final reflection should be at least 10 pages, double-spaced, and is due by Thursday, August 23rd. This is due after you get home. You are welcome to submit prior to the deadline.

- Please remember the final photo component as well -

APPENDIX E**Final Exam (Photo)
Summer 2012****Photo Component:**

For your final photo journal, I would like you to submit three photos of a diversity and social justice area that you have not focused on in your prior photos. Remember the definition of diversity that we discussed in the very beginning, and consider your collection of photos. What is one issue/area that you captured?

Finally, as you review your photos, what is the one image that you took that stands out to you? Why? (Please include your photo)

Please submit with your Final Reflection and it is due on Thursday, August 23rd.

APPENDIX F

Study Abroad UNIV 3954 Learning About Diversity and Social Justice: The European Perspective Summer II (7/9/12 – 8/18/12) London, United Kingdom

Course Instructor:

Raymond V. Plaza

Email: rp25@vt.edu

Course Description and Objectives:

This course is designed to engage and expose students in critical thought about race, class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality and physical differences and their intersections through the European perspective. This course is based overseas and will be located in London, England for a six-week period. During these six-weeks, students will participate in four scheduled trips that are designed to expose and engage the students in the issues of diversity and social justice.

Through these hands-on experiences and the dialogue about the issues, the students will gain a greater understanding and appreciation of the European Perspective and in turn a better awareness of the dynamics of these issues in the United States.

Text/Readings:

A reading list of various articles will assigned for the topics being addressed that includes issues of immigration, social economic issues, religion, diversity and about the European Union. These readings will be available online through Scholar and will be required reading assignments.

Learning Objectives:

- To engage in dialogue around difference and similarity, including the social locations of race, gender, age, class, sexual orientation and ability
- To gain an understanding and appreciation for the European perspective on these issues of diversity and social justice
- To articulate any differences or similarities between the issues in the United States and in Europe
- To interact with their peers around controversial issues and learn to articulate one's personal position
- To reflect on one's future role as a member of a multicultural and global society
- To understand various forms of prejudice and discrimination as well as the social, political and economic mechanisms that perpetuate them

Class Requirements:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| 1. Class Attendance and Participation | 35 points |
| 2. Photo Diary Journal (5 points per wk) | 25 points |
| 3. Online Reflections (10 points per wk) | 50 points |
| 4. Current Events Dialogue (5 points per week) | 25 points |
| 5. Viewpoints Presentation (5 points per trip) | 20 points |

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| 6. Video Blog | 40 points |
| 7. Final Reflection | 50 points |

This course is a credit bearing course that can be taken for a six credits in which students will receive a P – F grade. Students who have 205 or more points will pass the class. Those with 204 or fewer will fail the class.

Students must complete ALL course requirements in order to receive a passing grade.

1. Attendance and Participation

Your voices, ideas, and goals are the keys to making this class work. Each of us brings something different to the mix; therefore, to maintain the group dynamic and to maximize your learning experience, regular attendance is absolutely necessary. Attendance will be taken each day. Due to the nature of this study abroad experience, any absences will need to be cleared with the instructor. In addition, you are responsible for all due dates and for any work that is assigned. Policies may be adapted at the discretion of the instructor.

If an emergency arises, please notify your instructor immediately.

2. Class Expectations

Representing Virginia Tech:

Even though we are not on the Blacksburg campus, you are still a Virginia Tech student and are also a representative of the university. If you are unsure about something, please ask your instructor.

Honor Code:

Please familiarize yourself with and follow the Virginia Tech Honor Code, <http://www.honorsystem.vt.edu>. The Honor Code addresses cheating, plagiarism, and falsification. All writing produced for the class must be original and/or quoted with sources cited. (“Rearranging” sentences of someone else’s writing is not considered to be original writing. Close the book, and write it down in your own words.)

Virginia Tech Principles of Community: Please familiarize yourself with the Virginia Tech Principles of Community, available at: <http://www.vt.edu/principles.php>. It is the expectation that we follow these principles throughout the course.

Accommodations: If you need adaptations or accommodations because of a disability (learning disability, attention deficit disorder, psychological, physical, etc.), if you have emergency medical information to share with me, or if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible. Additional information can be requested from the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) Office, 250 South Main Street, Suite 300, 540-231-0858 (V), 231-0853 (TTY); Susan P. Angle, spangle@vt.edu, www.ssd.vt.edu

ASSIGNMENTS:

1. Photo Journal – Photo and Reflection

Students will be asked to take images that depict issues of diversity, inclusion and social justice. Instructions regarding the photos will be shared at the first class meeting. There will be a minimum of

five photos that will need to be taken each week. In addition, an additional set of three photos will need to be submitted with the final reflection essay.

The photos will be uploaded on a weekly basis onto Scholar (or related electronic forum) and the students will be asked to provide their insight and opinion on the photos. The photos will be shared with the entire class and be a part of the class discussion. The goal will be to provide a photo diary of the entire summer showing the students depictions of their interpretations of diversity, inclusion and social justice. This will serve as an excellent resource for the Virginia Tech community as well as future summer participants.

Students are not required to have a digital camera but it is preferred. Several digital cameras will be available in the event that students do not have access to a camera.

2. Online Reflections

Utilizing Scholar (or related electronic forum), students will be asked to do a weekly online journals based on their experiences during each week of the program. This will be important especially after the various trips and excursions. Topics for the journals will be shared at the start of each week and students will also be allowed to provide additional thoughts.

Journals will need to be at least two pages, double-spaced.

3. Current Events Dialogue

Students will be required to keep track of current events while in London. Students will be encouraged to follow the local and international news, with particular emphasis on impacts on London and the European Union and how events taking place back in the United States are viewed. This dialogue will take place in the class sessions and be a part of the daily conversations in class.

4. Viewpoints Presentations

In an effort to ensure that the experience is relevant to the respective majors of the students, each student will share their viewpoints of the different cities through the lenses of their academic major. These viewpoints will help guide the overall debriefing for the entire group and help each learn from each other about the impacts of their major. If there are more students in a particular major, then they can work together, but each student will need to share a perspective. The ultimate goal is to ensure that the students can articulate a relevance to their major of the experiences that they have witnessed.

These viewpoints will be shared during the post-trip debriefing as scheduled.

5. Video Blog

Students will be asked to prepare at least three video blogs as part of the experience. One will be a welcome blog at the start of the experience, one blog will be done in conjunction with another student, and one final blog at the end of the experience. Students can prepare additional blogs. Blogs will be posted online and made available for the public. The purposes of the blog will be to provide your insight and perspective.

6. Final Reflection Essay

Students will be asked to write a final reflection essay (at least 10 pages, double-spaced) that will ask them to reflect on their experiences during these six weeks in Europe and how they understand the issues

of diversity, inclusion and social justice from the European Perspective. Students will be asked about what they have learned and how they can apply this knowledge to how these issues are seen back in the United States. Students will have the flexibility to include their own thoughts and perspectives.

7. Exit Interview

During the last days of the program, each student will be required to have an exit interview with the program leader. This exit interview is not graded, so that students will not be penalized for expressing their viewpoints and perspectives.

TENTATIVE STUDY ABROAD CLASS SCHEDULE

Class Schedule while in London (M – F):

8am	Breakfast	9am – 12 Noon	Class Sessions
12 Noon – 2pm	Lunch Break	2pm – 5pm	Class Sessions
7pm	Group Dinner (TBD)		

Class Schedule while in Paris, Madrid, Rome, Munich/Prague:

These times will vary according to travel and other aspects. Students will get free time in each location for research and other interests.

Week	Date	Topic	Notes
1	7/8/12 (S)	Travel Day	
1	7/9/12 (M)	Arrival in London	Group Dinner/Gathering
1	7/10/12 (T)	First class meeting Exploring London	Orientation, Syllabus, schedule
1	7/11/12 (W)	Understanding Diversity Exploring London	
1	7/12/12 (R)	London	U.S. Embassy Visit
1	7/13/11 (F)	London	Globe Theatre Performance
1	7/14/11 (SAT)	London	
2	7/15/12 (SUN)	Rest Day	
2	7/16/12 (M)	Immigration Paris	Leave London AM for Paris
2	7/17/12 (T)	Paris	
2	7/18/12 (W)	Paris	

2	7/19/12 (R)	Paris	Leave Paris in PM
2	7/20/12 (F)	FREE DAY	
2	7/21/12 (Sat)	WEEKEND FREE	
3	7/22/12 (Sun)	WEEKEND FREE	
3	7/23/12 (M)	Socio-Economic Issues Madrid	Leave London in AM for Madrid
3	7/24/12 (T)	Madrid	
3	7/25/12 (W)	Madrid	
3	7/26/12 (R)	Madrid	Flight back to London in PM
3	7/27/12 (F)	FREE DAY	Olympic Opening Ceremonies
3	7/28/12 (Sat)	WEEKEND FREE	
4	7/29/12 (Sun)	WEEKEND FREE	
4	7/30/12 (M)	Religious Freedom/Politics Rome	
4	7/31/12 (T)	Rome	
4	8/1/12 (W)	Rome	
4	8/2/12 (R)	Rome	
4	8/3/12 (F)	LONG WEEKEND	
4	8/4/12 (Sat)	LONG WEEKEND	
5	8/5/12 (Sun)	LONG WEEKEND	
5	8/6/12 (M)	LONG WEEKEND	
5	8/7/12 (T)	LONG WEEKEND*	Ensure that you are back on London by afternoon
5	8/8/12 (W)	Political Viewpoints/Freedom of Speech Munich/Prague	Leave London in AM; late train to Prague
5	8/9/12 (R)	Prague	

5	8/10/12 (F)	Prague	
5	8/11/12 (Sat)	Prague	
6	8/12/12 (Sun)	Prague/Munich	Leave Prague in AM to Munich
6	8/13/12 (M)	Munich	Flight back to London in PM
6	8/14/12 (T)	Free Day/Rest Day	
6	8/15/12 (W)	London – Final Class Sessions	
6	8/16/12 (R)	London – Final Class Sessions	
6	8/17/12 (F)	London – Final Class Sessions	
6	8/18/12 (SAT)	Student Departure Day	Heading back to the U.S.

Timetable for Assignments:

All submitted via Scholar

Due Date (by Midnight)	What is due?	Focus Area
Sunday, July 15 th	Week #1 Reflection and Photo Journal	London
Sunday, July 22 nd	Week #2 Reflection and Photo Journal	Paris
Sunday, July 29 th	Week #3 Reflection and Photo Journal	Madrid
** Due to travel, due by August 18 th **	Week #4 Reflection and Photo Journal	Rome
** Due to travel, due by August 18 th **	Week #5 Reflection and Photo Journal	Munich/Prague
Friday, August 24 th	Final Exam – Reflection and Photo	Whole Trip/Experience

Video Blog Instructions

As part of the study abroad experience, you will be completing **three** video blogs during the program. The purpose of the blog is for you to be yourself and to convey in your own words your experiences. There is no wrong or right answer.

The first blog is a welcome blog that should take place during the first week of the program. This blog could be about your first impressions, etc. It is up to you.

The second blog will be done in conjunction with another student. You will be paired up and can choose which week you want to do the blog. It could be about something of that week.

The third and final blog will be at the end of the experience. These should be completed during the last week of the trip before your departure.

You are welcome to create additional video blogs.

As you create and prepare your video blogs, be mindful of who could be watching this from administrators/professors to relatives, etc.

Requirements for Video Blogs:

1. Keep individual video blog to about 3 - 5 minutes
2. When working with a partner on a group blog, should be about 7 - 10 minutes
3. Think about what you want to convey and how
4. Avoid long pauses or interruptions
5. Be mindful of language
6. Be yourself
7. Be creative

Uploading Videos:

Videos will be uploaded to the Vimeo website. You can upload your video directly, or you can have Ray upload the video for you.

If you choose to upload directly, go to: www.vimeo.com

Click on Log-In: Email: rp25@vt.edu Password: europe2012

Click on Upload Video and follow instructions

- I have created folders for each of the three Video Blog Assignments

Equipment:

Ray has a small video camera that you can use to record your videos, or you are welcome to use your own equipment.

APPENDIX G



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
 Blacksburg, VA 24060
 540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
 email irb@vt.edu
 website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: July 3, 2012
TO: Raymond Vidal Plaza, Kerry J Redican
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires May 31, 2014)
PROTOCOL TITLE: The Importance of Reflection within the Academic Components of Short-term study abroad programs: Enhancing the impact and experience for students
IRB NUMBER: 12-613

Effective July 3, 2012, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the New Application request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5**
 Protocol Approval Date: **July 3, 2012**
 Protocol Expiration Date: **July 2, 2013**
 Continuing Review Due Date*: **June 18, 2013**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Invent the Future

APPENDIX H**VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE AND STATE UNIVERSITY
Informed Consent for Participants
in Research Projects Involving Human Subjects**

Title of Project: The Importance of Reflection within the Academic Components of Short-term study abroad programs: Enhancing the impact and experience for students

Investigator: Raymond V. Plaza, Faculty Advisor: Dr. Kerry Redican

I. Purpose of this Research/Project:

The purpose of this project is to determine the impact/role of the academic components in the impact of the experience on the students participating in a short-term study abroad program. A qualitative case study analysis will be used to examine the data.

II. Procedures

In the project, the class assignments for the course will be used for the collection of the data. The assignments themselves serve as the instruments used to collect the data. The research will take place during the duration of the entire study abroad program. We ask that you complete the assignments as you would for any class.

III. Risks

No risks are associated with this study. Students will be asked to respond to the questions as part of the completion of the assignments.

IV. Benefits

The research will enable the development of a model that can be used to help in the development of strategies for the continued enhancement of short-term faculty-led study abroad programs.

There is no promise or guarantee of benefits for your participation in this study. Participation will not improve nor hinder your grade.

V. Extent of Anonymity and Confidentiality

Your individual responses will be confidential and no personal identifying information will be used with your responses. Your written responses will be analyzed as part of the collection of responses from the entire class.

It is possible that the Institutional Review Board (IRB) may review this study's collected data for auditing purposes. The IRB is responsible for the oversight of the protection of human subjects involved in research.

VI. Compensation

There is no compensation for your participation as the assignments used for the collection of the data are part of the assigned work for the study abroad course.

VII. Freedom to Withdraw

While you cannot choose to complete the projects, you can elect to not have your responses included in the analysis of the data. You will not gain nor lose any advantage in your grade as a result of your participation.

In an effort to further protect you, the instructor/researcher will not know of your decision to participate in the study until after grades have been submitted.

VIII. Subject's Responsibilities

I voluntarily agree to be a part of this study. I have the following responsibilities:
To participate in the course as I would for any course and to complete the necessary assignments as would be standard.

I will seal in an envelope my informed consent form understanding that it will be opened after grades have been submitted.

IX. Subject's Permission

I have read the Consent Form and conditions for this project. I have had all of my questions answered. I hereby acknowledge the above and give my voluntary consent:

Subject signature

Date

Should I have any pertinent questions about this research or its conduct, and research subjects' rights, and whom to contact in the event of a research-related injury to the subject, I may contact:

Raymond V. Plaza

540-641-1286 / rp25@vt.edu

Kerry Redican

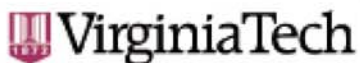
540-231-5741 / kredican@vt.edu

David M. Moore

540-231-4991 / moored@vt.edu

Chair, Virginia Tech Institutional Review
Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Office of Research Compliance
2000 Kraft Drive, Suite 2000 (0497)
Blacksburg, VA 24060

APPENDIX I



Office of Research Compliance
 Institutional Review Board
 North End Center, Suite 4120, Virginia Tech
 300 Turner Street NW
 Blacksburg, Virginia 24061
 540/231-4606 Fax 540/231-0959
 email irb@vt.edu
 website <http://www.irb.vt.edu>

MEMORANDUM

DATE: June 8, 2016
TO: Kerry J Redican, Raymond Vidal Plaza
FROM: Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (FWA00000572, expires January 29, 2021)
PROTOCOL TITLE: The Importance of Reflection within the Academic Components of Short-term study abroad programs: Enhancing the impact and experience for students
IRB NUMBER: 12-613

Effective June 8, 2016, the Virginia Tech Institutional Review Board (IRB) Chair, David M Moore, approved the Continuing Review request for the above-mentioned research protocol.

This approval provides permission to begin the human subject activities outlined in the IRB-approved protocol and supporting documents.

Plans to deviate from the approved protocol and/or supporting documents must be submitted to the IRB as an amendment request and approved by the IRB prior to the implementation of any changes, regardless of how minor, except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to the subjects. Report within 5 business days to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated or adverse events involving risks or harms to human research subjects or others.

All investigators (listed above) are required to comply with the researcher requirements outlined at:

<http://www.irb.vt.edu/pages/responsibilities.htm>

(Please review responsibilities before the commencement of your research.)

PROTOCOL INFORMATION:

Approved As: **Expedited, under 45 CFR 46.110 category(ies) 5**
 Protocol Approval Date: **July 3, 2016**
 Protocol Expiration Date: **July 2, 2017**
 Continuing Review Due Date*: **June 18, 2017**

*Date a Continuing Review application is due to the IRB office if human subject activities covered under this protocol, including data analysis, are to continue beyond the Protocol Expiration Date.

FEDERALLY FUNDED RESEARCH REQUIREMENTS:

Per federal regulations, 45 CFR 46.103(f), the IRB is required to compare all federally funded grant proposals/work statements to the IRB protocol(s) which cover the human research activities included in the proposal / work statement before funds are released. Note that this requirement does not apply to Exempt and Interim IRB protocols, or grants for which VT is not the primary awardee.

The table on the following page indicates whether grant proposals are related to this IRB protocol, and which of the listed proposals, if any, have been compared to this IRB protocol, if required.

Invent the Future